CHAPTER VII
THE PRINCELY ORDER

The bloodless event of the total transfer of power from princes to people is such an absorbing phenomenon as cannot pass unnoticed by writers seeking to project the image of our country on the international screen. Several Indo-Anglian novelists have devoted their attention to the analysis of the ways of life of princes and their fortunes. They have also dealt with the great political metamorphosis of our contemporary times viz., the process of the merging of Princely States like tributary rivers into the vast ocean of the Indian Union. Their attitudes are different. Manohar Malgonkar, Mulk Raj Anand and Huthi Singh devote one full novel each, which indicates the measure of importance they attach to this aspect of Indian life. Santha Rama Rau, Kamala Markandaya, Attia Hosain and Anand Lall use the theme of princely life to serve, more or less, as background only to support their main purpose. They chiefly depict the plight of princes in the post-Independence era.

Mulk Raj Anand and Manohar Malgonkar suggest that very few princes could have had pure affection and solicitous care from their parents as commoners' children usually get. In Anand's *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, the Maharaja, Victor, allows his first *tika* to die by
wilfully withholding the necessary medical treatment from his ailing child at the instance of his mistress Ganga Dasi. Victor himself could not get the love of his parents in his childhood. Dr. Shankar, while tracing his obsession for Gangi, ventures a guess: "I don't know if you were loved enough in your childhood, Victor's reply was "Not much." Much of the tyranny and obsession that had once reigned in Princely States could perhaps be thus explained. Victor could not give love to his son Indrajit. Not only that but he felt privileged to hector the boy whenever he so wished. Malgonkar's Abhay, in The Princes, also could not get the love of his parents. He had to do 'mujara' in their presence. There was always the living but opaque curtain of a medley of servants between a prince and his parents. Abhay does not feel that his childhood was the happiest time of his life. Abhay remarks: "Perhaps it is not given to any child brought up by a hoard of ayahs and supervised by a grim Anglo-Indian nanny to look back upon a happy childhood." There is a rigid time-table for visiting his royal parents and he often feels an 'intruder' even in the life of his parents. Abhay is not allowed to select his own friends. This shows that childhood bereft of parental love was often the lot of some princes.

Few princes had the right type of tutors who would
boldly mould the characters of their royal pupils with true insight, understanding and sympathy, but Malgonkar shows, in the *Princes*, how fortunate Abhay was in this respect. Mr. Moreton alone treats Abhay as a child, not merely as the Yuvaraj as all others do. His attitude is, psychologically speaking, healthy and honest and consequently his is a soothing and normalising influence - 'the greatest single influence' as Abhay's companion, guide, mentor. However, Anand's Victor in *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, shows scant respect for his tutor, Munshi Mithan Lal, who later on, becomes his private secretary. To Victor, he is 'a court fool in disguise' and he nicknames him 'Mian Mithu'. How can princes grow into fine, normal, healthy rulers, in such circumstances? Thus, Anand and Malongkar indicate how princes had to battle against the hampering influences of their unwise, reactionary and insular environment of their early life. Buthi Singh also points out how princes, instead of being brought up under sunny, paternal solicitous care, came under the fatal influence of palace servants. In *Maura*, Maura, who is violently perturbed over the gulf between Derry's sexuality and his sexlessness, thinks of making Derry a eunuch, but he realises it is futile to give his from to Derry, because their destinies are different. "Come, let me clasp you in my heart. I, who all but destroyed you! Let me mother you, hug you. Be my child! For one brief
moment know me as your mother.....". This shows how baby princes used to be weaned away from their royal mothers and some hired ayahs and governesses had to fill the bill, and who, sometimes, came to have full control over the royal infants and their possessive instinct sometimes played havoc.

The Indo-Anglian novel generally reflects the failure of the marriages of some princes and the great amount of misery and wretchedness emanating from their sexual obsessions and aberrations. Malgonkar shows that marriage, to princes, is a means for asserting or elevating their socio-political status. Though Hiroji, in The Princes, does not like to marry the girl with the white foot, he has to give in to duty. A prince had to sacrifice private desires in to duty. A prince had to sacrifice private desires in the interest of the welfare of the State. He tells Abhay that marriage for them means a sacred thing - it is not a private, purely personal matter at all, it is a duty, an obligation. Abhay's parents have reached the same conclusion that marriage is an obligation - of course, from different angles. His mother tells him, "Marriage does not have to have love, not our kind of marriage. Our marriages are not personal affairs but matters of duty." Malgonkar suggests how not to be lured into the illicit embraces of alluring concubines was wellnigh impossible for most princes, whose sex-life was marked by jerky
whimsicality and spasmodic - sentimentality. Abhay, in *The Princes*, accepts Zarina as mistress and respects her wished but insults Kamala in so doing. His conscience is enmeshed in the morass of sensuality by forming the segregated compartments of sex (Zarina) and family (Kamala). However, he realises the incomparability of Kamala's love and, in a supreme moment of fulfilment, they float on the waves of conjugal communion and angelic harmony. Kamala, usually docile, firmly tells him that she wants to be by his side. Her words - "I want to remain here. I am your wife. It is my duty to remain by your side. It is also my right." - remind us of Shakespeare's Portia insisting on her wifely rights before a perplexed Brutus. These also reflect the typical Indian conviction that a wife should not leave her husband in times of difficulty and stress.

Mulk Raj Anand shows how unhappy the married life of princes sometimes is. In *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, Victor has a wicked marital and sexual life - despite his three marriages and numberless amorous exploits. This reflects the general situation that prevailed in the States - marriages were royally, but not suitable, arranged. Victor hits upon the source of this malaise when he wistfully refers to his brief attachment for Indira: "But unfortunately, she was too good for me, because I was so bad." Huthi Singh also depicts a similar situation. In
Maura, Shevanti's carnal cravings, repressed and frustrated, are so aflame that she does not care even if Hanut thinks her a prostitute. "After all she was his wife." This shows that the inflammable spirit of princes, nourished on the lecherous atmosphere of the zenana and the court, could hardly be satiated by artless, noble, proud, puritanical princesses. Santha Rama Rau, too, depicts the failure of royal marriages, because considerations other than human love constitute their hollow basis. In Remember the House, the Maharaja of Kalipur and his Maharani are an ill-matched couple. Jay's own married life is all a mess. It has to end in a divorce as it does. This indicates that domestic happiness is a special boon which was mostly denied to princes. It is a sad commentary on their life that the royal couples could not gain happiness together in the intimacy of matrimony, though both, as individuals, would have deserved happiness.

Mulk Raj Anand points out how some princes learn their lesson of true love at great cost and belatedly and realise the difference between a concubine's physical attraction and a wife's faithful, all-sacrificing love. In Private Life of an Indian Prince, Victor is compelled to accept this when Gangi treacherously leaves him for good: "Oh, it is a mad, black torture to think of this faithless woman whom I love! Why couldn't I love Indira? Why did I have to fall in love with a whore?"
Companions of weal leave princes in their time of woe.

Even Dr. Shankar leaves Victor in the asylum! The
tender picture of Indira going to Poona to look after her
mad husband reflects the best Indian tradition of exempl-
ary womanhood.

Huthi Singh shows that sometimes love works miracles
in the life of even a profligate prince pampered by prostitu-
tutes. The butterfly of Hanut’s heart rests on the flower
of Ritha’s love and it transfigures his base self. Marri-
age, to Hanut and Ritha, is a perfect union of minds and
bodies. Ritha’s heart is hurt by the fact that not Hanut
but his sword is sent for the wedding ceremony. Princes
used to send their swords when they married commoners.
Huthi Singh touches on this custom faithfully.\(^{18}\)

Malgonkar indicates that it was a time-honoured
custom to present concubines to princes – even in their
early adolescence. Hiroji, in *The Princes*, was offered
his first concubine when he was only 16. He keeps away
from his wife and enjoys the company of his concubines –
Bibibai, Amina and Sherawathy. The size of the harem and
the gun-salute had come to be regarded as status-symbols
in many States. Abhay is fortunate to escape the evil
custom of concubinage, which once had its advantages but,
to a modern mind, it appears highly immoral and objection-
able.\(^{19}\)
Quite a few Maharajas, as the Indo-Anglian writers show, considered it their privilege to have affairs - adventures in the jungle of sex! Mulk Raj's Victor, after having enjoyed the most intimate company of Mrs. Russell, boldly creates a scandal by his affair with Miss Bunti Russell. Dr. Shankar sarcastically comments that the only conquests left to these princelings were the conquests over women in a hopeless country like India where the place of women is still governed by 'Manu Smriti' and the Hindu Mitakshara Law. Anand shows that the lechery of a prince could create a veritable hell! The existence of many Ranas and concubines in a princely harem posed the problem of succession and the air was thick with poison, bloodshed, adultery, bastardy, changelings, revenge, murder and what not! In *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, Ganga Dasi's conspiracies against Rani Indira and her sons can be cited as an instance in point. The sex-obsession of weak-willed 'angelic' princes, as suggested by Anand, invariably landed them on the dunghills of garbage! During intervals of separation from Ganga, Victor always seeks substitutes. Pratap Singh has to rescue him from a washerman who has caught Victor red-handed with his (the washerman's) wife! In order to wreak revenge on Ganga, he indulges in wild sexual orgies and not a virgin or a rupee is safe. At the mere hint that Victor is approaching village women flee immediately
because of his notoriety as a woman-hunter. Malgonkar's princes are monogamists and their affairs are also restricted to a small number. Nergis Dalal's Tejpore, in Minari, Shirk's marriage to enjoy full freedom in woman-hunt. Huthi Singh's Hanut is more adventurous - he audaciously maintains a very large harem!

Huthi Singh indicates that maintenance of a harem was almost a common feature in some big Indian States. The queer world of an outsized harem is graphically presented in Maura - concubines and their petty quarrels, their acceptance of bribes, their jealousy and snobbery even in this abysmal world, their affectionate tenderness for Maura under the garb of casualness and gay banter. Anand and Huthi Singh show how clever and attractive concubines hold the hearts of their princely owners in thrall. Victor's Ganga Dasi and Hanut's Ritha illustrate the point. In Maura Ritha is every inch a princess, but Panchi grudgingly admits Ritha's superiority by commenting that she is not an educated woman like Ritha. She says: "I hadn't a home or parents. I was brought up in a harem." Some princes were tragic victims of their fate inasmuch as their wild sex-life sent even their daughters - of course, illegitimate ones - to harems. Shevanti is discarded by Hanut and Panchi - his illegitimate daughter - is relegated to a cell in Hanut's harem!

Harem girls are like caged birds - unable to relish the
idea of freedom which, to wingless birds, spells fatality. Huthi Singh describes how concubines felt shocked if they had to quit the harem. Their existence was batty - loveless, lightless, meaningless. The girls in Hanut's harem celebrate their last day in the harem by singing and dancing with amity and jollity - truly, a touching scene, their swan-song!  

Huthi Singh hints at man's sexuality as a source of sorrows, Maura, being sexless, has no attachments: no ties, no sorrows. He feels that being a eunuch is not such a great misfortune - sex is not all. He is sure people will have to realise the futility of sex some day. Huthi Singh has aptly shown, through Maura's words, the inter-relation of sex and mind: "The mind is powerless against sex. It is moulded by sex. And what hope can there even be of the moulded moulding the moulder?"  

Indo-Anglian novelists show how princesses and others connived at the love-affairs of princes, who have to have comparatively tough and wild women to work off their passions upon. Thus concubinage had come to be regarded as a must by all concerned. Shevanti, in Huthi Singh's Maura, defends her keeping pretty women in the palace. "From our earliest days we are told that men like a little fun, and that we shouldn't really mind if they have an affair now and again. It helps to keep their poison down...."  

Not only Shevanti but Indira, in Private
Life of an Indian Prince, and Abhay's mother and Kamala, in The Princes, connive at the affairs of their respective husbands. Anand Lall describes the sexual exploits of a royal dotard in The House at Adampur. Raja Muzaffar Khan, a well preserved rogue of sixty five, is wretchedly brazen in his woman-hunting. He indulges in gorging the body of Ranu, a woman young enough to be his youngest child! The height of banality is reached when he asks Ranu to sleep with Ram Nath, for he wishes to enjoy the company of Ranu's friend. 28

Santha Rama Rau suggests how bought women redeem themselves with supreme loyalty and self-effacement. In Remember the House, Jay's hollow married life has crumbled and he is drawn to whisky and woman. His mistress, Sundaribai, a simple, sturdy, sweet-voiced, religious-minded, self-effacing Gujarati woman, serves as an anchor in Jay's shaken life and stands by him in his crisis. 29 These Sundaribais, Aminas and Zohras conjure up touching portraits in the treacherous world around them. Courtesans were regarded important items of cultural paraphernalia in the bygone Lucknow-life of Nawabs. In Attia Hosain's Sunlight on a Broken Column, Laila tries in vain to ape her father's courtly salutation to Mushtari Bai to whom her father pays glowing compliments. "An English governess cannot teach her as you taught us lessons in etiquette and courtesy." 30 Mushtari Bai is not a cruel, sensual money-sucker. She
is otherworldly and charitable. She represents the best in the tradition of the courtesan's world - nobility in depravity.

Malgonkar indicates how princes contributed to the complex tribe of bastards by consorting with countless concubines. In The Princes, Charudatt's character poses the question of bastardy in Indian States. Bastards often took to treachery as their legitimate tool, almost shamelessly, to redress their wrongs. Though Hiroji's first-born, Charudatt is subjected to social stigma and even Kanak Chand, a chamar can yell the word 'Bastard' into his ears. The oceans of anger bottled within him made him seek revenge in an unsportsmanlike manner - the revenge of sheep, indeed! The world does not forget that Charudatt is a bastard and he also does not forget that he is one and unfortunately behaves like one.

Malgonkar stresses that princes almost desperately struggled to achieve some speciality to monopolise the attention and interest of white rulers. In the case of Hiroji and Begwad, in The Princes, it is the tiger-hunt. He has evolved an elaborate, fool-proof, clockwork bandobast for it. Malgonkar, himself a keen hunter, given a stirring account of hunting in artistic terms and the bygone princely world with all its bravado, sportsman-spirit, reckless courage, astute cunning and impeccable mastery and above all, 'simple old world dignity' and
code of honour - all this passes vividly before our mind’s eye. Malgonkar and Anand show how hunting afforded facilities for carrying favour with white sahibs. It increased their royal dignity and decreased their funds - but, then, princes were never worried about it and borrowed blindly and levied illegal taxes of all descriptions like Nazarana, Motorana, Elephantana etc. The finances of Begwad - as also of Shampur - were in an irretrievably messy condition. Anand suggests that hunting orgies were often sexual orgies. Princes and their guests were only superficially interested in hunting. A Hiroji, of course, would be an exception.

In Private Life of an Indian Prince, Anand gives a satirical account of the pseudo-hunt. Popatlal and Kurt Landauer are vying with each other, to the chagrin of Bool Chand to win Gangi’s favour. Victor is laying a bait for the more-than-willing Mrs. Lane, enraged Mr. Lane, despite his deformity, Watkins and the Bells are practising self-deception that they are keen hunters. Only Buta, the real hunter, is really engaged in staging a panther-shoot. Anand describes the machan rather at length. One might suspect that it is probably meant for a Western audience. Indians do not need such an elaborately worded explanation for such an ordinary thing as a machan.

Indo-Anglian novelists stress the insane extravagance of princes. Santha Ram Rau’s Remember the House, hints at the fate of the princes other than the crown princes in Indian States, especially after Independence. Jay, the
younger prince of Kalipur, is an amiable wastrel, whose party on the New Year's Eve in 1947 is his Swan song. As Baba feels, such parties seemed to be out of place in the context of changing circumstances. Owing to Independence being around the corner. The novelist brings out the senselessness of the extravagance of royalty. Jay spends excessively after races and parties and drinks. His New Year party and the hang-over party are lavishly thrown. She describes, quite a few times, Daulat Sing stiffly hovering behind Jay with a bottle of champagne. Jay, a confirmed drunkard, regards whisky as more reliable than friends. He is a staunch opponent of Prohibition. He comments: "It's absurd - and cheeky - this policing of morals." The Maharani of Kalipur has her saris made for her in Paris which, indeed, as Pria and Baba think, is 'unpatriotic and in poor taste'. Kamala Markanaya also depicts how Prince Jumbo, in Possession, wallows in the silken mire of luxury. He, like Jay, rocks himself constantly in the opulent whirligig. The emptiness of life does not come in the way of his buoyancy 'that had not deserted him during the long sad ritual of divestment that had been his lot'. The figure of Jambo, moving from one gallery of art to another without understanding a thing about art and artist, just to be uptodate and fashionable, is a sad comment on those living on the surface. His own words are full of unconscious irony: "Must move with the times, My dear. Even if one does not
understand 'em." Even if it is granted that princes had a right to squander their money as they did, it has to be admitted that in a country of teeming millions and starving thousands, their extravagance was an unpardonable moral crime. No wonder people treated such extravagant princes with scant sympathy when they fell on evil days.

The Indo-Anglian novel reflects the prejudices of princes which indicate their narrow-mindedness and lack of a sense of justice. Princes were a class apart and lived in voluntary segregation and tight-lipped insularity. Dazzlingly forbidding, they were practically cut off from all real contact with commoners. As members of the top-most stratum of the Indian social hierarchy, they imprisoned themselves in the shell of parochialism and harboured deep prejudices against the ways of simple people, commoners, castes, breeding, dress, nationalists and their political agitation and movement.

Malgonkar depicts how Hiroji, in the Princes, hates nationalists the most. To him, they are the near enemies trying to subvert the loyalty of the people towards their rulers and keen on grabbing whatever was left by the British. "The Nationalists!" My father said with a sneer. "Goondas led by traders and lawyers!" He derives satisfaction from the grim struggle between the nationalists and the British. His prejudices against
the British come to be diluted. The novelist illustrates how princes reduced the national movement to sordid personal levels and believed that the movement for self-rule was motivated by a desire to pay back personal insults. In *The Princes*, Hiroji traces its origin to the insults heaped upon congress-leaders as individuals by the British e.g. Gandhiji was thrown out of a railway carriage reserved for the whites and Motilal Nehru was black-balled in the club at Allahabad. Malgonkar and Anand show that Hiroji and Victor love those who protect and respect their heritage and hate those who are bent upon destroying it. They cannot brook opposition and have no patience for upstarts like Kanak Chand, Pandit Gobind Das and the like who, after Independence, represent their new rulers' mal-administration. They brush aside the hint that they should give some sort of representation to the people in the administration of their States. They do not care even if persons like Kanak Chand and Gobind Das do a lot of harm to them. They are not prepared to win them over or suffer them. Their attitudes to congressmen in power are representative of those of many princes.

Markandaya's *Jumbo*, in *Possession*, also has prejudices against the people of low birth and the rise of the upstart. He regrets that the princes had to fight for posts against congresswallas - the 'riff-raff' - and stake their status. He bemoans that the upstarts
After the Accession of Sham Pur, Gobind Das, the Praja Mandal Boss, in Private Life of an Indian Prince, becomes the target of Victor's venom: "The ass! How can he rule? Brother-in-law, sprung up from nowhere!" 49 In the same novel, the Raj Mata, shut out from civilized life, expresses her feudal contempt for mere commoners, now the rulers of Independent India, by saying that they are 'not as kind as Angrezi Sarkar', and are 'mean, low people, sprung up from nowhere!" 50 Indira's veneration for Sardar Patel enrages the Raj Mata: "This Sardar — of which State was he a Sardar? He looks like an angry bull from the pictures of him. And his dhoti is much too short for his legs!" 51 In Attia Hosain's Sunlight on a Broken Column, Saira expresses her hatred for the new rulers. "What can you expect," she would jibe, "Where a government is run by people who wear dhoti to parties and put their dirty feet upon sofas?" 52 The Maharani of Kalipur, in Santha Rama Rau's Remember the House, is also a prey to such prejudices. She says proudly: "We will tell these congresswallahs, these dhoti-wallahs what our people think. They trust us..." 53 The simple dress of the congressmen has come in for brutal and blind criticism from princes and their families. Anand shows how princes could ill-digest their loss and were prejudiced against the new rulers. Victor taunts Popatlal with the breakdown of the administration.
in Shampur since the Accession. Popatlal retorts that it is the direct result of the past misrule of the Maharaja. Victor expresses his scorn for the Praja Mandal and deals a personal blow to Popatlal: "...The Banias are in power." The personal 'dig' is 'the most unkindest cut of all.' It is not cricket. This indicates how princes and their families could not stomach their defeat and their scorn for the commoner was aggravated. This is what most of the royal families must have felt like.

Though an important aspect of Indian life, religion seems to have been left well-nigh untouched by the Indo-Anglian novelists dealing with the Princely Order. Malgonkar shows how princes turned to religion for social stamp and for solace. Hiroji, in The Princes, spends much to establish his right to wear the sacred thread and offer prayers in the temples like high caste Hindus. Religion is a tangible, living matter of faith with Hiroji - 'blatant, noisy and almost an orgiastic affair'. Abhay's mother is deeply religious. Her religion is a simple and almost personal affair. She has tears of humility in her eyes while at prayers, and then, even Abhay feels like an intruder. Princes surrender to religion desperately, probably because not many princes are good husbands. Hiroji offers, now and then, a Mahapooja for one reason or another e.g. the
failure of the Cripps Mission, for a baby boy when Kamala expected, for the naming ceremony of the boy.\textsuperscript{57} In his last days, he has been engaged either in hunting or in pooja - a surprising combination, indeed! Religion is, thus, practised by princely families either for propitiation of the deities or for seeking solace in times of sorrow.

Malgonkar has described, in detail, the Bedar family treasure - Jamdarkhana - and its guards in The Princes, because the family treasure constitutes an important feature of princely life. It was hoarded in the Patalpat fort, where their family gods also were still there. Patalpat was like 'the chessboard in the nether world'.\textsuperscript{58} The Bedar prince could go there three times in his life - as yawaraj, as ruler and in an emergency. It had been faithfully guarded by a handful of the Ramoshi for the last 200 years. The procedure of access to it was such as even the prince might not remember its route and exact location. It constituted the plunder of the five Bedar generations - loaded with the groan of the victims. It was like a 'Mausoleum' and Abhay felt nausea and claustrophobia.\textsuperscript{59} The Ramoshi guards, loyal and ignorant, still lived in the 18th century. To them the Sarkar either meant the white Badshah from Bileyat or the Mughal Badshah! It left the Ramoshi leader blinking that there would be no more Bedar King and that Abhay was the last. Yes, they were not worried about their maintenance. They had implicit faith that the Bedar would never forsake them.\textsuperscript{60} This unflinching,
child-like loyal faith in the Bedars endears them to us — a tender Malgonkar touch.

Huthi Singh describes the fabulous treasure of the House of Savah at Anjala. The family god was there and the treasure was guarded by the Minas — savage, loyal, brave and formidable. Anjala was a labyrinth on a solitary peak. Hanut used to visit it once a year and bring back with him precious diamonds giving him ten times more than the annual State Revenue. The Minas were brave and their exercises were manly. They did not marry but stole away small boys to keep their tradition alive. They were married to the 'Rock' at the age of 12 and visited it, one night every year. They were originally Rajputs and desired to be restored to Chitor as rulers. Hanut defeated them and made them accept their new life. The Minas, like the Ramoshis in The Princes, mark their exodus from the primitive world under the princes and join the commoners in the new, strange world.

In Attia Hosain's Sunlight on a Broken Column, Romona told her schoolmates about the State treasure-house situated in the heart of a hill and its 'secret approach through a maze was known only to its hereditary guardians. Giant Negroes, bearing on their cheeks strange, secret, branded signs'. There was in it a strange necklace of a concubine who had been walled alive many centuries ago by a jealous ruler. Its large central ruby was said to drip blood on her death anniversary.
Thus, strange legends and brave tribal clans lend a mysterious and attractive charm to the princely treasure-houses.

Malgonkar, Hunthi Singh and Santha Rama Rau, incidentally, analyse the relations between princes and their heirs — indicating the generation gap. In The Princes, Hiroji belongs to the lost world and Abhay to the world to come. In the critical age of transition, they often find each other in the opposite camps. Abhay says, "I was youth, progressive, righteous; he was age, reactionary, taboridden.... he was a giant caught in the snare of contemporary values but trying to be true to the values of a lost world." Abhay's is the voice of sanity and realism, but it does not have the convincing ring. It is hesitant, tentative, impulsive. It belongs to a period of transition. It very often reflects only the sceptical attitude of an intellectual — passive, indifferent, listless. Abhay feels that the treaties guaranteed by Queen Victoria are not sacred. But, to Hiroji and his like, the treaties are "the gods of the Indian princes". With the passage of time Abhay eagerly leans fatherward — becomes more of a Bedar — with unflinching devotion and intimate understanding. It is a happy coincidence that both have brought, between themselves, the duelling pistols, which shows how like each other they basically are. Huthi Singh throws light on
the relative efficiency of the older and younger generations of princes as administrators. He seems to indicate that the older generation was more competent in administration than the younger one. In *Maura*, Hanut feels that he has not managed well since his father's death. Not even one department is functioning honestly or efficiently. He thinks he has to rule with an iron hand, otherwise he must give up. "I think my father was not a wise man, but he was a very wise ruler." 68

Indo-Anglian novelists examine the nature of the relationship between princes and their entourages from different angles. Mulk Raj Anand shows the last years of the rule of a decadent prince whose personal servants were down-right flatterers. In *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, Victor's Secretary, Munshi Mithanlal, bears an assload of humiliations for money and leads his former pupil to the door of a courtesan. Pratap Singh also humours the Prince. Dr. Shankar is different but not effective. His conscience is not dead but somnolent. The members of Victor's entourage represent the most ugly bygone tradition of fawning courtiers. This is so, especially because Anand is a purposeful writer. The members of the entourage do not come into their own. The State astrologer does not even care to cover his servile flattery under any coating. "The hour and the moment is ever auspicious for you. And your path's strewn with flowers all the way." 69 Dikker Rao's tame
visit to Shevanti and idle promises to help her, in Huthi Singh's *Maura*, support the point. Anand reveals how some princes indulge in open love-making in the presence of their superior servants even. Dr. Shankar, in *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, has to play a compulsory witness to the amorous embraces of Victor and Gangi. Though educated in England, Dr. Shankar has not conquered the demure part of his nature which is India's and feels embarrassed. This shows how self-respect could not be preserved by anyone serving an Indian prince. We often find princes in Indian fiction directing all their anger against their servants. Victor almost brutally asked Bool Chand to clear out and abused him as 'Mr. Snorter-donkey Bool Chand' and 'fool' when Bool Chand failed in his mission with India and Popatlal. Anand points out how a courtier's life is cursed with futility. Dr. Shankar regrets his years spent in the service of Victor. He had cloaked his desire for power and leisurely life under the excuse of paying off the Maharaja's debts incurred for his British education. He could have served the villages as a doctor, instead. His penetrating analysis underlines the meaningless existence of toadies and setzteles around the Indian princes. Huthi Singh suggests that royal palaces were breweries of vagaries, veritable Bedlams, where behaving like a mad-cap was a way to win social respect. In *Maura*, Rani Shevanti's maid servant thinks that rudeness is statecraft. She remembers her
father's advice. "If you want the world to call you sane and respect you, act as though you were mad." The novelist also stresses the insecurity of service of the personal staff of princes. When Dikker Rao is asked by Ritha to produce the pimp who had brought her into Savah, he expresses his righteous indignation. "These people would drive anyone mad. I don't think I have spent a single day here free from anxiety and fear.... It is impossible to know what is going to happen to one in the next moment." 

Mulk Raj Anand suggests how villagers were tired of forced labour and poverty. In *Private Life of an Indian prince*, whenever there was a hunt, any servant of the Maharaja called thousand of them away from their fields for forced labour to work as beaters and camp-followers. They, therefore, join the Communists in armed revolt against the Maharaja. Again, in Shampur, Somnath and his friends lead a procession of villagers for the abolition of the illegal taxes like *Elephantana* and *Motran*. Malgonkar brings out the climactic reaction of the down-trodden against the mad oppression and forced labour. Buta releases words like bullets and answers Victor back. "No more *begar*, Maharaja." This defiance was spurred on by 'the spirit of the new times'. The Mahatma had made men out of faceless clumps of clay.

Indo-Anglian novelists have looked at Englishmen in
princely states from different angles, Malgonkar's

Moreton, in The Princes, is a noble person who exercises
a healthy influence on Abhay. He is sensitive and has
deep regard for Indian sentiments. He can understand
India's poverty and has real compassion for the down-
trodden. The novelist also shows how some Englishmen
indulged in nefarious activities such as smuggling,
exploiting their position as members of the ruling race.
Farren (Punch), Watson and others worked as 'respectable'
smugglers and took away the jewels and money of the Indian
princes out of India and deposited in 'numberless accounts'.
Hiroji is eager to have a deal with Punch. He does not
bother whether or not it is moral or legal to do so.

Abhay dislikes it. Anand shows how from generation to
generation the fear of the Englishman is drilled into the
minds of Indians through insults and injuries. In the
pre-1942 period, he was an unknown quantity - silent,
unpredictable, remote, non-human, hot-tempered and authori-

tative and the symbol of the unlimited powers of the Sarkar.

Dr. Shankar, in Private Life of an Indian Prince,
is, therefore, afraid of meeting Col. Jevons, when Victor's
scandalous affair with Bunti is exposed. Anand illus-
trates how English officers were given to bribes. Col.
Burton of the Political Department does not insist on
Ganga Dasi's exile, after Mrs. Burton has received a
precious necklace as a present from Victor. He points
out that some white men, owing to weakness or wickedness,
allowed their wives to be treated as playthings by black princes. In *The Princes*, Minnie is spreading her wiles on Snappy to lure him into a big 'business-deal' of jewels - not without Punch's knowledge.\(^84\)

Malgonkar suggests how most of the Indian princes were well ahead of British India in adopting repressive measures to nip the nationalist movement in the bud. Hiroji, in *The Princes*, is no exception. He prohibits the sale of photographs of Tilak and Gandhi, dismisses the white-capped students from school and publicly flogs persons for shouting nationalist slogans. People were suppressed because they were backward and 'had not acquired the political consciousness of their brethren in the rest of the country'.\(^85\) The novelist also points out how even after Independence some villagers - particularly in tribal areas (e.g. Ramoshis) - do not know that the country is free. Some others still regret that old times cannot return! According to Abhay's analysis, the old rule meant, to them, ready justice, many holidays, pomp and festivals, drink and dance and absence of income-tax! The present rule means joylessness, dearness, prohibition and income-tax! Many people look back upon the princely rule with a sentimental longing.\(^86\)

Mulk Raj Anand shows how the commoner in princely states was living at a sub-human level - that he was allowed to exist was regarded in itself a great concession granted by the ruling class. But the advent of Independ-
ence awakened in his heart the sense of self-confidence and self-respect. Anand has delineated the first signs of this important change in the attitude of the commoner who had grown aware of his newly achieved freedom. But in *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, defies Victor and refuses to work without being adequately paid. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel brings home to Victor the change in the political climate of the country through the instance of Dhebarbhai who was insultingly driven out of Jamnagar by the Jam Sahib and who had later on risen to be the Chief Minister of a State ten times larger than the kingdom of the Jam Sahib. This shows the triumph of the commoner over the blind forces of opposition. Mulk Raj Anand shows how people could raise their voices boldly against the tyranny of princes. In *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, the people of Shampur are boldly demanding the release of the Praja Mandal Leaders and shouting the slogans of 'Quit Sham Pur' against the Maharaja. Obviously, this situation was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders. Also, in Santha Rama Rau's *Remember the House*, the people pressing for Independence cause a lot of embarrassment to the Maharaja of Kalipur whom they yell down by roaring slogans - 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai!' 'Jawaharlal Nehru ki Jai!' This indicated the direction of the wind, but the Maharaja had drugged himself into believing that the people were loyal to him and that they would support him in a political crisis.
Praja Mandals made important contributions in hastening the process of Accession of their States to the Indian Union. These were not always led by foolish people like Kanak Chand or Gobind Das. Such names as Dhebarbhai, Balvantrai and others rise before our mind's eye, when we think of Praja Mandals in princely States. But neither Anand nor Malgonkar does full justice to Praja Mandals, who, according to them, were fortunate but faceless masses of humanity led by people like Kanak Chand or Gobind Das, who were either foolish or mean or both. This is not true. Their treatment is not satisfying. Gobind Das and Kanak Chand are caricatures only. Apart from this, their description of Praja Mandals is based on historical facts and they sympathise with the people, on the whole, in their suffering.

Malgonkar shows how some of the headstrong princes were once striving to form a third force. In The Princes, Hiroji informs Abhay that they have been busy forming a third force which is intended to be a counter-weight to the I.N.Congress and the Muslim League. There were rumours that the Political Department was at the back of all this. Abhay knows that no such thing as the third force can come up because of the internal rivalries and bickerings of the Indian princes. Hiroji, however, has full faith in its emergence. In January, 1946, the Chamber of Princes was given an anaesthetic assurance that the rights and treaties of the princes
would not be violated. This put wind into their sails. They started dreaming of a force 'far more powerful than either the white-capwallas or the dhotivallas'. Hiroji has a new lease of hope. "We shall have a separate India, the India of the Princes", he explains. "Powerful, solid, deep-rooted in tradition; six hundred independent States merging together to form a princely India....." Malgonkar, through Abhay, points out that this was the attitude of the majority of the princes. Even at the cost of civil war, they were determined to oppose the nationalists. It was a pathetic illusion, an impractical idea.

The princes started bewailing like orphaned children, when the British Cabinet Mission declared that there would be no relationship between the princes and the British Crown after the transfer of power. The communal conflict in the country side-tracked the people's attention and the princes were simply ignored. Hiroji appears like a general fighting 'a back-to-wall campaign' for the third force 'doomed for failure.' Abhay advises him to join the Assembly but Hiroji is adamant. As Malgonkar rightly observes: "Theirs was merely the anguished cry of the last-ditchers in the face of progress." The third force was not born—it died its embryonic death. As described by Malgonkar, the government had prepared a formula for the acceptance of the States. It was known as the Instrument of Accession under which the government
would take over the control of only defence, foreign affairs and communications from the princes within their States. The British had controlled these and the successors did not demand anything more. Many princes did not value the assurances of the Congress leaders. Hiroji says, "The vengeance of sheep can be terrible." The Viceroy had called a meeting of their Chamber on 25th July, because many princes had not accepted the Instrument. They were plunged in gloom and were making cruel jokes about their own end. To one, it was like the oysters at the tea-party of the walrus and the carpenter. Anotherstyled the Instrument as 'the instrument of destruction'. Hiroji signs it reluctantly and is cynical, indifferent and reckless ever afterwards. His grief is palpable. In the words of Abhay: "I was aware that I was in the presence of sorrow; a grief deeper than when his brother had died, a humiliation far more wounding than when his Maharani had taken a lover."

Mulk Raj Anand's Victor represents those princes who wanted to set themselves up as independent, after the departure of the British, and did not sign the Instrument. He was thrown in an incalculable state of mind, because the Sardar's threatening image had been preying upon his weakening nerves. Later on, Diwan Popatlal vainly advised Victor - who believed that because Sham Pur bordered on Tibet and touched Kashmir, it should be treated like Nepal and Bhutan, a buffer State - to accede to the Union. This shows the attitude of some princes
who unwisely bragged of declaring their independence without any real argument or ability to support the privilege which they had never enjoyed. Malgonkar shows how the news of the merger of Chhatisgarh and Orissa States into their neighbouring provinces and that the princes concerned had been pensioned off dealt a rude shock to the princes. After the big piles of guarantees from Viceroy, Ministers and nationalist leaders, the princes wondered how it could have happened. This caused misgivings in their hearts about the existence of the remaining princely States also. Hiroji had become extremely cynical, apathetic and resigned to his fate. With his uncanny judgement he could clearly see the end of all. The Begwad State was practically compelled to accept the merger. Hiroji was dejected but also determined not to sign the Instrument of Merger. The dramatic irony of his utterance deserves notice: "I shall never put my name to that paper. I shall remain true to the salt of my ancestors." He allowed himself to be killed by the Kolras giant tiger and averted the ignominy of signing the death-warrant of the whole princely dynasty.

Malgonkar shows how some narrow-minded fanatical Congress bosses meanly wreaked 'the vengeance of sheep' on the dethroned princes by adding insult to injury. Their sense of boastful self-importance was inflamed by their unexpected and ill-digested success and they could
not placate the disgruntled princes to win them over to their side. In *The Princes*, Kanak Chand, in his speech at the school function, makes some false and disparaging remarks — "the man who wielded the whip is no more. All that he stood for is gone" — concerning Hiroji. Beside himself with rage, Abhay beats Kanak Chand publicly and fulfills his oath and then abdicates his title.

The epilogue of *The Princes* tells us that the Bulwara Dam is erected in 1958. It is the third largest dam in India. The Patalpat Fort, the stronghold of the pindaries 200 years ago, is 200 feet under water. There is a quiet irony impressing upon us the tragedy that is enacted. The matter-of-fact epilogue indicates, as it were, the cumbrous movement of the monstrous machinery of democracy handled by people, who crush the aspirations of the Ramoshis and the Bhils of Bulwara who assume a hauntingly pathetic shape. The author’s sympathy — expressed with great restraint — lends tragic grandeur to the tale.

In Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, Laila, while recalling the picture of Romana and her princely husband — comments on the plight of princes in changing times. After the Integration, the princes had their privy purses only. They were left with titles, no states, reduced incomes and unchanged habits and tastes. An adequate degree of co-operation between the wealthy
and the titled was necessary "to play polo—entertain, race, drink, flirt or fornicate with the proper air of aristocratic nonchalance...."

Anand describes how after the Accession of Sham Pur, the dyarchy of Popatlal, the administrator and Cobind Das, the Chief Minister faces a fatal discord and controversies, gossips, intrigues, contempt, corruption, nepotism and black market has gripped the whole of Sham Pur. On the top of everything, the guns of the Communist guerrillas rend the atmosphere. The process of the transformation of values is the natural outcome of the transformation of power. Anand deftly indicates that the old values are reversed and nothing very new is evolved. The Inspector of Police, for instance, is more honoured than the Inspector of Schools. The rich black-marketeer is boosted by the validity of money values and "a new kind of barbarism emerged and held sway". The tragedy of the lonely intellectual, such as Dr. Shankar, can well be gauged in such a socio-political set-up.

Anand brings out how the malady of rootlessness had swayed many persons (e.g., Victor) in the age of transition. Dr. Shankar was acutely aware of "the cruelty and ugliness of Indian life" which was responsible for the insanity of many persons. The conflict between the new possibilities of life and the old reactionary forces like poverty, prejudices, inhibitions and traditional
repressions tore the emotional life of the people and drove them to neurosis or lunacy, while waging the war against feudalism. Dr. Shankar feels that India — in fact, the whole world — is a kind of lunatic asylum in which only those who struggle against the status quo and authority 'seemed to find some balance through the elaboration of a new sense of values'. Anand regrets that very few persons bother themselves about the meaning of human existence.

Indo-Anglian novelists point out that those of the princes who had no individuality and no spirit of service or sacrifice rushed to luxurious, metropolitan foreign cities, where they could live in their westernized lavish style. Markandaya shows, in Possession, how Jumbo loves 'to dine well, to drink and to dance and, therefore, he flew to London where he became metamorphosed into a representative of civilized man'. Nergis Dalal's Tejpore in Minari and the Maharani of Kalipur in Santha Rama Rau's Remember the House and Anand's Victor in Private Life of an Indian Prince all flock to foreign capitals.

Kamala Markandaya points out that the advent of Independence necessarily brings in its wake changes in the social hierarchy of India, which leave a bitter taste in Jumbo’s mouth when he observes how the not-very-rich of yesterday give themselves airs upon their
coming into sudden moneyed positions. Jumbo, a representative of the fallen princes feels disconcerted over the changes. He can't stand the 'riff-raff' elbowing themselves about and ousting the princes! He is filled with rage over the hopeless but inevitable situation. He ironically says that the power and the influence now lie among the representatives of the people.

Malgonkar indicates how princes were blind to their own fate and how they clung to one pathetic illusion or another. Hiroji, in *The Princes*, fondly hugs the impractical idea of the Union of Princely States. Their States were not contiguous geographically and they themselves were not united emotionally. Their downfall was a foregone conclusion. Who could stem the tidal, triumphal wave of a people advancing with tight-lipped determination? — Abhay, like a modern 'Sahdev' bemoans their impending fall and their paralysed sensibility. He feels that they were like mangoes in late May, ready to fall and if someone gave the tree a shaking all-good and rotten alike would drop off. According to Abhay, the time was over for champagne and dreaming. But his was a lone and unheeded cry. The princes rushed to their doom with their usual bravado! Malgonkar ponders over the plight of the princes in India after Independence. They were not destined to exist as princes and they did not.
Their fate was evident. How could they defy the forces of destruction unleashed in the country? After Independence, unseen chaos was raging in the States. In the wild dance of anarchy, the administrators had no time to lament the fate of 'oysters', however, docile they had now become. People were thirsting for universal liberation and regarded princes as the virtual relics of British Imperialism in the land of the free. Abhay says that they were a jest of history and they had outlived their time owing to British protection without which their extinction was inevitable.

Mulk Raj Anand artistically brings out the insurmountability of the forces of disruption before a new socio-political order could come into existence through the gnawing foreboding in the heart of Dr. Shankar when he witnesses the tug-of-war of opposing wills in Victor and Ganga who are in a mood of flirting, respectively with Mrs. Lane and Kurt Landauer. This produces in him 'a repeated sense of the doom that was imminent in it all'. The people of Sham Pur, the powerful actors in the drama, are determined to vanquish the decadent prince and all he stood for. When Buta defied him, the Maharaja feels highly indignant against the fates which are 'annihilating the very roots of his personality, his kingship...

' Anand indicates that all the Furies of Hell are relentlessly pursuing the spoilt, ever-erring child that is the Maharaja with all his wallowings in lethargy.
luxury and lechery; life has marked him out as a hollow man. The most powerful man of Sham Pur is also the most weakened. He is bewildered to think of persons in the opposite camp. Dr. Shankar clearly senses Victor's allround defeat and anticipates his complete collapse and feels that 'not all the Machiavellianism of Victor could ward off the nemesis that was approaching'.

Anand illustrates how princes, affected by the malady of rootlessness in the age of transition, feel like lost children. Shorn of their vainglorious power, they find themselves naked and neglected. To escape this ignominy one has to have the true desire to serve the people and to ascend the throne of the people's hearts. Victor represents those who have found themselves hollow. His frantic cries, however, histrionic these might sound, depict the agony of a doomed man, doomed to futility and oblivion in his own lifetime: "I am afraid! I dread the future! I feel a terrible sense of foreboding! It is all darkness, darkness, darkness around me!"

Anand suggests how fate drives Victor to an actual lunatic asylum in Poona - a fit finale for the prince who indulged in every wild orgy of sex and tyranny. Sham Pur was full of everything sham about it in the 'glorious' regime of Victor who carried a veritable Bedlam with him wherever he went! The wild, rash, ridiculous sex-'exploit' sets the tone of the novel. It is a proper prologue to the Poona asylum epilogue! Savah, in Huthi Singh's Maura
represents an Indian State undisturbed by the political consciousness of the people. It is baffling in its scheme of time, or rather, timelessness! It is medieval in tone and yet it is equipped with modern amenities of life. In a mystifying environment such as this, it is quite fitting that the ruler should parade as almost Omnipotent - and Hanut does feel like that. "He was lord of life....." he thought. "Even God could not be feared more," Huthi Singh also indicates the Omnipotence of fate in Maura. There were some irrational moments for the inmates of the royal harem and even for its owner, Hanut, 'in which anything could happen, moments of destiny, moments when Fate played strange tricks'. Santha Rama Rau shows, in Remember the House, how the Kalipurs are also as unheeding to the warning as the persons marching to their doom. The Maharani is sorry they are unable to go to Europe for a holiday in summer because of the agitations in the State. "All these dreadful little political types are going to be deciding our fate and we must wait and see what happens." Thus, Indo-Anglian novelists have dealt with the princely Order, bringing out the psychological problems and complications and the political aspirations and intrigues which marked their life. They have aptly brought out the peculiarities of their childhood, education, upkeep, marriage, sex-life, palace-life, harems,
entourage, hunting trips and excursions, wild and whimsical extravagance, senseless tyranny, prejudices and predilections, power-mania and vanities, eccentricities and oddities as also their relations with the British Crown, Britishers and Americans. The two major novelists — Anand and Malgonkar — have described at length the political situation at the time of Independence — the repressive measures of the princes to curb the nationalist movement and their resistance against the Integration of States, their efforts for raising a third political force viz. Princely India, their helplessness and consequent acceptance of the Merger and their pathetic plight in the post-Independence era.

Malgonkar deserves our gratitude for giving us a satisfying, artistic novel on the princely theme which is no mere sociological account. His attitude is, of course, sympathetic and sometimes even nostalgic, but he is too great a story-teller to broadcast it. He presents a romantic picture of the glory and greatness of princes, not fanatically but with a rare understanding and insight resulting in artistic objectivity. The novelist showst through the character of Abhay his awareness of the changing times and the imperative 'must' to adapt oneself to the just demands of modernity.

When a novelist of Mulk Raj Anand's calibre prefers to write fully on the princely life, one would not have
expected the words 'private' and 'an'. He has circumscribed his observation to the sexual exploits of a lawless, neurotic prince. The journey through the novel is not easy and leaves one exhausted and even exasperated. Anand's anonymous predecessor had done the job quite frankly, unhindered by psychological pretensions in his *The Memoirs of a Maharaja's Mistress*. However, Anand's clinical method and cathartic objective cannot be lost sight of.

Huthi Singh delineates the portrait of the philosophical enunch Maura in his *Maura* which also deals with the sex-exploits of a prince who ultimately redeems himself through his love for a commoner. The novel, except for Maura's portrait and a few cynical witticisms of Hanut, does not go much beyond a sociological account of a princely harem.

Santha Rama Rau uses the princely theme as a backdrop and keeps on reverting to it, now and then, and succeeds in enlisting our sympathy for the quizzical and pathetic second prince and showing the trepidations of a degenerated princely household after Independence. Kamala Markandaya also brings in a prince, Jumbo, in *Possession*, to give colour to the high society she intends to portray. Jumbo is a caricature. Attia Hosain describes a Muslim family which is not exactly royal as there is no State; the head of the family is a feudal
lord. She shows the post-Partition age of transition from slavery to independence. Anand Lall also depicts a feudal lord - in all his degeneration and decay, underlining the fact that most of the princes led lawlessly sensual lives. On the whole, The Princes by Malgonkar is the only satisfying picture of the ruler community who controlled the destinies of many human beings.

In pre-Independence times, S. C. Ghosh, S. K. Ghose, S. M. Mitra and Jogendra Singh wrote novels about the princes, but they aimed at presenting the luxurious lascivious and craftly environment of the princely court. They incidentally showed a prince's ambition and even his patriotism but dwelt on his love affairs, sexual exploits and tyrannical rule. The story would run in the old off-repeated rut having stock characters and situations; sometimes, political or philosophical discussions would be thrown in to give the novel a facade of purposefulness, as seen in The Prince of Destiny by S. K. Ghose and Hindupore by S. M. Mitra. Hardly would there be a fully realised character. The novelist's attitude to his subject lacked gravity and, therefore, he could not go beyond presenting a romantic, improbable fantasy. However, it should be noted that despite his alien sensibility, Ackerley could bring out the basic humanity of the superstitious and eccentric old Maharaja in Hindoo Holiday. The Indo-Anglian novel after Independence assumed a more
vital role than in the pre-Independence era - of faithfully representing the new socio-political attitudes, approaches and aspirations in terms of fictional art. Independence brought in its wake an upheaval in the princely fairyland and this was a thematic god-send for the serious novelist. The post-Independence Indo-Anglian novel on the theme, apart from its technical virtuosity and excellence, depicts the princely world in all its gamut - the personal as well as the public concerns of the Indian Princes. It shows how these princes reluctantly accepted the Merger of the native States into the Indian Union and it also shows their predicament after their being divested of power. It conjures up their past glory and magnificence and also reveals their neurotic, atrocious and megalomaniac behaviour. These writers are, to a large extent, objective and realistic in their treatment and psycho-analytical - almost clinical - in their method. Malgonkar's involvement with his princely heroes is so complete that he shares even their prejudices against the Congress upstarts with whom Mulk Raj Anand also does not seem to show sympathy. Santha Ram Rau's picture of the ruling prince's younger brother as an amiable wastrel, faced with a grave personal crisis after Independence, reveals her perceptive art. Ruthi Singh's inside-story of a ruler's harem bears the true stamp of authenticity. Thus, there is a vital difference between the concerns of the Indo-Anglian novelist in pre-Independence and
post-Independence times.

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