

## Preface

Among the Indian novelists writing in English, Malgonkar ranks very high. Critics, however, tend to dismiss him as a mere storyteller, an entertainer. For example, Paul Varghese condemns him for 'his tendencies to concentrate his attention more on the exotic and melodramatic than on the worthwhile aspects of Indian life', and Jill Hugh-Jones commenting on the use of English in The Princes declares his intention to 'prevent this kind of writing from ever getting into print'. My opinion is otherwise; I have found a meaningful vision of life beneath the superficial veneer of his delightful stories.

So far, except Prof. G. S. Amur and James Y. Dayanand, nobody has made any serious attempt to evaluate Malgonkar fully as a significant writer. Dr. Amur is the first to note that critical attention has bypassed Manohar Malgonkar. Amur's analysis of each individual novel is well-studied and penetrating; but he has made no attempt to look into the consistent historical vision that underlies Malgonkar's work as a whole. Moreover, he tends to look at the historical element in Malgonkar's novels as documentation rather than as the author's serious preoccupation. James Y. Dayanand, who presupposes five separate themes in Malgonkar's novels with varying emphasis in each novel, seems to dwell largely on the 'initiation' theme, and except in The Princes, his analysis of the individual works of Malgonkar does not appear to do full justice to Malgonkar's historical vision. Dayanand takes no notice of Malgonkar's short fiction, whereas Amur takes no cognisance of Malgonkar's

historical works. In my present study, which encompasses all works of Malgonkar till April 1983, I propose to look at them as artefacts of his historical vision.

Malgonkar's insistence on the historical truth underlies all his works, whether they are historical novels or historical books. To analyse the historical aspect of all his works with reference to his attitude to Indian history, and to study the functioning of his historical imagination, shall, therefore, be the principal aim of this study.

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Warananagar.  
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