CHAPTER V
Manohar Malgonkar, the historian fabulist captured in his novels the momentous and rare incidents of pre and post independent India in his fictions. While for Shattancharya art teaches, for Malgonkar it entertains the reader. He is a good story teller, as he himself has always claimed, who has always treated novel as a source of entertainment. His novels explore the known and unknown facts of history that took place during the crucial period of our nation's life. He never concentrated on certain aspects like poverty, hunger and economic inequity like his counterpart. He himself claimed that for him talking about the slum dwellers and the villagers would be something like 'a white man writing a negro riot'. Unlike Shabani Shattancharya, he concentrated on the immediate problems that India faced in the wake of partition. They are the division of the British Indian Army, the rise of native politicians devoid of the values cherished by our respected leaders, breakdown of the administrative machinery, unification of states. As an officer of the British Indian Army for Malgonkar the realities of the military society had weightage at par with the civilian society of the times. Partition, in the views of Malgonkar, was not only an administrative blunder but also a man made national disaster unparalleled in the history of mankind. Communism in its ghastly form has been narrated in his novels placing
Malgonkar among the front ranking Indo-English novelists like Khuswant Singh dealing with a similar theme. As a novelist he lived through those traumatic days, and tried to project those elements not only to his readers in India but more to his readers in the Western world. Regarding his historical sense James Y. Deyananda observes:

Malgonkar’s distinctive characteristics are his strong sense of history, and of the tension between the individual and the historical forces of the time, and his capacity for seeing a human situation in close relation to its material setting.

Regarding the Indianness of his novels depicting the Indian society Prof. Deyananda further observes:

These characteristics invite comparison in some ways with other writers who have presented India in their fiction — J. M. Forester, John Masters, and Paul Scott come to mind. His fiction is Indian in the deepest sense; it shows Indians experiencing Indian culture free of take profundity and mysticism. Not to read Malgonkar is to cheat yourself of a writer of considerable charm and skill.

His literary career is studded with a very steady output. He is a regular craftsman whose involvement and dedication can be marked in the themes he chooses for his fictions. As a Dian’s son he took to hunting at a very teen age and later on he developed deep love for forests. As a student of English literature his knowledge was bookish initially. But he had come in contact with living
Sogllsb in the British Indian Army and had a first hand knowledge of Army codes and discipline. His stint in the Army for a decade gave him enough material and experience for the novel he wrote later. His close experience of the communal riots in Delhi and uncalled for partition of army also found expression in the same novel. His close contact and keen observation of the traumatic phase in the national life during the days that just preceded and followed independence were very forcefully conveyed in his major novels. All the novels of Malgonkar take their shape from an artist's soul that has had its encounter with the different aspects of national life ranging from racial arrogance to the downfall of monarchy. In this context P.P. Mehta observes:

Malgonkar's novels are valuable documents in as much particular phase in our national life. Distant Drum gives a graphic picture of the new Indian Army as well as The Prince and what they went through when their states were merged into the Indian Union. And in the Complete perhaps his masterpiece is almost a documentary of the struggle for independence and its sequel of the bath of blood in the Punjab.

Like Khuswant Singh Malgonkar did not keep his heroes mostly confined to the sikh community. His heroes were from the wider community canvas which India has always represented. Most of his contemporaries like Khuswant Singh, Raj Gill, Attia Hosain and Shamas Nabi concentrated more on the
vivisection of the liberation covenant and the human tragedy involved after independence was achieved. As a keen student of history Malgonkar explores the causes as well as effects and the evolution of the secessionist forces on communal lines along with violence that rocked the Indian subcontinent and crushed the values, for which it stood and survived. As a competent historian and a military personnel with active participation in the national affairs he pointed out the avenues of weaknesses that caused the collapse of human values at a very crucial period of national crisis. H.M. Williams observes:

Malgonkar, like Khuswant Singh, writes about the tragedy, the despair and the heroism of Indian Independence and the bloody communal vivisection which followed. Like Khuswant Singh too Malgonkar searches for a code of heroism that is capable of sustaining man in the critical testing time of war (including civil war) and revolution where as Singh finds his code in Sikh tradition and in the manly peasants of Northern India, Malgonkar's ideal code is that of the ex-British Indian army combined with the heroic virtues of the old Indian aristocracy.

At the same time the historian has also tried to delve deep into the past when he has gone to the mutiny days of 1857. The Devil's Wind has touched another significant period of Indian history as The Princes and A Bond in the Cause chronicle the fatal decade of contemporary history. His fictional works have touched these two major periods of
history when the nation has struggled for its independence and survival. In the words of Prof. Dayananda:

Two periods of Indian history have powerfully appealed to Mr. Malgonkar's novelististic imagination. It is these two periods of tremendous stress that he dramatizes and revivifies in his novels. In the first period, 1857-1858, an explosion occurred which led to savage acts on both sides and brought about the end of East India Company's rule of India.

In the second period, 1938-1948 which was far bloodier and crueler, occurred the great Independence Movement of Gandhi, which succeeded in putting British policy and British conscience to a test. The British labor Government decided to withdraw from India. But the advent of independence was celebrated against a backdrop of violent riots and burning villages in India and Pakistan. The Princes and A Band in the Y reunion attend this fatal decade of contemporary history, a decade of hope and misery, of terror and slaughter of thousands of Indians and Pakistanis.

His fictions confirm sharply to historical chronology without violating or twisting than to the novelist's wish. Historical veracity and aptness on a social carpet is Malgonkar's credit as a novelist. That is the basic reason why he is widely read and applauded. He handled historical facts in fictional terms with a motto of pure entertainment.
But projecting the changing Indian society to the Western readers was also his chief purpose as a novelist.

History is not presented evangelistically nor is it lacking in scholarly underpinning. No doubt it is the interaction of public and private lives that interests him. All the historical figures are in the right places, on the right dates, doing what they actually did, though conversations are mostly made up. Yet for all this documentary authenticity, how alive and immediate everything seems?

Paul Verghese commented that Malgorkar is a novelist who writes not about the average but the exceptions. Malgorkar described the pomp and pageantry that accompanied the Indian royalty. The sincerity, grace and masculine quality found in the British Indian army and its officers have been aptly described in his novels. The gaiety of the tea planter's life found ample expression in his novels. He has always endeavoured to communicate the views and assumptions of this exclusive class on the verge of extinction. Though an admirer of the British, the princely order and ethos, Malgorkar wants them to go and be replaced gradually and gracefully by a new democratic and socialistic order on Gandhian lines as his counterpart, Shatacharya also desired. But he lamented over the new order taking its roots with the birth of a new generation of native
politic<eud><eud> Here also he shares a similar view with Bhattacharya as discussed earlier. In this context G.P. Sharan comments:

Manohar Malgonkar has come to be known as an upholder of aristocracy, a novelist of the top dog, a conservative who does not want the liberal ideas to take root. No doubt, in all his social or sociopolitical novels like Distant Drum (1960), Shadow of Shadows and the present one, he has shown a tendency to uphold conservative ideals and values in spite of the fact that he takes meticulous care to paint the unpalatable aspects of both the aristocrats and middle class and lower class in equal proportions, without an attempt to gloss over the defects of the upper class. His sympathy for conservative values amounting to a repugnance for democratic or proletarian ideals will be clear from his portraiture of the politicians and leaders of the new order who stand for the underdogs, liberalism and democracy.

As a competent craftsman with a lucid style and diction, Malgonkar gave expression to his extraordinary range of experiences as a story teller. Regarding his finesse and maturity as a craftsman Prof. P.P. Mohta observes:

Whether he is telling the story of the Indian Army (Distant Drum) or he is turning the pages of the troublesome days of the partition of India (A Band in the Ganges) or he is discussing the problems of the princely states after 1947 (The Princes) he has the spontaneous knack of creating
the authentic atmosphere and weaving the plots on an epic scale. In all these he, a novelist of consummate skill who has brought to bear upon the art of story telling his vivid experiences in a number of spheres and his keen razor-like perception.

But the class character of his novels do not place him in the same rank with Shobani Shattacharya as a novelist of social concern alone. The hypothesis does not altogether brand him as a novelist having no social concern at all. But the fact that he has rarely stepped out of his class cocoon do not make him eligible to be known as a committed artist of social concern. By limiting himself always to the higher strata he has often lost sight of the major social problems that did attract the attention of Shattacharya, a basically, a novelist of social concern. On a Marxist parameter Prof. Dayananda has the following observations about Malgonkar:

Malgonkar's works demonstrate the Marxist point that there is a correlation between a writer's class and his vision of life. Malgonkar has always been financially well-off with a comfortable and independent income from his ancestral family land to support his career as a writer. This economic fact explains the class character of his works. He is often inhibited by ideas, values and assumptions of his own property-owning, wealthy middle class. He cleaves to this class in his works and does not feel called upon to present the experience of another class. Nine times out of ten he chooses his principal characters from his own class.
He rarely steps outside his class for his literary or historical material. There are no workers or peasants in his works; there are only princes, landlords, officers and bureaucrats. It is this class character of his works that gives the impression of a partial account of life in India. Malgonkar is more concerned with the vanities of a small upper class than with the cries in the streets of a larger lower class. There is a delicate skirting of the common life of India.

Prof. Dayananda is correct in his assessment of Malgonkar but he takes an extreme view when he further observes:

He does not deal with the social and political realities of India but only with the social and political thinking of a small property-owning conservative class in India. There is no room in his works for a progressive social vision. He holds first to the privileges of his class and his creative powers are in the service of that class, whether British or Indian.

Though the class character is a naked reality in his novels we can not fully brand him as a novelist having no social concern at all since class formed an integral part of the class and caste ridden Indian society. Moreover, Malgonkar as a literary personality has never gone beyond the living realities of his times. He has written because he has lived with the times. He himself asserts,

I keep writing of India ....... because I feel no author should write outside his
own living circumstances. If he does, it is phoney. To write of our own society and to be accepted by the English and American public we must be better than average writers.12

For this purpose an analytical study of his major novels is essential at this point to find out the social elements and the solutions, if any, offered by the novelist.

Distant Drum is Malhotra's maiden venture of novel writing. His experience in the Indian Army during those fateful days of second world war, encounter with some real heroic personalities in the British Indian Army, the deep friendship that resisted all parochial feelings during communal riots and partition are portrayed in this novel with a high degree of authenticity based on the novelist's first hand knowledge and experience. The painful partition of the Indian Army on communal lines has also been described in this novel. This partition brought about some agonising experiences when brother officers faced each other during the border dispute over Kashmir. They fought bravely and lived gallantly up to their code. The rise of the new breed of upstart politicians with a new temperament unbecoming of an independent India have found ample expression in this novel. Division in Army meant quick promotions which ultimately led to shouldering of harder responsibilities. The novel also highlights how the officers of the British
Indian Army did accept the challenge and crossed many hurdles to be able to live up to the standards set by the Britishers. Depletion of the army dwindled the number of real soldiers to sustain the territorial integrity of the nation. Racial conflagration and partition leading to mass exodus on both the sides had demoralised the police, the civil administration and public. The army was the only alternative force left out to quell all these external as well as internal upheaval. Fresh recruits to the army on an emergency basis only exposed the weakness of the personnel to live up to the code set by the gallant British officers.

Malgonkar has made a masterly attempt to lay bare the crisis and realities faced by the Indian Army in the post-independence period before the readers at home and abroad. Not only does he analyse the causes of various pressures and turmoil but also offers a solution in the sacrifice of these dedicated brand of young men like Kiran Garud and Abdul Jamal who gave their present inch by inch to shape our future. Removal of experienced British officers from the top and division in rank and file did have a definite adverse impact on the army but those youngsters at the helm of affairs could fill the void by their determination, sacrifice and integrity. A
strained relationship between two neighbouring countries, India and Pakistan, could be manipulated into a good neighbourly relation due to the personal integrity and emotional restrain of those gallant officers. They not only paved the path in the crisis but also set a new pattern. They paid a high price by staking their personal longings as no price is higher than the security of one's motherland. Thus the crisis was averted. Like Knuswant Singh's Train to Pakistan Malgonkar does not keep himself confined to the agony of partition alone. Kiran Garud's taking over the Satpura Regiment not only lay bare the reality of the situation but also symbolise the future shape of things to come when they celebrate with champagne in the no man's land across the border. In spite of the artificiality and awkwardness faced by both of them, it is Malgonkar alone with his first hand knowledge of army life who could take us to a 'no man's land' were some solution is obvious. The preceding cease fire is symbolic of an end to hostility.

The story is divided into three parts and covers the growth and maturity of young, energetic Kiran Garud as an officer of the 4th Satpura Regiment in the British Indian Army. The realities taken into account covers not only the period from August, 1949 to March, 1950, but also,
on a deeper level, an earlier period from 1928 to 1949 when Kiran Garud rose from the rank of Second Lieutenant to that of Lieutenant Colonel after going through the Burma War in 1942. His initiation into regimental code of conduct is from resentment to infatuation, a phenomenon that really happens in the life of many army officers. His training under ideal officers like Hopay Hooker and Bill Hampton taught him the basic tenets of a high officer’s code of conduct. The rigorous training with a pattern of undesirable punishments reveals the real process in the army that hardens one and increases his resistance to stress and professional hazards, the grounding necessary to become the leader of men and situations. The process builds up the officer in Kiran Garud, self-confident, determined, gallant and at the same time conscious that personal ease, comfort and emotional satisfaction comes after his country and the regiment he loves:

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It was something that men like Kamala Kant or Rawal Singh could never furnish. The meagre salary under the new pay code, theickering over appointments, the number of seemingly incompetent officers holding high positions and the thousand other daily irritations of service life were all minor things, to be brushed aside by strong, disciplined men, men like himself, privileged to be the officers of the Indian army and charged with an extra responsibility of building up the coming generation of officers like Sarada Nath; not an easy task in these difficult, first years of the country’s emergence from bondage to freedom.
Kiran Garud's close encounter with death while retreating near Sitang bridge and bull hampton's all offensive attack on Pogod Hill with his war cry "Come on, Jawans; Tigers don't live for ever," had a tremendous impact on the morale of soldiers present on the scene. Malgonkar describes the impact of bull hampton's offensive leadership as:

Although the attack had failed, bull had succeeded in smashing through an attitude of mind which the arturans and indeed most of the troops then in arma, were beginning to develop: an attitude of 'sit and wait and let the enemy take the initiative.'

Sexual promiscuity and fornication is a common feature found in the military life. This reality has not been lost sight of by Malgonkar when he presents before us Kiran Garud's affairs with Mrs. Margot Medley, his tennis partner in Mohiniwada. The affair is repeated once again in 1944 when Kiran was on leave for four days during the wartime. For Kiran Garud it becomes a matter of conscience when his presence in Mrs. Medley's bedroom is discovered by Col. Medley. But the sharp contrast of an extremely liberal attitude is shown by Mrs. Medley quite becoming of a sophisticated lady of the British Indian Army. In delineating the social life of the upper class and the exceptionalists the novelist has become apt in his narration. Kiran Garud's telephonic conversation serves ample testimony to the fact.
I am afraid something awful has happened; he said.

'I know, Margot said. 'Bob rang me up a minute ago. I can't tell you how sorry I am. Can I help in any way, any way at all.'

'No, darling, you can't. He is gone already: I don't know where. I hope he won't do any thing silly. No, one can help these things ... they just happen to one.

'It was all my fault of course, Kiran said. 'I was entirely to blame, I mean ..........

'Please, Please, Margot said, 'No one can do anything. Nothing can be done now; just nothing and Margot had put down the receiver.'

His affair with Mrs. Hadley and suicide of her husband had left a scar on his conscience. It was Abdul Josna, a Muslim brother officer as well as a friend and philosopher who saved Kiran when he gave witness in Bob Medley's suicide case. Their friendship as revealed by the novelist presents before us a true picture of communal harmony that prevailed till the partition. We meet both these officers once again in Delhi when partitioned India was reeling under communal riots. Both worked hand in hand amidst the frenzy of both the communities least conscious of their own religions. Their comradeship and fellow feeling passed through many a fiery ordeals that establishes
the inaccessibility of communalism into the strong fabric of communal harmony that the Indian army stands for.

Nearly thirty thousand Muslim refugees had taken shelter in a mosque. Hindus and Muslims were massacring one another in madness outside the mosque. Kiran Garud happened to enter inside the mosque and the arrogant Muslim had jumped upon him presuming him to be a Hindu. It was Abdul Jamal's timely intervention that had saved his life once again. Malgankar described the communal frenzy with all its accuracy. Malgankar himself concludes their role in the riot as:

But one thing stood out, although neither of them could have thought about it at the time. Neither he nor Abdul had been conscious of the fact they belonged to the opposing factions in the riot—that one was a Hindu, the other a Muslim on the verge of setting out for a world of new values. What stood out magnificently secure in that holocaust was the fact that although they belonged to the two opposing communities crazed with vengeance and thirsting for blood, he and Abdul had been able to work together in the closest accord, their loyalties to each other absolutely unruptured by that incessant strain.

A similar observation is made by R.S. Singh about Distant Drum when he says:

Distant Drum (1960) tries to analyse the mind of the army of India at the most critical period in it's history when on
account of the partition, riots were taking place and the Hindus and the Muslims were sharply divided on almost every issue. 18

The most unfortunate consequence of the partition was division of the army. It deprived both the nations of security from within and outside. Native friends in Kashmir turned out to be native foes within a few days. The brilliant brother officers who were paid farewell befitting to their regimental rank and file confronted each other in Indo-Pak war within a short while. The painful experiences of separation was followed by agonising and bitter moments across the border when people of integrity like Kiran Garud and Abdul Jamal faced each other. Turn of events placed them in opposite camps and it was almost a general military phenomenon during the first war that India had to fight. The dilemma has been nicely portrayed by Halgorkar:

"Of course I'll have to be careful of Abdul Jamal," Kiran had reminded himself. As an enemy commander with a reputation for courage there was no question of not being careful of Abdul Jamal. The professional soldier's duty was clear. It was unfortunate that he and Abdul faced each other as commanders of opposing battalions, but whether it was Abdul Jamal, or even Arun Sanwal, it would have been just the same.
Kir an did not have the least doubt in his mind as to what was the right thing for him to do. He would defend his position as best he could, and when it came to the question of attack, he would load his men into it without any other thought in his mind except the thought of winning. The fact that he and Abdul were close friends, even the fact that Abdul had probably saved his life in that mosque during the Delhi riots, the fact that Abdul had told lies for him during a Court of inquiry, had nothing to do with it.

There was no room in the soldier's code for divided loyalties. His debt to Abdul was only a private debt.10

The theme of partition has been sufficiently dealt) by many a novelists in India. But it is Malgonkar who did his best in projecting how much painful the first Indo-Pak war might have been on the emotional level. The political decision for partition undoubtedly satisfied some people like Jinnah or Nehru but the common man as well as the army had to face the real ordeal. It is Malgonkar as a novelist who has recorded the tragic predicament in which the Indian army was caught on a massive scale. Both Abdul Jamal and Kiran Garud did violate the army code of conduct to celebrate the new year in the no man's land. As discussed earlier the celebration is symbolic of a solution on one scale as well as a revelation of a crisis at another level: crisis in the ethics and code of the army.
The meeting with Abdul Jamal had not been a success. It had left a new emptiness; it had given a raw edge to old memories; it had brought an painful awareness of new realities. A soldier could not remain friendly with some one who had now become an enemy. His relationship had to be subjected to new values; confined to narrow and comforted limitations. The very essence of friendship, frankness, had been completely drained off.

The cyclic motion of the action of the novel brings Kiran Garud once again to Raniwada to shoulder the entire responsibility of the 4th Satpuras. In spite of rich offers by Roopay Sooker, the most ideal officer in Kiran's eyes, to lookafter the sales wing of an American organisation Kiran decisively joins the regiment at Raniwada. His answer to Roopay Sooker reflects the crisis in the divided army as well as offers a solution. He replied:

We would be failing in our duty to these youngsters and to the future army if we were to quit. Well, it is something like those principles that the Satpuras live by, or try to live upto. No one can explain them, no one can teach them. You have to find them out yourself, by taking out whatever is worthwhile from those who do make an honest effort to live upto them and by testing yourself. It is a sort of debt we have towards those who are now coming. Do you see what I mean, Sir?

Halgonkar was highly critical of the native upstart politicians who raised their heads in the post-independence era. Uncivilised, uncultured and unscrupulous these politicians were least concerned of their duties. Lala Vishnu Saran Dev is a nice specimen of this belligerent class.
As a chairman of the District Congress Committee he was typically dressed and chewing paan all the time. His crumpled clothes, oil cap on his head and rough tone was itself disgusting. The threat given to a highly disciplined military officer by Lala Vishnu Saran Dev reveals the obstinacy and unwanted sallow aggressive psyche of the native politicians:

"Coloneel Saab," he said, the political party that which you took so lightly is ruling this country today. The days of treating us as a sordidious organization are gone. Now the party and the government are the same. I would say that in refusing this small favour you are running a great risk. He may complain to your own minister. You must remember that this will amount to belittling a minister of the government and which you are only a servant.22

Regarding the portraiture of this new generation of politicians G.S. Iyengar observes:

The Lala is Malgonkar's first portrait of the upstart politician who has made his appearance on the Indian political scene during the country's struggle for freedom. He lacks the depth of the later portraits — Jugal Kishore of Combat of Shadows and Kamakhya of The Princess — and is almost a caricature.23

Iyengar finds the portraiture of the political boss as a symbol of evil in the newly-emerging India. He comments:

If, for Malgonkar, the army officer stands for certain positive qualities, the political boss typifies the opposite qualities.24
This novel throws light on the crisis noticed in the military life, the partition and its impact on the common man as well as the army, the rise of the new brand of native politicians in a fast changing Indian society. At the same time the novel minutely depicts the fits and bits of the army life and its code with the highest accuracy. Malgonkar with his varied experience in different profession had a very close and sharp observation of the changes that took place in a significant period of Indian history.

Malgonkar's novel *Combat of Shadows* explores another dimension of the Indian freedom struggle. It celebrates with misgivings the arrival of the native leaders on the national life at a point of transition. The new breed of 'Jugal Kishore' and the like was no suitable alternative to the British diplomacy. More than that the novel depicts the life of the tea planters and workers in the farthest reaches of the Assam highlands. *Combat of Shadows* tries to project the misery and plight of tea plantation workers in contrast to the opulence, luxury and hypocrisy of the British tea planters. The plight of the Anglo-Indians oscillating between the natives and the Britishers with a deep sense of rootlessness has also nicely been portrayed through beautiful characters. On another level it also highlights Indo-British relationship on a very personal level.
It is a story which has two stages. The first part comprising of 'Prelude to Home Leave' tells of the establishing of relationship between Henry Winton and the Indians and the Anglo-Indians. This section also deals with Winton's special relationship with Ruby Miranda. Another episode that brings the Britishers and Indians together, revealing their fears and prejudices, is the hunting of the one-tusked elephant. In this context Prof. Dayananda observes:

The second part is primarily concerned with Winton's conduct of personal relationships and especially with the dark places in the human heart which make for unhappiness and confusion not only among individuals but also among races and nations. 25

A similar observation is made by G.S. Amur when he says:

Hiro Distant Drum, Combat of Shadows too has a double theme. On the personal level, it is a study in moral decay and death, on the public level a statement on racial encounters. 26

This novel covers a very crucial phase in the national as well as international history. Tag of war between the Britishers and the Indians was entering a new state with the approach of the second world war. Formation of allies in the global war had divided the world into two powerful blocks. The changing military and political scenario had its remote impact on the silence, solitude and
seclusion of the Silent Hill in the farthest north-east of India. The British empire was almost in a quaking stage and its weak clarion, too weak to silence the 'Silent Hill' was distinctly audible in Assam. The planters who were completely away from the political tremors in and out were not spared by any means. They symbolized oppression and economic exploitation in totality. Native politicians were making it more painful for them to rule with a sense of supremacy. Their deep-rooted contempt for the black natives and centuries of exploitation roused the Indians from their deep slumber of total surrender and they organised themselves. Fast changing political events and incidents on national and international level changed the life-style of the tea planters who had to combat the trade union activists. The noted historian R.G. Hazarika observes:

The cruelties perpetrated by European Indigo and tea planters have become almost a by-word for inequity of British rule during the period under review. The harrowing tales of misery and oppression, committed with impunity and with connivance, if not active support, of the officials intensified trade union activities. 27

In Combat of Shadows what Halgankar tries to emphasize is the underlying theme of colour prejudice silhouetted by the British sense of justice and supremacy.
A congenital colour snob Henry Winton has always tried to assert his racial supremacy over the plantation labourers. He nurtured deep hatred for the natives but was compelled to work amidst them. Sudden Dart, the tea tycoon and resident Director was a highly pragmatic imperialist who was more interested in growing tea than morals. In a sense he represented the last generation of efficient tea planters of the British Raj. Sudden Dart's realisation of the management in the tea gardens at that time is a revelation of the social realities as a changing phenomenon in the tea gardens:

"But you don't know your Indian official. Give him a handle and he'll take the bit between his teeth," said Sir Jeffrey, mixing his metaphors recklessly. Education is the favourite gripe of the Indian native politician; and the Englishman his favourite whipping boy."

Though the East India Company tried to spread English education in Bengal for its own benefit, towards the flag end of the British Raj the Bengalis were equally objects of hatred on a personal as well as public level; their fear of the elite Bolschis finds ample expression in their conversation:

"I know you have to be careful. Don't take on any of these Bengali graduates. They are all Bolschies; damned trouble-mongers everyone of them."
The only Indian Winton does not mind people like the schoolmaster, Sarkar, typical bumb and ideal subordinates, grinning, servile, grovelling, totally incapable of hitting back, on whom the business of the empire rested; or men like Kistulal, the professional shikari, who make themselves indispensable by their professional skill and fit into the Englishman's mode of living in India. It is the Jugal Kishores and the Gauris who create difficulties and offer challenges Winton is unable to face:

Henry was glad that Sarkar was not a man like Jugal Kishore, capable of being damned, awkward over a question of rights, dangerous, cunning, vindictive; soft and yielding whenever it suited him, but equally capable of violent recoil.30

Since the British empire was in a tottering condition those who failed to compromise had to bear the brunt. Henry Winton was one of them. Jugal Kishore and his niece Gauri created obstacles on his path. They represented the group of political activists and trade unionists who could stoop to conquer. Winton was waiting for a chance to eliminate Jugal Kishore. At the same time he also knew his popularity and organising skill. He had a bitter taste of Jugal Kishore's popularity when his leniency towards Gauri who was stealing tea leaves was later fabricated as a case of molestation on the part of a white planter. Winton viewed Jugal Kishore as the ugly, with the blunted, puffy roundness of feature, the
opaque, half-closed eyes of the low cast Indian. The only incident in which Jugal Kishore is shown dramatically is the one in which he goes to Winton with his niece Gauri and offers her as a mistress in exchange for a job for her. In the words of G.S. Amur:

"Jugal Kishore is thus by no means a fully realized character; as is almost allegorical in his typicality and abstraction and is cast in a purely functional role. His main function in the novel is to constitute a political threat to Winton's career in India and to hasten his downfall. Jugal Kishore, in spite of his opportunistic nationalism, is not an enemy of the British. He was a favourite of Wallach, Winton's predecessor, and gets on very well with Sudden Dart and other planters. What arouses his antagonism for Winton is the latter's hatred for Indians and his stance of 'moral rectitude' which makes him inflexible and hypocritical."

"Jugal Kishore could go to the extent of offering his niece as a bait to get a job for her. But he was denied by Winton. Inexped handling of the situation during demonstration by plantation workers further deteriorated the complicated situation. Winton's failure in different fronts led to an incomprehensible disaster. His failure in killing the elephant and the murder of Kistulal hung heavy on his conscience. His failures in different professions earlier and his utter failure as a tea planter made him shattered as a personality. Escapade was an impossibility. That was what Jugal Kishore pointed out when he came to tender his resignation to contest the election to assembly."
God help India if people like you are to be elected to assemblies - You are crooked, without a spark of decency, corrupt, and .... and quite immoral; why, you even offered to get me interested, in your neice. With what face can anyone who would stoop as low as you go before the people and ....

'With the same face as you who go about calling yourself a hunter and a white man and 'I don't want to hear another word from you.' Henry turned in his heel.'

'Yes, runaway: runaway, that's the best thing you can do. His arrogant, derisive laughter, loud and defiant, followed Henry Winton right into his sitting room. 'You'll all be running away soon, all you Englishmen! Yelled Jugal Kishore from the verandah.'

Indo-British relationship on a personal level as well as public level has been always portrayed by Malgonkar in almost all his novels. But this is a dominant theme in Distant Drum and Combat of Shadows. Speaking about the difference in the treatment of this theme in the two novels James Y. Dayananda comments:

As in Distant Drum Malgonkar continues to explore the relationships between British managers and the Indians and Anglo-Indians they control. There is, however, an important difference between the two novels. In Distant Drum Malgonkar treats British Officers with sympathy; all of them appear to be courtly gentlemen. In Combat of Shadows the Britishers are not admirable but corrupt and immoral. Henry Winton, Cockburn, Jean Walters and Sir Jeffrey Dart, and others are hated by Indians and Anglo-Indians. Malgonkar concentrates on the dark side of the nature of the ruling British rather than the brighter side, as he does in Distant Drum.
Indians and Anglo-Indians were despised. They were not allowed the same place together and in the same club to entertain. They were not entitled to get a pay commensurate with the workload. The predicament of Ruby Miranda and Eddie Trevor bear ample testimony to the fact. Winton's betrayal of Ruby Miranda and Eddie Trevor disgraced him in the eyes of the British, the natives as well as the Anglo-Indian Community. His cold blooded murder of Eddie Trevor exposed him and his failure to keep the murder a secret subjected him to harsh treatment. In contrast to him Sudden Dart was a realist and a clever administrator who knew where the shoe pinched. He explained the situation and asked Winton to adjust and accommodate with it. Though sarcastic and biting, Dart's analysis of the then political situation unveils another dimension in the political scenario when India was under tremendous pressure due to war outside and nationalist movement gaining momentum inside. Sudden Dart explains how some of the politicians and capitalists struck secret deals among themselves. Tea-planters practically purchased those elected representatives to their advantage:

No, Henry; you don't know your baba politician. Politics are his business, just as growing tea is yours and mine. We grow tea for no other reason than because it gives us the wherewithal to live according to our standards; he goes into politics for much the same reason. I grant you that he is capable of raising all the trouble you have described, and more. And yet, he won't be doing it for
any of the reasons that you have detailed. There is only one aim, one motive force?

'Mationalism?'

'Far from it, Money.'

'Money!' 34

Some of the politicians elevated to the position of Minister turned their power into commercial enterprise. Instead of protecting and preserving the rights of commoner who elected them, they tried to make fast bucks. They bargained for their silence and the tea planters did not hesitate to purchase them as their friends instead of confronting them as formidable foes. This transaction saved the planters from unnecessary harassment, lock-up and loss. As a manganese mine himself Malgonkar encountered these petty politicians, hence portrayed them vividly. Tea companies advanced Jugal Kishore during his election campaign and the day he became Minister for plantation he was assured of regular monthly remuneration. Dart's statement exposed the seamy side of these collusive deals. Dart preferred Jugal Kishore because he was accessible and could be hired:

Jugal Kishore, thank heavens, is not like some of the other ministers I can name — inaccessible — he is wholly amenable .... to listen to reason, particularly when reason is accompanied by the tinkle of rupees. 35
Malgonkar did never lament on the Indian politics of the times nor the emerging leadership. He personally contested twice for the Lok Sabha elections. He had a direct knowledge of the changing political scenario and the emerging nexus between the politicians and the business tycoons. He only tried to project the irony of the situation in novel form. The tea planters did not consider the hush money as bribe. They were rather simple bonds of business arithmetic. He exposed the commercialisation of political profession in a very down to earth manner.

As a seasoned businessman Dart did not find any wrong in these transactions. He considered them very essential and judicious. When Winton questions the validity of such deals as unbecoming of a ruling class, Dart explains:

We don't grow morals in the tea district, Henry, we grow tea. And whatever is conducive to the growth of tea, we foster.

This nasty economic character of the tea garden management unravels the follies that allowed degeneration to take place when politics turned out to be tools in the hands of men like Jugal Kishore. Malgonkar also exposed the strong and weak points of British administration. These payments were potential strategies for defusing potential threats to management and production.
As you know, we pay lakhs of rupees every year to the tribesmen on the North-West frontier just to keep them quiet — just to behave themselves. Those who have to run the business of the Empire have found the system invaluable. As Jock Maclean always says, it is better to pay a lakh of rupees to a tribal village to behave itself than spend ten lakhs of rupees in sending a brigade to destroy the village.

The description of the tea garden with its office, factory and club is very accurate in the novel. Its geographical isolation and British pattern of buildings and management can still be found in many of the tea gardens of Assam. The garden is complete with a factory of the Brindian Tea Company. Silent Hill is forty-two miles from Chinnar, the headquarters of the tea district where Resident Directors of tea companies live. Chinnar is something like the present day Dibrugarh. British officers often go to Chinnar because the center of Chinnar is the Highland club, part hotel, part sports, a place for the normal relaxations of an English way of life — boating, trout fishing, cricket, golf, tennis, squash, clay-pigeon shooting and dancing. This English way of life was completely inaccessible to the natives. Henry Hinton like any of his British counterparts goes to the Highland club, accepting its values without question and sharing its taboos. It is here he meets Jean Walters introduced to him by Sir Jeffrey Dart and Lady Dart.
Theoretically Kalgonkar gives priority to hunting in comparison to Indo-British relationship on a personal level. As one time big game hunter Kalgonkar satiates his curiosity in *Combat of Shadows* by narrating hunting and its associated phenomena in greater detail as well as makes the novel interesting by associating hunting with intrigues. As Prof. Dayananda observes:

The second theme-hunting - is dealt with in great detail in *Combat of Shadows*. It was only briefly touched on in *Distant Drum*, as we have seen.38

Most of the characters are seen in terms of their reactions to the shooting of the elephant. Henry Winton makes love in the game cottage and dies in the game cottage. Indo-British relationships and hunting are intertwined in *Combat of Shadows*. Henry like George Orwell in "Shooting an Elephant" has to pretend to be a good hunter before Indians and Anglo-Indians and not let his side down. Sir Jeffrey warns him on one occasion; "Remember that the Assure is a hellish big thing, but in the last analysis it is nothing more than a few thousands of hard-core men like you and me doing our jobs and taking care not to let the side down."39 After Kistulal's accidental death Cockburn advises Henry not to worry about the moral obligations of a hunter towards his Indian Shikari. The important thing is to present the image
of a great and successful hunter; to confess failure before Indians is to let the side down. Cockburn says:

It will kill your reputation as a big game hunter ....... Sudden will never forgive you for having let down the side ......... the Indian Ministers will laugh their heads off; and the villagers will whisper behind your back, pointing a finger at you ....... this incident now will make all the difference between success and failure. If you are determined to make a go of your career here, you cannot afford to be tied down to a subconscious conscience.

It is at this point that corruption begins. Henry suppresses the evidence of the faulty cartridges. He lets people believe that Kistulal, his expert tracker, foolishly allowed himself to be trampled by the rogue elephant. Henry did not do his job by not testing the cartridges beforehand. But Kistulal did his job perfectly and died-heroically. Henry thinks:

There was no room in India for Sahibs who failed. That was the over-riding truth; they were despised even more by their class than by the Indians. Failure was unthinkable; it was the abyss, dark and bottomless.

Henry's struggle was, in terms of George Orwell's experience, like every white man's life in the East. Naturally the shooting of the one-tusked rogue elephant becomes an extremely complex political and moral event, affecting the relationships of people in the novel. It corrupts Henry and Cockburn who do not tell the truth about those cartridges. It
leads to two murders — Kistulal's and Eddie Trevor's, the one unplanned and the other planned meticulously by Henry. It makes Jugal Kishore, Assam's minister adjutant to keep Henry in Assam and not allow him to join the army. Even Sir Jeffrey also begins to doubt Henry after the death of Eddie Trevor. Hunting is a passion in Combat of Shadows both professionally as well as nonprofessionally. In this context Prof. Dayananda observes:

**Combat of Shadows** contains some of the descriptions of hunting in the Indian jungles, reminding readers of Hemingway and Corbett. Henry, Kistulal, Eddie, Cockburn, Pasupati and Dart are deeply involved in hunting and killing animals.42

As one time professional big game hunter Malgounkar describes the feelings of Henry as a hunter in the following words regarding the scope of hunting in Assam:

*A true hunter is not afraid of the thing he wants to kill, nor does he hate it; indeed, in a sense he loves that which he seeks to destroy. What a hunter looks forward to is the chase itself, the matching of wits against an animal of the jungle on its own ground, and then coming face to face with it; not the actual act of killing — the killing nearly always came as an anti-climax.... Henry knew that he was secretly afraid of the elephant, and hated it because he was afraid...*43
In nutshell this novel makes an attempt to delineate the lives of the British tea planters, their love and intrigue in the tea gardens' British staff, the origin of political blackmail and economic exploitation of the rulers in the partition days. The novel also demonstrates the fact that the nationalist movement had entered such a phase that the natives were ready to avenge. They were no more servile and grinning as Sarkar Sabu on whose passivity the British Empire rested in peace. They had transformed themselves into Pasupati, Gauri and Jugal Kishore and the British had already realised this change. Such a changing human situation compelled the white man either to rectify himself or to loose his dominion in the East.

Another prominent issue that had rocked the citadel of unity and integrity in India during those turbulent days of transition was the Indian princes demand for independence. Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1st November 1908 to protect the rights and privileges of the native princes proved futile as the nationalist movement had gained momentum in the mean time. The rise of a democratic atmosphere and temperament alongwith communal tension inside the country gave a death blow to their hopes and aspirations. It is Malgonkar, the historian-cum-story
teller who makes a serious study of them in his novel
The Princes. Viewed from a historian's angle and described
with a cool objectivity of a fine artist the novel portrays
a poignant spectacle of rulers parting with their proud heritage.
He made an indepth study of the vacillations that finally led
to the extinction of monarchy and merger of some five hundred
and sixty five states big and small. They had to sign the
instrument of Accession with such pain. The way he described
the life and living of the princes is quite realistic and
deserves appreciation. The noted critic Prof. Dayanand
acknowledges the truth in the following manner.

The Princes viewed in certain
perspective, may be regarded both as a
document of contemporary history and as
a work of conscious literary art. It
is part fact, part fiction.44

E.M. Forster, who had attempted to do something very
similar in A Hill of Devi but was handicapped by his inescapable
Western identity, recognized the merit of The Princes and wrote:

I have just finished The Princes and
should like to thank you for it. It
interested me both on its own account
because I am involved -- as far as an Englishman
can be -- in its subject. I happen to have
been in touch with a small Maratha state
(Dowas Senior) during the years of its
dissolution. The parallels are numerous and
heart-rending. I am so glad you have got
down a record. Otherwise all would soon be
forgotten.45
India was entering a new era. Old order was dying a very slow and agonising death. As a conscious literary artist Malgonkar couldn't overlook the tragedy of the rulers of the yester-years. His close association with court life enabled him to present the disintegration of princely India from inside. Prof. G.S. Amrth thus considers it an epic of the transition:

As epic, *The Prince* is a history of the disintegration of the princely state of Bejnad from the early days of political unrest in 1938 to the merger in 1949. This is part of an inexorable historical movement which swept the whole of the nation and decided the fate of individuals - the heroic death of Maharajah Hiroji, the surrender of the titles and privileges by his son Abhayraj and the rise of Kundrekhund, the cobbler to political power.

It makes a critical study of the political ferment, and predicament of the rulers on the eve of their merger. At a critical juncture of national history the kings and rulers had to succumb to the pressure of the hour and had to become mute and reluctant witness to the collapse of their glorious regime. Alternatives to merger were quite alluring but their consequence would have been disastrous. In this context G.P. Sharan says that the moral is,

an objective appraisal of situation where the princely order was dissolved in the white heat.
of our strong national fervour which brought for the country, freedom and for the people democracy.

The story is told in the first person. The protagonist who had to sign the merger because the fate that overtook their proud heritage. Prince Akbarwaj nostalgically recollects the days of the silk turbans, brocaded robes and velvet slippers when he is caught in the grip of unavoidable compulsions of the merger of the Begwad state into the Union of India. He pines for the old order like any of his counterparts in the post independence period.

We were the princes; no one mourned our passing. We were a jest of history, a tribe that had lived long beyond its day because it had been carefully preserved in the strong chemicals of British protection. And when that protection was withdrawn and all of us were exposed to the harsh glare of the sun like frogs under an overturned slab, it was inevitable that we should perish.48

The ruler of Begwad His Highness Hiroji Akbarwaj was a man who had the courage to bear any loss without breaking down at least in public and preferred playing cards honourably than playing badly or unsuccessfully. He represented a generation who lived a life of pomp and pageantry in the world of royal activities. Wine, women, making relationships, hunting and hosting parties were a part of their life style. But the rising turn of events, intelligensia and the new awareness
of the middle class and the proletariat made life miserable for them. These moments of anxiety and uncertainty put to test the mettle of those who are adept to lascivious living and this novel captures these rare moments of betrayal, ordeal, hopelessness, helplessness, trials and triumph.

Malgonkar had a deep understanding of the psyche of the princes about the British and the native politicians. They destructed one another but the princes wanted the British to stay for their own safety. Neither the rise of the native politicians nor the withdrawal of the British support was tolerable for them. Hiroji's natural and spontaneous outburst against the leaders of the nationalist movement rightly convey the attitude of the rulers of the time towards an emerging society.

The nationalists! My father said with a sneer, "Goondas led by traders and lawyers." For the nationalists, my father had nothing but contempt. The British were our traditional enemies, for they had taken our kingdom by treachery. But that was long ago and he had become resigned to their domination. The adversaries of the moment were the nationalists, out to grab whatever the British had spared by resorting to treachery far greater than the British were capable of — by subverting the loyalty of the people towards their rulers."

The princes desired the continuation of the clash between the native 'topiwallahs' and the Britishers. They
thought that this prolonged clash would bring the British closer to them, and, thereby, the dynasties would be more secure under a British patronage. Malgunkar has sincerely tried to analyse and project the motive of the ruler when he says,

"The topiwallahs are getting scared of the white-capwallahs. We must take the fullest advantage. This is the time to try and win back our privileges, one by one."

Rulers like Hiroji wanted to keep the territorial integrity of their state intact at any cost and at any price. They had no respect for the nationalist aspiration nor any regards for British paramountcy. They got a free hand as the rise of the Nationalist movement kept the British otherwise busy. Hiroji's deep hatred for the British and his compromise with them for survival was a glaring example of the precarious condition of the rulers of the states all over India. The only consideration before them was continuation and territorial integrity. For that they were ready to support the British in spite of their good sense and conscience.

Mind you, I am no friend of the British, as you know; I hate them far worse than Gandhi can do. He was only thrown out of a railway carriage. My grandfather was certified mad by them — certified mad and deported just because he refused to kowtow to the Resident.
My great grandfather was declared a rebel for almost the same reason. And they took our raj by the vilest treachery. But I would prefer the British to the Gandhites any day, so that the integrity of our state is preserved for all times. It is more important than anything else — more important than our own lives, yours and mine. And if it can be achieved only through British bayonets, let us keep British bayonets here by all means. Keep them for all time, so that Begum remains ours, the descendants of the Bedare, the Fearless Chieftains — ours for all time.

These Princes helped the British actively for their own interest. They paid a deaf ear to the historical compulsions of the time. They made every possible effort on Earth to keep the Union Jack fluttering happily in the soil of India which they thought would guarantee their continuation. Their dream of regaining sovereignty again made them an unwilling partner. This tragic predicament caused due to the socio-political upheaval of the times has been effectively brought to light by the novelist.

No, Abays, the British will never leave this country. We shall see that they don’t. It is India, to see that they remain here, for our own sakes — remain here forever.

On the other hand Malgonkar gives a true account of the repression and censor of the nationalist agitation in the states. The rulers desired the continuation of illiteracy...
so that the new awakening won't have any concrete effect. Anybody found hobnobbing with the nationalists was held guilty and was punished severely. They gave warmly to them so that a new follower won't tread their path. Hiroji and the young Ashaya was no exception to this principle. Ashaya considered his regime to be far more repressive than the British. Hiroji banned all nationalist papers and noted the people associated with the Prajamandal. Ordinances were promulgated and wearing white khaddar cap was strictly forbidden. "And once he was so enraged by a group of people shouting 'Inquilab-Zindabad' which meant 'long live the revolution', after his ear had passed, that he had all of them rounded up and sent to prison for three weeks."53

Draconian laws were enacted, peoples' freedom and freedom of the press were gagged. Entire administration was duly harnessed to stamp out any infiltration. Even British laws looked pale before these forceful implementation of laws and ban orders.

He stepped the sale of photographs of Tilak and Ghandi in the state. He also reintroduced horse whipping as a punishment for these and similar crimes, and the next time someone shouted a nationalist slogan in his hearing, he had the offender flogged in the market square.54
Those corporal punishment would have failed if the people of the states were enlightened. Ignorance, poverty, illiteracy and superstition of the common lot brought instant control over them. Ashokraj High School existed only as a mute witness to ineffective teaching. It did not impart high school education at all.

He earnestly believed that education was at the root of most of the political troubles that the British were encountering in India. He used to educate every Tom, Dick and Harry, he used to say. It is like gunpowder, precious, but equally dangerous. It must always be in the right hands. If you cheapen learning, you are just asking for trouble.55

These Princes regarded the nationalists more harmful than the British. Abhayraj was surprised when Kansak Chand referred to Gandhi as Mahatma whom his father used to mention as that man Gandhi. People of the states were deprived to know the developments elsewhere. Moreover, the Divine Right of the king and the unquestionable bond between the ruler and the ruled did not allow the agitation to infiltrate and spread immediately. But it was gathering a steady momentum and quite visible in the capital. There is also reference to anti-salt campaign whose success made a lasting impression everywhere. The student-like Kansak Chand developed a liking for Gandhi and his movement. It was spontaneous.
They kept the white cap in their pockets defying the law of the land but did not put on them for fear of reproach.

As the attention shifts to the world, the attitude of these rulers also changes. They did not consider it their war. They did not want to fight for it. Hiroji was not mentally prepared to send Abhaya to join this war. He was satisfied by supplying recruits and contributing to the war fund.

It is only fair to say that my father saw the war from an entirely different angle, distorted by his own values, conditioned by his own upbringing. He was certainly no friend of the British, and he felt no particular hatred for the Germans. He did not see the war as many of my own generation did, even though our own perspective too had its own distortions.

The kings considered the war a Godsent opportunity. They were looking for a chance to settle their score and outmanoeuvred both the British and the nationalists. They just watched the war from a distance keeping the British in good humour. They waited for a chance to avenge.

The war will be a long one, even longer than the Great War. And both sides will bleed each other to death. That will be the time for the princes to unite and rise: to drive away the British and put down the nationalists and set up our own rule in the country. It is only the princes who can do it. Gandhi and the Congress, the white-cap wallahs, will never do it ........ it is we who will oust the British. That war will be ours: yours and mine, a war in which we shall serve with pride..... if necessary lay down our lives.
Malgoskar has made a correct assessment of the prevalent trends amongst the kings. They failed to move with the time and understanding its warnings. They were lost in their world of supremacy and complacency.

On the national level the movement was taking dent into the hard shell of the states. The people were under great stress. Abhaya was a product of that time and understood its implications. Loyalty to the feudal kings and their aspiration to liberate themselves from all shackles clashed. The changes in the political atmosphere of British India at the advent of Gandhi had their echoes in the states. Old values were giving place to new ones. Being an integral part of India, states could not become mute witness to all these. It was impossible to keep themselves isolated. But its rulers did not acknowledge this transformation. Living in their traditional world, they still persisted with the hope that the British with whom they were bound by the proclamation would come to their rescue and this nationalist movement was just a passing phase. Certain moves on the part of the British government assured these princes of stability of their rule. Cripps mission is one such attempt to keep India quiet for sometime. It suggested balkanisation of India, hence was rejected by the nationalists. But these princes rejoiced over its report. It surprised a fast changing Abhaya.
All over the country there had been acute disappointment at the failures of the Cripps mission, and here was my father offering gifts to his gods. 58

Combat of Shadows

Like Jugal Kishore in Distant Drum Malgonkar delineates the character of the neo-politician, Kamal Chand in vivid terms. Viewed as an outcast he was flogged in his childhood by the king for his nationalist activities. And now this firebrand politician was arrested and forbidden to enter the state for five years. These leaders were considered undesirable elements inciting peace loving subjects, hence they were mercilessly ill treated and crushed. The deep seated anguish of the king can be realised in the following passage where he locked with dismay at the lenient attitude of the British government towards the nationalists.

The way the government has begun to seek up to the nationalists is absolutely shocking - the nationalists who have never co-operated and have openly called upon the British to quit. We, on the other hand, are their staunchest allies. Without us, the Princes, there would be no such thing as an Indian Empire. We have offered everything -- all our resources -- to the war effort. The Congress has only obstructed it. And yet the British would be prepared to sell us to the Congress. That is what makes me furious -- that there should be no justice. 59

Abhay, though an extension of his father's old views, reads the invisible signs of the socio-political change rather in a pragmatic way. He knew the thrust would pull the states along with it.
Abhaya saw the shift in history and knew that the ruthless finger of destiny was moving against his father's cherished ideals. He was a part of the tradition and was in sympathy with it, but at the same time was unable to dissociate himself completely from the down-trodden. As he stood ideologically between his father and Mahatma Gandhi, he was able to appreciate the inevitability of the logic of history. Begum could not be separated from the rest of India.

The world war was coming to an end. Talks of terms of transfer of power and greater importance attached to the Congress panicked the Princes who were aware of the British hesitation. They had to counter the Congress thrust as well as the British indifference. The conversation between the king and his heir apparent throws light on the desperate struggle of the rulers to defend their frontier. Abhaya made a critical assessment of their thought pattern. They were striving desperately for safety and security. The following conversation between Abhaya and Hiroji throws light on the despair of Hiroji:

......... his attitude somehow symbolized the current of fear that had run through the princely order at the Labour victory in England. The structure of their world was beginning to show cracks, and it was becoming clear that they would do themselves no good by trying to hinder India's attainment of self-rule. The nationalist who would succeed the British were not even prepared to recognise the rights of the rulers to speak for their own states.

'Through elected men'. Father snored. 'If the British let us down, we will just have to raise troops and fight for our rights and for our territories. Let the Congress just try and take them from us.'
'But what about the treaties?' I asked. 'Has the British Government said anything to cause you alarm?'

They keep making promise, and then they keep hedging, giving into the congress. Why should they have let them out of jail in the middle of the war? If the British would only keep their political agitators where I keep mine, India would be peaceful place.

Most of the kings became puppets in the hands of their colonial masters and failed to make any compromise with the native leaders. Some asserted their own independence and sovereignty as a matter of right. Amidst such helplessness Field Marshal Wavell convened the chamber of princes on 17th January 1946 and assured the security of the princes and their territorial integrity. Practically Wavell injected in them a false sense of security and they thought of leading the country to a civil war, if necessary to keep their right upright. Last days of that Raj were very painful. The rulers were running from pillar to post desperately in search of an identity. Malgonkar makes a very objective analysis of the state of things prevailing when he describes the conversation of the father and the son:

The viceroy's assurance had whipped up their enthusiasm for the third force. "We shall have a separate India, the India of the Princes" he explained, "powerful, solid, deeply rooted in tradition; six hundred independent states merging together to form a princely India. . . . . . . ."
It is through Abhaya, the narrator that Malgonkar pities
the lot of these last generation of rulers who fumed and irroted
before succumbing to the uncanny ways of history.

It was pathetic to see how desperately
they clung to their illusions. Panic had been
replaced by wishful thinking. A glance at the
map would have shown them how impractical the
idea of states were prospered all over the
landscape of India and even in and out of each
other. But even if geographical contiguity had
existed, such a creation would still have been
out of question, because all history had shown
that the princes were incapable of uniting. Their
internal jealousies had made it possible for the
British to pick them off one by one. The
compulsions that governed them now, two hundred
years later, were still the same. Without British
protection they would have been finished long ago.
Now the British were going, leaving them to their
fate. It was incredible that they could not see
the writing on the wall.63

Speaking about the close association of Malgonkar with
the princely India and his keen sense of observation of historical
changes, Gaur remarks:

These associations with the princes provided
Malgonkar with an insight into the human and
cultural values embodied in their strange
lives and his training as a historian enabled
him to recognise, with detachment and objectivity,
the anachronistic irrelevance of princely India as
a socio-political phenomenon and the evils
associated with it.64

With the fall of Churchill political events took a new
shape both in India and England. The Labour party was very
pragmatic about giving priority to the question of independence
for India. By the time the Cabinet Mission came to India in 1946, communal tensions had already erupted in Calcutta and other cities. Amidst such tense situation the British had the least time and means to help the decadent princely order. They were reduced to mere pawns in the hands of the British and the Congress.

".... the princes groaned, but in the convulsions of the Hindu-Muslim riots in Calcutta and Lahore, no one heard their wails. The chancellor of their chamber wrote a pathetic letter to the Viceroy, asking whether His Majesty's Government intended to leave the states as a sort of no man's child."

Like Halgonkar's A Bend in the Ganges and Shobani Bhattacharya's novel So Many Runners, the novelist in this novel too points out the din of the communal flare up that foreshadowed all other voices. The country was shocked at the communal frenzy caused by certain Hindu Chauvinists and Muslim fanatics. Entire administration was busy to restore normalcy. None had time and patience to pay heed to the grievances of the princes. It was no more a fight between nationalists and princes. Rift between two communities turned violent and put the princes into oblivion. This loss of traditional status of the princes has been nicely conveyed by the novelist in the following lines:

The papers gave little prominence to the pronouncement of the princes. All eyes were pinned on the communal conflict that raged throughout the country. There had been mass killings in most of the major towns. The process
of dividing the country, of tearing apart unit
had grown together and taken deep roots, was
already taking a toll. The road to freedom was
red with blood.

The princes had been relegated to a position
of extreme unimportance. After a century and a
half of hot-house living, they found themselves
suddenly abandoned on the doorstep of the Indian
National Congress.

Abhaya found these princes cackling, who came to Delhi to
confer on their grievances. In utter despair Maharaja Niroji
was offering another ashapooja like the one he did when Cripps
Mission left. He also gave away twenty-five cows to propitiate
the God. When Abhaya met these princes, he found them bustling
with joy trying to hide the strain of defeat and despair lying
underneath. They appeared to him like a race that was doomed,
'waiting in the hospital lobby to be told just how long they had
to go on.'

The kings were exposed to the subversive activities from
within. They were utterly helpless. They were under tremendous
pressure from the day Congress got an upper hand. Different
democratic organisations and prajamandalas inside their kingdom
were clamouring for independence and doing all sorts of
propaganda with the help of the press to malign them. The mounting
pressure with its magnified grip throughout the country started
taking toll of them. Certain drastic and mistimed acts of
certain princes sealed their fate completely. Two of the over
zealous princes declared themselves to be independent sovereigns
after the withdrawal of the British. Unfortunately this
declaration had no meaning in the new political scenario. Some other princes still indecisive, thought in terms of joining the constituent assembly to avoid uncertainties. As per the terms of the Instrument of Accession they were to handover only the control of defence, foreign affairs and communication to the Government. In practice it was same as that they had with the British. But the feeling of disbelief was more in the Instrument of Accession. They regarded it as a plot to ruin them and crush kingship as an institution in total. Their doubts have been nicely displayed in the king's statement.

It is all a matter of interpretation, he told me. They are all clever lawyers. They can do anything they like under the guise of those concessions — take control of our states at any time, on any pretext. Just by making out they are protecting us from attack.

Rift between these two groups of princes widened as the deadline fixed to handover independence came closer. As disillusioned rulers and helpless princes they failed to estimate the position in which they would find themselves once the paramountcy expired. They were torn by doubts and confusion. They were sceptic about the offer of the Government and very doubtful of the Government's motive to declare them sovereign. Nearness of the deadline, i.e. 15th of August '47 haunted their minds most and Malgonkar made a masterly presentation of the fact!
Throughout July most of the princes and their Devans sat in New Delhi, talking interminably, getting nowhere and dividing into two frantically opposed groups. At one extreme were those who had declared themselves independent and who now realized that unless they could persuade a majority of the rulers to do likewise their own stand would look absurd. Opposed to them were the princes who had cooperated with the authorities right from the start, those apostles of caution and common sense who were bringing pressure on their friends to accept the instrument.

The princes and their advisers hung on in New Delhi, confused, dejected, tense, torn between facts and wishful thinking, while the time for decision was drawing to a close. *69

As the Viceroy called a meeting of the Chamber of princes on 23rd July, many princes including Hiroji and his son Ashaya came to attend it. They were still expecting some miracle to happen. But on arrival they were utterly disappointed. They considered "the instrument of accession as instrument of destruction". *70 The Nawab of Bhopal did not even attend it. He felt as if "they were being invited like the oysters to attend the tea party with the Walrus and the Carpenter." *71 On that very historic day the kings were panicky when the viceroy pronounced the final verdict in a masterly extempore speech urging the Princes to sign the instrument of merger so that he could mediate between Congress and the Princes after 15th of August in connection with other related matters of interest. And by 15th August all the states, excluding Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir had signed the Instrument of Accession.
Siroji like many of his contemporaries was a dejected personality, isolated and forlorn. He had to shoulder the burden of the dying and extinct royal pride without breaking down in public. Singing of the Instrument of Accession was deadlier a blow in comparison to his brother's untimely death or elopment of his queen with Adullin Jan, the palace official of the Estate. The rest of his life was spent in useless escapist activities like Pooja and sports. He wanted to live like a prince with honour.

The destiny of the Princes has been projected by many Indo-Anglian novelists like Khuswant Singh and K. A. Abbas. Malgonkar is also ironical about the promises made in the Tryst with Destiny speech of Nehru. He bemoans the fate of the vanishing Maharajah in the following words:

\[
\text{The day of our freedom, what Nehru had referred to as our Tryst with Destiny, had come and gone. The whole country rejoiced, forgetting, in the advent of freedom, the great communal conflict raging all around them. The rumblings of the long war for self-rule and its accompanying evil, the vivisection of the country, went on unchecked as though through a chain reaction. For the next thirteen months within the Indian states there was neither the old order nor the new democracy, only a mounting chaos. The most natural targets of the people's still unappeased hunger for universal liberation were the pockets of states ruled by the same old princes, virtual relics of British imperialism in the land of the free.}^{72}
\]

The activities of the Prajamandal were intensified. People had become more and more inclined to the Prajamandal activists. Their activities had taken a militant turn. Active support of
the government was becoming more tangible. It had tremendous
bearings on the way of the thinking of the young prince, Abhaya
who was a staunch critic of his father only months ago. As
Abhaya realises:

At the time I was irritated by his flippancy.
I realize now that he was being wholly natural.
The alert, efficient general, easy with his
plans had vanished; in his place there was a
man who had shed all inner uncertainties and
was ready for whatever the future might hold.
I, on the other hand, was bewildered and unsure,
thoroughly alarmed at how things were going,
really concerned for the first time for what we
were about to lose.73

Abhayaraj's faith received a great shock when he met
Kanakchand in connection with his agitation. The scene brings
out the gloomy aspect of the so-called popular mass movements. It
unravels how the local leaders settled their personal scores and
avenged their humiliations in the name of national interest.
Independence had provided them a providential opportunity to
satisfy their bruised ego. Such leaders like Kanakchand and his
counterpart Jugal Kishore are usually noticed in halgorman's novels.
They are the byproducts of independence that enabled these
opportunists to thrive in a chaotic atmosphere. Kanakchand
once exploded:

Yes, I suppose I do want something for
myself. I want revenge, I want to wash away
the insult of poverty, the shame of
untouchability.74
The Prajamandal activities like Kanakchand at the grassroot level were never idealists. This is evident from the meeting of Abhaya and Kanakchand. On Abhaya's arrival no shows absolutely no regard for the Prince of Sedar. Rather is there any sense of gratefulness in him for the help rendered to him by the Late Queen of Sedar. Rather Kanakchand went on speaking his revengeful feelings like a leader. He accused the King of being responsible for every prevalent social customs and maladies. Malgonkar has nicely exposed him as a leader with his real intent to break down the administrative machinery.

To see the end of your rule here - the rule of the Sedaris. This I have sworn.73

Like his counterpart Jugal Kishore in Combat of Shadows Kanakchand too becomes an epitome of self interest. As a true representatives of their times they shout and sneer at Kingship or the British Paramountcy with full-throated ease. The newly acquired power had gone into his head.

The days of the Princes are gone, Kanakchand said with a new surge of malevolence, you are finished, and you know it. All you princes are like impotent cats, pretending to snarl, knowing you can do nothing. I do anything I want, understand anything. No one can stop us. Neither you nor your father. Where is his horse-whip now.73

In spite of Abhaya's restraint at such remarks, difference of opinion prevailed causing a law and order situation. The king banned all political meetings and gatherings to restore normalcy and peace. The group clash was much publicised by the Press.
This breach of law and order provided an excuse for the government to ask the king to request the Western province to provide a force consisting of one superintendent and hundred policemen to be stationed in the state for emergency. This revealed the apathy of the British government towards these princes. The reality of the situation is further exposed when Charudutt, the half brother of Abhayaraj, took side with the policemen and the Prajamandal activists. Abhaya made a formal request to Charudutt to take stern action against Kanakchand for his declaration to overthrow the king's rule and set up Mandal's rule in contravention of the treaty. But Charudutt also expressed his inability as he regarded people's right to form government as an inherent and inborn right. Abhaya could realise the uneasy ways of the government machinery.

The princes were hard-pressed. On the one hand they were harassed by the local revolutionaries whom they were quite powerless to control, because that would have been inviting a change of suppressing the natural aspirations of their people. On the other, if the preservation of law and order really broke down, the centre and every right to intervene.??

Preparations were going on everywhere for holding elections in a free and fair manner. Shills were asked to refrain from counter-agitation and the prince sought an assurance from the Mandal chief to stop agitation and contest election. But Kanakchand did not approve of such a suggestion as he did not enjoy popular support. He thought of grabbing
power rather than winning it on people's support. A democratic movement was thwarted. Malgonkar makes every attempt to delineate the social-political changes taking place in the history of India. Like R.K. Narayan's 'Malgudi' symbolising the rural India, Malgonkar's 'Bodar' is a true symbol of the downfall of Indian states and their subsequent merger with the Indian Union. Without pointing his finger at any of the socio-political forces the novelist simply tries to project the reality of the crisis in the annals of history.

What was happening in Bodar was happening everywhere else in Padmanabhapur and in most Indian states. But we carried on, paying no heed to the ominous rumble around us, to the unrelenting clamour of the slogans. We carried on from day to day, patching and mending as best we could, trying to persuade ourselves that it was not already too late, not realizing that you could not hope to mend a tear in the sky itself. 78

The changes that followed have also been described nicely and in vivid terms as the narrator himself happens to be the protagonist. Their ultimate hope to preserve their estates was shattered when they came to know that the princely states of Orissa and Chhattisgarh were merged into their neighbouring provinces. They apprehended foul play behind this merger declared to have been done as voluntarily. Abhaya was making his last attempts to preserve the princely order. In his last bid in this direction he thought of emulating 'Nayurbhunj' of Orissa that conceded responsible government of the people, preserving the king as the constitutional head. As per his conviction he
convinced the king to request the government to provide enough power and means to conduct a free and fair election to install a popular government. But the Prajamandal activists had already occupied the administrative building. The role played by the press in hastening the merger did not escape the novelist's attention. Press was all praise for the Prajamandal activists and timely intervention of the police. The news was a long process of fabrication. The aptitude of the princes and their quality of leadership in maintaining law and order was all the time ignored by the press. Thus the media had added momentum to such an extent that installation of popular government would not have prevented the merger in any way.

Little did I realise then that Nayurbhanj itself would last not much more than a year as a semi-independent state.

Malgonkar’s penetrating eyes has also lost sight of the apathetic and cruel behaviour of the post-independent Indian bureaucrats. He draws a comparison between the courteous and punctual bureaucrats of the pre-independent India with the officious and arrogant ones of the Post-independent period.

Accompanied by his father and Lala Harikishore, Abhaya went to New Delhi for discussion. The Secretary kept them waiting for some minutes beyond the appointment time as he was breakfasting leisurely. He was seen busy for no important reasons and making curt remarks on sensitive issues. The
Secretary neither apologised for being late nor had a sense of decency to remove the leftovers of the breakfast before asking them to come in. Malgonkar nicely portrays the lacunae usually noticed in the bureaucratic circle devoid of any human kindness. The post-independent bureaucrats were also very officious. Very curtly he informed them to merge with the Indian Union before the circumstances compel the government to take over the administration of the state. They were also asked immediately to finalise the privy purse. Malgonkar describes the feelings of the prince at the behaviour of these bureaucrats in the following words:

The British, I feel, would have handled it with much more finesse. They would have been civil even as they were putting us on the block—civil as well as punctual.80

The jubilant local politicians gathered at the railway station to greet the king and the prince showed untowardly behaviour as the merger had been widely published by the press. Hiroji could not face the ordeals of life and wanted to die as honourably as he lived. To avoid merger he fought with the wounded tiger bare handed and met with a violent but heroic death than suffering death in life. Finally the states merged and the princes were meagrely compensated with some perquisites and privileges in exchange. The process was full of agonising moments and mental sufferings. As a chronicler and storyteller Malgonkar has never distorted historical events for fictional purposes. Prof. Dayananda in this context observes:
The Princely states were ceded to India in return for a few perquisites and privy purses. The rulers first signed the Instrument of Accession and then signed the Instrument of Merger, which resulted in merger of small states into a larger federation of states. All were finally swallowed into the belly of India. Malgonkar takes no liberties with these and other facts connected with the princely states.

After the merger of the states bribery became a common practice amongst top Indian bureaucrats. With the native politicians like Kanakehand at the helm of affairs this practice became a very common phenomenon. Robbery along with bribe was cutting at the roots of the common man's society. Some of the princes managed to transfer their valuables to foreign accounts through brokers like Punch Farran and Minnie. Others resorted to bribery to secure some of the state property as personal assets. The transaction took place on a percentage share basis, described accurately by the novelist as he did in his Distant Drum and Combat of Shadows.

The novel gives a day to day account of the merger of the states and the formation of the Union of India. Malgonkar tries his best to bring to light the human element in this otherwise sad drama of betrayal, exploitation and finally the extinction of the ruling race. His keen eyes trace the origin of certain administrative lacunae and that found its birth in those turbulent days and prevalent till today in a vicious form. As a socially conscious artist his attention did not overlook those significant moments of socio-political change.
that accompanied the birth pangs of a nation. While recording the historical facts on the pages of fiction he throws light on some of the deplorable and deep-rooted social customs that had blanished the Indian soil for a long time. He cites the marriage of the king to a girl of a prestigious family who was procured at a high price to upgrade his family status. The harrowing tale of the life of the queen has been described in detail to highlight this social malady. The subordinate status given to the Indian woman even in a princely background is a social malady in itself. The average woman within her grew rebellious. Right from the beginning she has always wanted to revolt and flee away from those blind customs and taboos that deprived her from fulfilment of her inner longings and urge. Her fornication with the Palace Officer, Aodulla Jan and her final elopement to Pakistan reveals both the inner realities of the Palace life as well as a human phenomenon. The women who used to spend a lot of her time in idealising 'Sati cult' and worshipping the 'Satis' finally decided to revolt. She preferred to lead a life of an ordinary man's wife rather than a queen deprived of any human sentiments. Malgonkar accuses Hiroji's chauvinistic attitude as a male responsible for the queen's elopment with Aodulla Jan.
like his earlier novels and in many respects like
his contemporary shashi chattcharya, Malgonkar too points
his finger at casteism and untouchability. Lower class people
were viewed as creatures on earth rather than as human beings.
They were denied of the minimum rights and privileges as
human beings that led to discontent among them. This deep
seated discontentment and accumulated inferiority complex
of ages made them united to fight for their supremacy under
the leadership of people like kanakchand, the cobbler.
Kanakchand is like 'Kalo' in He Who Rides a Tiger or Jugal
Kishoro of 'Combat of Shadows'. Kanakchand, the cobbler boy
underwent those cruelties of the society till he graduated
to become a leader to avenge. Throughout the agitation his
inner motive has been to avenge; during his school days he
was thrown into the pond with his books for daring to play
with his upper caste friends. He did not have a square meal
a day or a good dress to make himself presentable. He was
cursed in public to which his kinsmen fighting with each other
like dogs to grab the left-overs thrown outside after the
caste people took their meals in a function. Like shashi
chattcharya; he was fully sensitive to such maladies. Post-
independent India did provide them an opportunity to avenge
in order to establish a new order.
His novel *The Princes* is a document of the crisis that the Princely India had to undergo on the eve of and just after independence. His observation and narration has received wider acclaim for their veracity and objectivity. Though critics like Saras Cawasjee have argued that Malgonkar had been influenced by Mulk Raj Anand's *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, the real analysis of the novel highlights the fact that it is more an objective study of the process of 'disintegration' rather than of 'decadence' as in Anand's novel. As a social document of its times and a chronicle in the garb of fiction, G.S. Amur observes:

> The only values celebrated in the novel are the conservative and traditional values symbolized by Hiroji and accepted by Achyutraj, after several acts of soul-searching. The Princes makes no pretensions to modernity. This may be its limitation as a contemporary social document but it is also its strength as a novel.82

Regarding the novelist's objectivity maintained throughout the novel in making history alive in fiction, Prof. Asnani has the following observation:

> Malgonkar sees the extinction of the princes from political point of view, and in the creation of his characters and situations he ensures historical objectivity and veracity without sacrificing the story-telling effect.83

Obviously a study of *The Princes* with its emphasis on socio-political events of pre-independence India and aftermath leads us to a study of his next novel *A Bend in the Ganges*.
A Band in the Ganges published in 1964 makes a detailed study of the varying movements that overtook struggle for independence at different times and finally took the shape of the struggle for existence in the form of hit and run method of the communal frenzy. The novel begins this bloody upheaval from the non-violent days of the Congress to the first dawn of the independence followed by partition. The undivided Indian mass lost their sense of propriety and feeling of brotherhood for each other. The mass frenzy led to unimaginable killings and heart rending agonies. The title of the novel is quite ironical and pregnant with inuendoes. It is the cruel act of partition which allegorically brought a new bend in the Ganges that had witnessed a silent but rich riverine culture since times immemorial. The man-made holocaust made the rich fabric of social life topsyturvy and signalled the advent of a gloomy future for the multiracial Indian society. People were divided between the high ideals of non-violence and sometimes inevitable violence accompanied by sentimentalism, emotionalism and communalism. Disillusioned illiterate mass became tools in the hands of the crafty communalists and the outcome was complete chaos. This novel draws a portrait of those days of uncertainty and apprehension. Prof. Dayananda has summed up the historical aspects of the novel in the following lines:
Malganikar gives the impression that he has investigated the circumstances of actual events in the Punjab during the religious war of 1947. Like John Hershey's Hiroshima or Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* or Khushwant's *Train to Pakistan*, Malgonkar's novel is recurrently and explicitly exact about events in relation to time; he pays scrupulous attention to chronology.34

As in his other novels, Malgonkar in *A Bend in the Ganges* meticulously sticks to time while narrating the momentous incidents that became milestones in the history of India's freedom struggle. Authenticity in documentation gives the reader an insight into the human characters who were trapped when the nation was in transition. The story begins with Gian Talwar's initiation into the doctrine of non-violence when he throws his blazer into the fire as a mark of boycott of all English goods and articles. In the words of E.G.S. Arolandrum, *he resembles one section of the Indian Youth who preferred non-violence but could not resist the pressure of events and lure of violence.* The youth were very much divided within as to which path to choose. Timidity within made them easy targets. Gian's act of revenge on the purely personal level is the sign of failure that took a large shape in the national level. Similar is the case with Devi Dayal and Shafi Usman, the other two leading characters of the novel. In the words of K.R.S. Iyengar:

Like a prologue to the main act, this story of family feud—suspicion, rivalry, hatred, vindictiveness, murder — is to be viewed as the advance micro-tragedy foreshadowing the macro-tragedy on a national scale in the year of the partition.35
A similar view is cherished by Prof. Dayanda when he remarks on the aspect of violence in the novel in the following manner.

It could also be regarded as a documentary narrative dealing with the violent rather than non-violent aspects of India's struggle for independence.37

It is only the brave who faced the ordeal without flinching. Gian who made a vocal protest against Shafi was found weak and wanting when he had his maiden encounter with violence. He avenged his brother, Rari's death by killing Vishnu Dutt with the same axe. He became a D ticket holder and was sent to the Andaman Cellular jail.

In spite of Gian's baptism into the cult of truth and non-violence he succumbs to the circumstances. Gandhi was also gradually losing his grip over the youth being cornered by the terrorist elements. The triangular clash among the followers of Gandhi, the terrorists and the British was on a collision course. The brave opted for Gandhi whereas those who favoured the idea of instant success also favoured the terrorists. But both were patriots in their own way. Their unity would have strengthened the freedom struggle. But the irony was that understanding among them was far too imaginable.
Gandhi's tactical move against the British was to boycott all British made goods and reduce dependence on British industries totally. He wanted to give a death blow to British economy and boost home economy instead. The novelist rightly describes this political move in Gandhi's words:

> It is only by renouncing all British-made goods, by wearing clothes made out of materials produced in this country - wearing them proudly and defiantly - that we shall foster the economy of our own country, defeat its poverty.

This call of Mahatma could draw the attention of millions young and old who shed all luxuries and material prosperity. Alongwith it he preached the message of non-violence as a means to fight with the British. The impact of Gandhi is evident in the following lines:

> But we are a new kind of soldier. Our weapons are truth and non-violence. Our war shall be fought by peaceful means. Gandhi has shown us the path. But make no mistake; our non-violence is the non-violence of the brave, arising not from cowardice but from courage, demanding greater sacrifices than ordinary fighting men are called upon to make. We are aware that there are in our country those who do not believe in our methods, those who aim to achieve freedom by resorting to violence. Such men have no place in our army, however patriotic they may be.
On the other hand there were leaders like Shafi Usman who believed in violence. They considered Gandhi a menace to India's freedom struggle. They thought that Gandhi would only emasculate the youth force sooner or later. These brand of patriots felt in the following manner:

What harm the man has done with his hypnotic powers. Tell us of a single instance in history, of just one country which has been able to shake off foreign rule without resorting to war, to violence?

Freedom has to be won; it has to be won by sacrifice; by giving blood, not by giving up the good things of life and wearing white caps and going to jail. Look at America - the United States! They went to war. Turkey! Even our own Shivaji. Non-violence is the philosophy of sheep, a creed for cowards. It is the greatest danger to this country. 

Malgonkar also keenly observed the principles and methods adopted by those firebrand terrorists and their mode of working. Its members belonged to all sections and religious sects. The Ramjan Physical Culture club was highly secular in nature. Shafi was the leader. It was a gymnasium training terrorists in Judo but in reality it was a meeting place of all activists. Shafi was the most wanted man carrying a reward on his head. On Saturday evenings all the thirtyseven members gathered in the club. They had dinner and discussions together regarding future acts of sabotage. All of them took beef and pork curry. They had
no inhibitions regarding any religion. Taking beef and pork curry was compulsory. Dobi, the scion of Korvad family in Durand was also a member and provided them with dynamite sticks to be used in acts of sabotage. Unfortunately his father, Devan Tekchand was a staunch supporter of the British regime. Malgonkar presents them as underground patriots determined to overthrow the British rule.

Any one who represented that rule, British or Indian, was their enemy; anything that represented that rule was their legitimate target. 'Jai ram!' answered by 'Jai rahim!' was their secret mode of greeting. The name of Rama sacred to all Hindus and that of Rahim equally sacred to the Muslims.

Their oath of initiation was signed in blood, blood drawn from the little finger of the left hand. The Hindus and Sikhs venerated the cow whereas the Muslims abhorred the pig as unclean and unholy. After eating the beef and pork curry no Hindu, Muslim or Sikh could practice his religion. The communal solidarity of these young patriots was really commendable as perceived by the novelist. Sikh is a symbol of communal solidarity in the novel as the movement gains slow momentum. He and his companions had a deep understanding of the social malady that helped the British to rule. They knew thoroughly how and why such a mighty race was pinned down for so long. Hence they discarded all religious differences to fight unitedly. Malgonkar made a note of their ideals and feelings.
Religious differences among the races of India were the root cause of the country's slavery, and the British had learnt to take the fullest advantage of these differences, playing the Hindus against the Muslims and the Sikhs against both.

'The nationalists have just played into their hands — Gandhi and Jinnah both.' Shafi would pronounce. 'The only saving grace of the nationalist movement has gone; it is no longer united, no longer secular. The Hindus and Muslims are both going their own ways, both trying to propagate non-violence.

They themselves were the elite, having smashed down the carriers of religion that held other Indians divided; blood brothers in the service of the motherland.'

He further notes,

They tried to emulate Akbar, Ranjit Singh and Shivaji. They prepared themselves mentally and physically in a secret manner spreading their tentacles throughout the country. Shafi and his followers sneered at passive resistance and considered it a 'naked insult to the land of Shivaji, Akbar and Ranjeet'.

The bombing of the air force plane of Shafi and Debi brings fulfilment to both. But as Shafi observes, the personal fulfilment of Debi was far greater than that of a terrorist. Debi in his adolescence had seen one British officer attempting to rape his innocent mother. Shafi had seen his innocent father being killed in the Jallianwallah bag massacre. They were committed and prepared to take calculated risks. They did not want to be caught before they reached their target like the girls of Bengal who hurled bombs and were caught. Their intention was to paralyse the Government. They used to
write anti-British slogans, cutting telephone and telegraph lines, setting fire to post offices and government vehicles, removing fish plates and burning sleepers. In fact Smai and Usman can be considered as exact counterparts of 'shibiran bokh' and 'Hamid Das' of 'Kirti vijay', the Sahitya Academy winning Assamese novel by Dr. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya.

When religion entered politics it took an ugly turn. Communalism entered into the heads of some people like Hafiz who thought the British better than the Hindus. The secular and dedicated extremist leaders also started assessing and reassessing their position.

The Congress and the Muslim League had come to a final parting of ways, with Hindus and Muslims separated into opposing camps, learning to hate each other with bitterness of ages. Even their own leaders had begun to take sides. Hafiz had already written to him from London complaining about the callousness of the Hindus towards the Muslims, suggesting that they should reorientate their activities.

Along with the portrayal of the violence cult of the extremists Malgonkar also attempts to delineate these dilemmas into life and exposes their far reaching consequences very realistically. Deven Tharchand complained to the intelligence chief about the missing dynamite sticks. Dani and his accomplices were closely watched by the police. Hafiz, in the meantime, has managed to convince Smai about the inhuman treatment meted out to their Muslim brethren in other parts.
of India. He has brought with him paper cuttings from The Dawn, Trident, Azad and Subah. A painful chapter in the history began dividing them into small segments. The betrayal starts when Subah warns all his Muslim brothers about the police raid on the gymnasium leaving his Hindu followers to their fate. Thus Mefiz succeeds in his persuasion. Fight for freedom degenerated into religious fanaticism and communalism. Instead of fighting against the alien, they vied with each other to make friendship with the British. Distrust amongst each other spoiled the nicely structured social fabric of the Ganges valley. Malgudi's keen historic sense aptly records how the struggle between Indian nationalism and British colonialism took a ferocious turn in the form of communal conflagration.

The Muslim fears of being ruled by the Hindus in the absence of the British rule in the country where they had been the rulers, their notion that the Hindus were more dangerous than the foreigners and ought to be their real target and their subsequent striking at them, their struggle for a safe homeland separate from India leading to the partition, and the terror and pity of it — all these form the contents of the novel.

Subai, by birth a Muslim and baptised to Sikhsian shed his Kirpan and Turban as racial arrogance overshadowed all his rational outlook. His failure is symbolic of others belonging to both the camps, the violent and the non-violent groups. The clash between communalism and nationalism led to degeneration of ideals and mutual trust. The doubts and anxieties of being
relegated to a second class citizenship in a sovereign country
haunted the Muslim mind. The freedom struggle was left midway
giving vent to communal outburst. Malgonkar has very well
recorded these agonising moments in an nation's life in this
novel:

"Fanatics! We have to turn fanatic in
sheer self-defence. You talk of the Punjab,
but even the Punjab will not escape the fate
of Bombay and Madras, where already we are
second-rate citizens, working ants in a
society of ants.

'But even there they have taken one or
two Muslins into the Government!' Shafi
pointed out.

"One or two! Are we to be satisfied with
armons? Who ruled the whole country? Have
we now become dogs? And who are the one or
two? Who - I am ask you? Stooges - their own
men, Muslims who are members of the Congress,
renegades. Don't you know that the Congress
will not have any one who is not a member?
That is what will happen here too. You will
find a Congress ministry - a Hindu ministry
with a couple of Muslims who are obedient
servants of the Congress. Even today, there
are Congress administrations in eight of the
eleven provinces. What is happening? They
will not take any Muslim who will not join
them. Jinnah has exposed them: 'The Hindus
have shown us that Hindustan is for the
Hindus'. Now we Muslims have to look after
ourselves. Organize ourselves before it's
too late. Carve out our own country......'

Communal hatred among each other suppressed all
rational feelings and good sense in both the communities. Each
community tried to find identity with exclusive interests.
National interest was replaced by communal interest. The
terrorist found themselves divided on communal lines. Pictitious
fears about Hindu superiority panicked them, and this
subconscious feeling was nicely exploited by crafty politicians
as well as the British. Shakti Baru in this context observes:

Malgonkar's account takes the form of
cool impersonal debate among the characters, it looks like a scientific analysis of the
situation rather than something which emerges
out of the characters themselves and their
convictions.57

Malgonkar has sufficiently ventilated the feelings of
Muslim racial fear and Muslim rationality. This is a bare
truth that has been neglected by many Indo-Anglian novelists
though the theme of partition has been chosen by many of them.
The heated argument between Shafi and Hafiz projects the
conflict that communalism had to face when it forced entry into
the integrated fort of terrorism. Reason was subdued by
partisan views and rumours:

We don't want freedom if it means our
living here as slaves of the Hindus. If we
succeed in driving out the British it is
the Hindus who will inherit power. Then
what happens to us? We are heading for a
slavery far more degrading . . . . struggling
for it. That's what Shafi is worried about.
That's what all of us are worried about.

'It doesn't bear thinking about', Shafi
said. 'To break up with one's own hands what
we have striven so hard to build up! Communal
solidarity'.

'It has to be done. We have to organize
ourselves — Muslims against the rest of India,
if we are to survive. Organize, not so much
to win freedom, but to protect ourselves from being swamped by the Hindus; emasculated to become a race of serfs in a country ruled by idolaters. 

The militant attitude of the Hindu Mahasabha brought suspicion in the mind of Shafi. In spite of his inner musings he often wanted to join the Gandhians movement to become a communal leader. But Hafiz tried to convince him by telling that,

In the midst of Gandhi’s non-violence, violence persists. Violence such as no one has ever seen. That is what waits this country: the violence settled up in those who pay lip-service to non-violence. The Hindus are preparing for it - to kill us, to swamp us.

Shafi finally betrayed his Hindu accomplices in collusion with Munsoor. Debi Doyal was caught and transferred to the Andaman Cellular jail as a 'D' ticket holder. He was transported to the island on the same ship along with Gian and other hard core criminals. Debi’s reflection about Gian very rightly points out the typical youth in India during those Gandhian days:

Was Gian the man, Debi wondered, the non-violent disciple of Gandhi who had been convicted for murder? He cursed and shook his head in disgust. Gian was certainly not the man. He was typical of the youth of India, vacillating, always seeking new anchors, new directions, devoid of any basic convictions. He had been dedicated, so he had told them, to truth and non-violence. He had already jettisoned non-violence; how far would he go with truth?
Gian was more denounced in Debi's eyes when he betrayed friendship and worked as an agent of Patrick Mulligan, the British Officer. His role as an 'Administrative Spy' more ridiculed his position as a Gandhian disciple. Very often Debi thought that the British were far better than the vacillating natives. At least they are determined to rule India. Regarding the British sense of justice Malgobkar was well aware of as an Officer of the British Indian Army. Many of his characters become helpless enough to compare things and persons with what might have been, had the British handled such a situation. Desan Takehand even wanted the terrorist movement to be crushed down mercilessly. He considered there was no alternative to British rule in India.

In the chaos that would follow the withdrawal of British authority, Hindus and Muslims would be at each other's throats just as they had always been before the British came and established peace. Men like Churchill were not fools; the alternative to the British quitting India was civil war.¹⁰¹

The prolonged quarrel between the 'Big House' and the 'Small House' led Debi to believe that the British are more fair in delivering judgement. At least they are not like their Indian counterparts, easy victims of bribe and material gains. He also boldly remarks:

Remember that we in India can get justice only at British hands—never from our own people. They are clean—clean as grains of washed rice.¹⁰²
Gian who turned an opportunist in the middle of his topsy-turvy career acted as a spy on behalf of Mulligan. He had an inkling of the Britisher's sense of justice.

They were fair, they were always fair, even under extreme provocation, Gian reminded himself. He could never visualise any one but the British being so fuzzy. The Indian police would have just rounded up all the suspects, taken them to the theme and beaten them to a pulp to extract confessions.

Under extreme communal fears and false apprehensions, they also feel that the British are fairer than the native topiwallahs. But communalism played havoc with the British sense of justice. The British administration was sadly exposed as the seeds of communalism was only sown by them. Repression of the British on innocent agitators gave a new turn to the course of events. It made all segments of society deeply involved. The administration did not hesitate to take any kind of repressive measures.

The authorities had swung into action with unprecedented virulence. The prisons of the country overflowed with patriots. Sixty thousand people were arrested in the last four months of 1943. After that the arrests went on with warlike resolution, but the figures were not made available to the press. The Calcutta Statesman, mouthpiece of the ruling power, published a daily list of nationalists who had courted arrest. The paper headed the column 'The Crank's Corner'.

It was almost as though the British were striving to convert the non-violence of the leaders of India into the violence of the terrorists; to discredit the movement in the eyes of the world by forcing it to become violent.
Then India was seething with anger, anguish and frustration the Japanese attacked the Andamans. Gian managed to escape with Mulligan. Debai did not like to take the opportunity as he had realised by that time that the Japanese were no way better than the British. He hated Yemski as much as he hated Mulligan.

By now Debai Royal had made up his mind. He was not going to choose between two brands of world conquerors, between playing the role of the Indian Brigadier to Yemski, or of Gian to Mulligan.

The Japanese wanted the terrorists to act as fifth columnist. Indian Youth was once again facing a dilemma beyond their comprehension. Posters caricaturing Patrick Mulligan appeared on the walls. An Indian Officer asked Debai to act as an agent. Though mentally indecisive he thought of availing the chance to settle his score against Shahi. By that time the communal tension was at its peak touching the general public life everywhere. People were ready to take revenge against the other community by any means, however inhuman the act may be. Throwing of acid bulbs and stabbing was a very common phenomena. Debidyal's return was as painful as his journey to the Andamans. After his return to the mainland he laments:

 What a pass we have come to, fighting ourselves, just when we should be concentrating on the British, Debidyal lamented. It is almost as though just when they are on the point of
leaving the country, the British have succeeded in what they set out to do. Set the Hindus and Muslims at each other’s throats. 106

Communal violence had disrupted the civility of public life totally. By the time Desi reached Basu’s family, he was shocked at Basu’s revelation of the carnage.

That is the spirit of non-violence for you! he said to Desidaya, pointing a finger at his wife. Her face has been ravaged by a hooligan, and I, her husband, have done nothing to avenge it. But will she ever be angry with me? — tell me I am a no-good bastard who can not look after family? Not she is mother India, damn it — non-violent! All she is worried about is that I should eat my food while it is still hot! 107

Polarisation in general public life was taking place very fast. As Shafi had joined the Muslim commnialists, similarly, Basu and the like had joined the militant Mahasabha. Malgonkar also exposes the Hindu fear psychosis as vividly as he did expose the Muslim psyche. Basu echoes his decision:

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That is what made me join the Mahasabha. parole or no parole, I could not keep out. We have to become aligned, in sheer self-defence. Hindus against Muslims. 108

Violence did breed only violence. The liberation movement was degenerated into a sinister game of anarchy, arson, loot, goondaism, rape, and mass killings. The Muslims demanded a separate land of their own. The Hindus retaliated on equal terms as the militants thought of Gandhi taking side with the Muslims.
Ultimately the inevitable had to happen. Malgonkar did not spare any of the two communities for this folly:

The moment the British quit, there will be civil war in the country, a great slaughter. Every city, every village, every bustee, where the two communities live side by side, will be the scene of war. Both sides are preparing for it, the Hindus and the Muslims. The Muslim League and the Hindu rashtrasam are both militant.

Partition was the inevitable alternative to quell the mass frenzy. It was the victory of the British and the communalists, not a victory of the common Indian mass. The proportion of violence was so vast that it even shocked the terrorists. Even Basu felt as if mankind is not prepared to accept the spirit of true non-violence. Hence 'Gandhi will die a thousand death.' Basu airs his views in defence of the Hindus as Hafiz did in defence of the Muslims. He sorrowfully remarks:

And the only thing we Hindus can do about it is to get ready for it, as the Muslims are doing. Unless we are prepared to meet violence with violence, we will perish. If our answer to Muslim fury is to be non-violence, then we shall be a slave race again — within weeks of the British leaving us. Non-violence is all very well, if the other party too plays by the rules. It may prove an effective weapon against the British because of their inherent decency. How far would it have gone against Hitler? Yes, tell me what would non-violence do against brute force?
Shafi and Basu at different points of time express the real perspective on which each community stood in their inner feelings. It probes deep into the frenzied minds of the supporters of both the communities and attempts to make a brief analysis of the unprecedented maladies that overlooked concerted effort for liberation movement. Fear psychosis about personal security had made each community panicky. Each community, more so the Hindu community, who opted Gandhi earlier began to doubt its validity in the new context. Basu echoes further:

It is an ever greater failure. But will they ever admit it? They will take all the credit for achieving independence when the British finally leave, as though all that the others have done, the Mahasabha, the League even, means nothing. But there is a greater failure still: the enmaselation of the people — making them into a nation of sheep, as Enghati used to tell us. That is what our organisation, the Hindu Mahasabha, is attempting to remedy. But it may be already too late. The results of what non-violence has done will be seen — seen as soon as the British leave us to our own devices. For every Hindu that had to die, five will die because of the way the doctrine of non-violence has caught on. More women will be raped, abducted, children slaughtered, because their men will have been made incapable of standing up for themselves.

The Hindus were equally doubtful of their survival as the Muslims. Malgonkar has very deftly dissected the psychological pattern of the two major communities and
explored the reasons as to why India prostrated, reeling under the agony of communal flare. He has also analysed as to how this division became distinct and what price each Indian had to pay when the demand for political freedom turned into communal slaughter. Shafi was now a changed man, a follower of Hafiz. He painfully realises:

The days of religious unity, trying to organise the Hindus and Muslims and the Sikhs and the others to snatch power from the rulers, was gone. The Hindus had shown their hand.

Political wave of the time and the misdirected policies of the Congress discouraged the Muslims, in turn, made them diehard communalists. Fear of losing their own identity in a Hindu majority country haunted the Muslim mind. The only consideration before the Muslims was their racial superiority of long ages. They could not forget the community status of the bygone days:

They were unquestionably the superior race. They had conquered the whole of India, ruled it for centuries before the British came. It was unthinkable that they should now allow themselves to be relegated to a position of inferiority, crushed by sheer weight of numbers.

Malgonkar has impartially analysed the psychology of both the communities without pointing any finger. The hysteria of partition shattered ages of amity and understanding. British design gave patronage to Muslim fundamentalism. The British government was now ready to quit after playing the nicest game of divide and rule on this soil. Cripps Mission gave legal
sanction to Hindu-Muslim rift. Congress was all in haste to capture power and neglected in giving due importance to other minor communities. Its rational Muslim leaders were not paid any attention by the Muslim fundamentalists. The Muslims desired to carve out a land of their own and share power on their own terms. Congress was regarded as an essentially Hindu organisation.

For Shafi and millions of other Muslims, the resolution of the Muslim League in which Jinnah had demanded the creation of a separate state carved out of India, had crystallized the issues. When Afzal had talked about it, six years earlier, it had seemed an absurd conception, now it was the bedrock of their political faith. The British were going away. Now the fight was no longer against the British, but against the Hindus who were aspiring to rule over them. It was Jihad, a war sanctioned by religion; a sacred duty of every true believer.

Jinnah had given direction to their struggle. But Shafi, Afzal and others were not the men to abide by Jinnah's discipline. To strive to achieve their goal by constitutional means was one thing; it was the politician's way, slow and tortuous, like a legal battle in the courts. Unless it was backed by terrorism, the Hindus would never concede their demands with grace. It was essential to draw blood, to shed blood, confront their adversaries with fire and steel, the prick of the spear.

Muslims were determined to have Pakistan as a result of which sporadic incidents of violence had erupted throughout the country. Incidents multiplied in number and people were emotionally involved. Malgosaar, like Khaswaut Singh in
A Train to Pakistan, has delineated its meandering course till violence came out everywhere openly and shocked the common man who did not understand how this partition would help him in future. The common man became a victim of mass exodus and mass migration. Qian, Debi and Musaraz could not escape this tragedy. Malgonkar then notes:

Every citizen was caught up in this holocaust. No one could remain aloof; no one could be trusted to be impartial, when men and women of your own religion were being subjected to atrocities, you could not be expected to remain friendly with adherents to the religion of the oppressors. The administration, the police, even the armed forces, were caught up in the blaze of hatred. Willy-nilly, everyone had to be a participant in what was, in effect, a civil war.

Tens of millions of people had to flee, leaving everything behind; Muslim from India, Hindus and Sikhs from the land that was soon to become Pakistan: two great rivers of humanity flowing in opposite directions along the pitifully opposite roads and railways, jamming and clashing, colliding head-on, leaving their dead and dying littering the landscape.

Unimaginable inhuman atrocities were inflicted on old men, women and children by either communities. The magnitude of violence increased. There was no sanity and no civic sense. Malgonkar gives an impartial and eye witness account of the traumas of the hard times:

As a background to this great, two way migration, religious civil war was being waged all over the country; a war fought in every village and town and city where the two communities came upon each other. The most barbaric cruelties of
primitive men prevailed over all other human attributes. The administration had collapsed, the railways had stopped functioning because the officials and the technicians had themselves joined the mass migrations. Mobs ruled the streets, burning, looting, killing, dishonouring women and mutilating children; even animals sacred to the other community became the legitimate targets of reprisals.

With the breakdown of the administrative machinery, migration on both sides had become more painful, risky and hazardous. It had its untold miseries. Unescorted journeys were ambushed, women raped and killed and travellers were hacked to death. Stranded people expecting a sound train journey were also caught in the grip of death on their way. Malgonkar projects the plight of Dewan Tekuand who considered this very temporary and believed in the innate goodness of his neighbours. Debidayal had returned from the Andamans and avenged on Shafi by taking away his lady love Mumtaz. Shafi tried to disfigure her with acid bomb but Dobi rescued her by risking his own life. But in this process Dobi was also caught in the coils of 'Sansar'. Gian, in the meantime, had managed to secure a job in the Kewad Construction Company by fabricating a cock and bull story to gain the confidence of Sundari and Tekuand. But Debidayal's timely arrival had exposed his hypocrisy.

The story here takes a new turn to focus the ghastly deeds done hours before the independence. Dobi and Mumtaz under the guise of purely a Muslim couple had started their
last journey to Deoria in a train. They inevitably meet with the community suspicion of the co-passengers and are killed in the most heinous manner. On the other hand Sundari and arrived at her father's house to prepare grounds for the arrival of her brother Debidoal. Gian being exposed time and again had decided to prove his worth. Hence he came from Delhi to help Tekchand and his family stranded in Punjab. The posh locality in which Tekchand lived was almost deserted except its Muslim tenants who were afraid to give shelter to any Hindu for fear of reprisal. Tekchand's sikh driver had gone to fetch his family by car and was ambushed.

The dawn of the much awaited independence day was becoming visible in the Eastern Horizon. But the men and women were sweating and bleeding in pain in stead of celebrating the advent of independence. Tekchand and his family had to leave behind the ancestral properties, kith and kin quite unsure of the future. In the tragic predicament Tekchand's wife is killed by Shafi who avenges on Debidoal. In the process Tekchand also loses his life. Sundari breaks the skull of Shafi with the 'Shiva Linga' kept in the museum of Tekchand. But before the end comes, the agony of Tekchand reveals aptly the apathy and insecurity of a man who lived in the Punjab since time immemorial. Tekchand echoes:
This is my city, as much as that of its most respected Muslim families - the Abbasses, the Hussains, the Chinas. I, my family, have done as much as any of them to make it prosperous and beautiful. And what are they doing? Burning it down! And look at us! Waiting for police protection because its citizens want to finish us off.

Malgonkar delineates with finesse the plight of the victims of partition like Dobi and Mantaz whose wailing were drowned under the euphoria of newly acquired freedom. Dobi was caught by the prowling Muslims and was stabbed at the loins. Circumcision was the only mark of identity that could save or kill anyone on both sides. This was the mob frenzy. Mantaz was carried away presuming to be a Hindu girl by lecherous Muslims. She was gang raped and her heart rending cry was 'indeed the cry of outraged humanity.' In this context Prof. Dayananda observes on the thematic aspect of the novel in the following manner:

The novel has another theme: nobody is exempt from the capacity for violence. Gandhi, the great apostle of non-violence, might appear in the opening scene to convert Gian Tulmar to his creed of non-violence but the theme that runs through the novel from beginning to end is man's hidden capacity for violence often brought out by the destructive acts of others. It is a novel with three different stories skillfully interwoven, and all three work out the theme of violence.

Malgonkar did a magnificent job by exposing in detail the cruel ironies of the turbulent partition days. A large section of humanity was sacrificed in the undivided India at
the altar of independence. The sacrifice was more for partition than for independence. In the triangular clash between Gandhism, terrorism and imperialism emerged prominent as a force was communalism. The most prosperous Punjab was vivisected and its inhabitants became refugees on both the fronts.

'The land of the five rivers had become the land of carrion. The vultures and jackals and cows and rats wandered about, pecking gnawing, tearing, glutted, starring boldly at their train.'

Malgoskar sufficiently paid his attention to the terrorist movement and its role in freedom struggle. But inwardly, as a man with a keen sense of history, he was sure that even if this terrorist movement would have taken leadership, the consequence would have been same. But in stead of answering this vulnerable question himself, he left it to the reader to decide and for posterity to critically answer:

Malgoskar does not uphold terrorism as an answer to the country's freedom question. He does not reject Gandhi's principles, though he is dubious of the peoples capability to follow him. He is critical of the effectiveness of Jinnah's separatist view which is also held responsible in the story for that national holocaust.

Malgoskar has been regarded as a novelist keeping himself mostly confined to the upper class, aristocrats and the bourgeoisie; he has also shown authenticity in describing the rural India, its ethos and taboos to a great extent.
bullock cart waiting for Gian under the jackfruit tree at the back of the station yard at Pachewad, description of Tikarca, the cartman with his faded turban and the rust coloured bullocks, Raja and Sarja, are all indicative of his rural consciousness as an Indo-English novelist. Konkot is divided between the 'Big House' and the 'Small House'. The rivalry between the two houses over the piece of land at Pipoda is a very common phenomenon. Gian's grandfather's marriage to Aji, his grandmother and her inaccessibility to the 'Big House' as a low caste woman, is also typically a rural sentiment prevalent in rural aristocracy. G.S. Mur in support of E.M. Forster regarding the authenticity and universal appeal of this novel notes with emphasis:

The Prince in spite of its outstanding qualities, suffers from being tied down to a set of conservative values which have a great appeal in the context of the novel but little relevance to modern life. A Band on the contrary, in its attempts to explore violence and non-violence in a double context - personal and social - and in its presentation of love as a transcendent value, attains a degree of universality reached by very few novels by Indian writers in English.

The historical authenticity and realistic portrayal of history is approved through Prof. Dayananda who notes:

The stark realism of the novel, its exposition of the human catastrophe of the partition of India, is one of its predominant qualities. Fiction is simply the form or shape the novelist has given to documented facts and authentic events of the national past. Every historical fact, every historical event in the
This concludes the analysis of the social aspects of the major novels of Manohar Malgonkar. He himself is proud of the fact that his novels are informative as well as entertaining and, at the same time they are close enough to pass for straight history. In spite of all adverse criticism regarding the writer's sympathy for the privileged, Malgonkar can rightly be described as a socially conscious artist always trying to project the socio-political and economic changes of a struggling and emerging nation in its pains and agonies. His characters are as real as flesh and blood; the situations they come across are a part of living history of India. That is why he has been described as a 'Historian Fabulist'.
NOTES

3. Ibid, p.156.
7. Ibid, p.149.
10. Dayananda, op. cit., Ch.7, pp.151-152.
15. Ibid, p.137.
16. Ibid, p.35.
21. Ibid, p.252
22. Ibid, pp.50-61.
29. Ibid.
32. Malgokar, Combat of Shadows, p.112.
33. Ibid, p.223.
34. Ibid, p.223.
37. Ibid, p.34.
38. Ibid, pp.89-90.
40. Dayananda, op. cit., Ch.2, p.58.
41. Malgokar, Combat of Shadows, p.237.
42. Dayananda, op. cit., Ch.4, p.39.
43. Letters to Manohar Malgokar, dated August 27, 1963, Quoted by G.S.Amur, Manohar Malgokar.
46. G.S. Amur, Manohar Malgonkar, p.30.
50. Ibid, p.15.
51. Ibid, p.16.
52. Ibid, p.15.
53. Ibid, p.61.
55. Ibid, p.67.
56. Ibid, pp.145-146.
57. Ibid.
60. Singh, op. cit, p.123.
62. Ibid, p.244.
63. Ibid.
64. G.S. Amur, Manohar Malgonkar, Ch.5, p.79.
65. Malgonkar, op. cit, p.246.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid, pp.262-263.
70. Ibid.
73. Ibid, p.268.
74. Ibid, p.274.
75. Ibid, p.275.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid, p.284.
82. G.S. Anur, op. cit., Ch.5, p.35.
83. G.S. Anur, op. cit., Ch.5, p.35.
86. Iyangar, op. cit., p.433.
87. Dayananda, op. cit., p.194.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid, p.18.
91. Ibid, p.72.
92. Ibid, p.73.
93. Ibid, p.75.

94. Ibid, p.81.


99. Ibid, p.93

100. Ibid, p.165

101. Ibid, p.246

102. Ibid, p.28

103. Ibid, p.178

104. Ibid, pp.233-234

105. Ibid, p.268

106. Ibid, p.283

107. Ibid, p.292

108. Ibid, p.290


110. Ibid

111. Ibid, p.291

112. Ibid, pp.291-292

113. Ibid, p.294

114. Ibid.
115. Ibid, p.335
116. Ibid, pp.231-232
117. Ibid, p.332
118. Ibid, p.337.
123. G.S. Amur, Monohar Malgonkar, p.120.