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Social

**MANOHAR MALGONKAR - “THE INDIAN KIPLING”**



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**ABSTRACT**

*Manohar Malgonkar a versatile Indian fictional writer represents the life of pre independent and of post independent India that has left heavy memories of events which changed our nation's history and society in the most profound ways. His novels “ Distant Drum” (1960), “Combat of Shadows “(1962),” The Princes” (1963), “A Bend in the Ganges” (1964), and “The Devil's Wind” (1972) witness a wonderful knock of weaving plots of singular originality. His themes such as the army life, the aristocracy, commonality, partition of India, violence, sex, hunting, betrayal and revenge actually provides scope to find out the depth of Human relationships. “There is no exaggeration in calling him “INDIAN KIPLING”.*

*Malgonkar has similarities with R.K. Narayan. Both are contemporary Indian fiction writers in English and have experimented with the English language. He finds India under the pressures of modern education and industrialization changing its virtues and reminds us to overcome the evil factors. As a contemporary of writers such as Mulk Raj Anand and Khushwant Singh, it is a fact that Malgonkar's contribution to the genre we refer to today as Indian Writing in English remains largely unacknowledged.*

**Keywords:**

*Unacknowledged: not acknowledged or not given much attention; Poignant: Sharp-pointed, penetrating; Aristocracy: nobility or the hereditary ruling class.*

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

Manohar Malgonkar a versatile Indian fictional writer represents the life of pre independent and of post independent India that has left heavy memories of events which changed our nation's history and society in the most profound ways. His novels “ Distant Drum” (1960), “Combat of Shadows “(1962),” The Princes” (1963), “A Bend in the Ganges” (1964), and “The Devil's Wind” (1972) witness a wonderful knock of weaving plots of singular originality.

Malgonkar very often described as “The John Masters of the Indo-English fiction” is undoubtedly one of the great Indian fictional writers in English. He has certain qualities which

make him truly prolific. Malgonkar who achieved a spectacular success in the post-independence period started writing very late.

K.R.Shrinivas Iyengar calls Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K.Narayan as “Trimurties” of Indian fictional world and no one disputes his comment. But at the same time he adds that there is no one better than Manohar Malgonkar who could occupy the next place after these Trimurties”.

His fictional works present various themes, such as the army life, the aristocracy commonality, and partition of India, violence, sex, hunting, betrayal and revenge actually providing scope for the research as to find out the depth of Human relationships. He retained an abiding fascination for the Indian Royals as he too belonged to the same. “There is no exaggeration in calling him “INDIAN KIPLING”.

Malgonkar has a few similarities with R.K. Narayan. Both are contemporary Indian fiction writers in English and have experimented with the English language. Both Malgonkar and Narayan believe that the test of a good writer is his readability. If a novel cannot hold you from the very first page, it is not worth bothering about. But this must not make us conclude that what is so easy to read must be superficial. R.K. Narayan does not deal with the themes of army life, aristocracy, violence, Partition and hunting. His characters are mainly drawn from the middle class and they spring from the mud and river of Malgudi. Men, women, boys and girls come from this particular region of South India. Whereas, Malgonkar has drawn characters India and abroad. Narayan’s attitude towards sex is the conventional, mid-victorian attitude. Unlike Malgonkar he hardly describes physical passion in any of his novels.

Malgonkar's method of characterization is a pointer to the complex facts of human nature. The growth of his characters namely - Gian, Debi, Shafi, Kiran, and Henry- in all his novels exhibit good and bad qualities which specify that nobody is inherently good or bad. He is conscious of the existence of both in one and the same person. The good often turns into bad by the destructive acts of others and by a disastrous pressure on our mind. Malgonkar's world is one where we find negative qualities more than the positive ones. In this world he seems to aspire for a religion based on human love and equality for everyone, but is not found so; at reality. He takes delight in breaking down the barriers between individuals and communities. In his vision he sees a brave new India where people of all religions are one. The novelist writes about several things that happen in day today life.

Some illustrations in the marital life of the characters in Bend and Princes acknowledge the force of love as capable of creating great changes in human life. In his vision of life he sees love as a reforming drug. According to him all men are not Rama’s or women Sita’s. And he does not want them to be so either. He wants women also to enjoy life, and fulfill their self.

Being an Indian novelist, Malgonkar's world view is coloured by a sense of destiny behind the lives of human beings. His novels show the defects of the nuclear and the joint-family. They give a truthful account of parent-child relationship. The most striking of the familial relationships in the novels is the poignant picture of the surrogate mother in the elder sister in Bend. At the outset

the author shows the concern of a father for his daughter's welfare; but his traditional views and consequent actions regarding the marriage of the daughter are proved futile for her.

Distant Drum is the story of a 'Satpura' Officer Kiran who belongs to a military Regime who dies while fighting but still his words inspire the rest of the soldiers to continue to fight with their unflinching determination and tenacity of purpose as they seem to be not afraid of death. Malgonkar beautifully relates a leader's emotional attachment and belief in his respondents and vice-versa. Wherein we understand how a healthy relationship brings equal belief and strength to attain solutions at various levels of problems. The life of soldiers occupies a prominent place among his various themes.

In Malgonkar's *Combat of Shadows*, there is a portrayal of the life of British aristocracy. Malgonkar is the only Indian writer who has first – hand experience in the army. So his accent of the life of soldiers during war and peace in the Pre-Independence & Post-Independence period is authentic. A detailed description of the life of soldiers is found in the *Distant Drum*. His soldiers are known for their courage, bravery, honesty, integrity, discipline, dignity, loyalty & patriotism under any circumstances. There is a lot of Autobiographical element in his novels as he evidently feels at home in their presentation.

*Combat of Shadows* exhibits the life of British aristocracy which does not care for the morals and sex-taboos of the poor, exploiting their ethical existence shows the dominance put forth by some rich people disturbing human relationships.

Malgonkar also draws the attention of the common people towards such many characters of his depicting certain bad qualities effecting society with differing attitude structures. He finds India under the pressures of modern education and industrialization changing its virtues and reminds us to overcome the evil factors.

As a contemporary of writers such as Mulk Raj Anand, Khushwant Singh and Kamala Markandya, it is a fact that Manohar Malgonkar's contribution to the genre we refer to today as Indian Writing in English remains largely unacknowledged. Malgonkar evolves his own technique, in his belief that it is the responsibility of the novelist to make his novels as readable as possible. Malgonkar weaves a plot in such a way that no reader feels bored while reading him. The novels of Malgonkar have social and political parameters. At the same time his works are informative and authentic.

Therefore a writer who has contributed so much to the Indian fiction writing in English is immensely readable and whose novels have been translated into many European and Indian languages should not be overlooked and under estimated instead should be studied seriously and deeply.

## 2. REFERENCES

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