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CHAPTER – III

IMAGE OF ANGLO-INDIAN AND BRITISH MINORITY IN THE WRITINGS OF MANOHAR MAGONKAR

I. MANOHAR MAGONKAR

a) LIFE AND WORKS:

Manohar Malgonkar is a prominent Indo-English novelist. He has made a distinct contribution to Indian writing in English as a “down to earth letter of tales”. He has published 10 novels, three collection of short stories, three histories, three works of non-fiction and a play. The first four novels were published within five years viz., *‘Distant Drums’* (1960), *‘Compat of Shadows’* (1962), *‘The Princes’* (1963), *‘A Bend in the Ganges’* (1964). *‘The Devils Wind’* (1972) is the story of Nana Saheb, the controversial figure of the Sepoy Revolt of 1857. *‘The Garland Keepers’* (1986), his latest is a novel on Emergency.

Malgonkar has earned a niche for himself in Indo-English fiction by his compelling ‘Story telling’ technique and the probing insight into life. He is one of those few writers who go in the stamp of unmistakable authenticity by transmuting ‘felt experience’ into his art. His own diverse experience in the fields of big game hunting, civil service, army business, politics have helped him catch the ‘Colour of life’ especially of the upper strata. His own army service and princely ancestry brought him into
close contact with the 'Living English' and the upper class of people. Malgonkar's insistence on the authenticity of felt experience keeps him within the confines of direct involvement.

Like a dramatist, Malgonkar deliberately keeps in mind the nature and taste of his audience or readers. Though he says that he writes to be accepted by the English American readers, he invariably draws upon the reserves of the Indian ethos milieu to win authenticity and accuracy.

*I keep writing of India .... Because I feel no
author should write outside his own living
circumstances. If he does it is phoney*.1

He portrays the lives of the princes, landlords, British officers and bureaucrats truthfully and photographically. He takes great pains to present the life-like figures of these upper class because they also form a part and parcel of society through a minority in terms of number.

Since most of his novels are realistic pieces they deal with recent past incidents of Indian history also. They are concerned with the values associated with the British rule in India. As A.S. Ramamurti aptly observes:

*The novels of Malgonkar are concerned more with the contrast and conflict between the values associated with the impact of British*
rule in India and the values and attitudes which

are basically Indian².

We find in Malgonkar the inside picture of the princes, soldiers and British officers and not of the coolies and untouchables as in Mulk Raj Anand. It is, perhaps the reason why his writings are considered “withdrawn” from the reality of his country’s poverty. Malgonkar acknowledges the fact:

The social life of millions of Indian centres
around the dust bins of great cities. Granted.

But mine doesn’t, and for me to write about it
would be as insincere as a white man writing
about a Negro riot³.

His descriptions of the princely life and its pomp and glory, and finally its disintegration in The Princes, of the army life and war scenes in ‘Distant Drums’, of the dark interiors of the Indian Jungles and Wildlife hunting in Combat of Shadows of the Partition of India and the consequent Hindu-Muslim riots in A Bend in the Ganges, of Nana’s involvement in the process of history in The Devils Wind all reveal a deep concern for authenticity informed by a verve of personal knowledge.

Malgonkar feels that history and fiction have many elements in common,
and assert that history forms the basis of most of his work. He says that his novels are

\begin{align*}
\text{close enough to the ground to pass off for} \\
\text{straight history}^4.
\end{align*}

He writes –

\begin{align*}
I \text{ take great pains to be absolutely accurate. If} \\
I \text{ write that something happened on a Saturday} \\
or \text{ on a moonless night, you can be sure it was} \\
on \text{ a Saturday or a moonless night}^5.
\end{align*}

Besides the authentic historicity Malgonkar has deep awareness of the technique of characterisation in shaping the story, commenting on the process of characterization. Malgonkar says:

\begin{align*}
I \text{ thought they were sufficiently camouflaged for} \\
you not to think of them as real persons. They are actually composite personalities you know; \\
there is no real person. I might disguise the voice or size of the person and put them into a character which has absolutely no connection with that person and I think that the mental process is not deliberate at all .... Its rather involved and you just arrive at it what I can
\end{align*}
speak more authoritatively on is “How to make a fictional person into a real person’. Take a character like Minnie for instance. And give her the sort of composite attributes of people whom you have met in real life. So that to the reader she appears as some real person you have described.

It is by this technique of camouflage that Malgonkar successfully creates ‘the illusion of life’. The Maharaja of Begwad, Abhayraj, Henry Winton, Kiran, Debidayal, Gian – all are composite portraits who take their come from Malgonkar’s personal knowledge of various princes, soldiers, British officers and Anglo-Indians.

The present chapter aims to bring out the Anglo-Indian and British minority characters and the life of the upper crust of society viz., the princes as depicted in the writings of Manohar Malgonkar. In order to through light on the above mentioned minority characters in Malgonkar’s writings, I have dealt with his two novels viz., The Combat of Shadows and The Princes in particular.

b) PROBLEM OF IDENTITY AMONG EURASIANS:

Malgonkar presents in his novels like The Princes, Combat of Shadows and Bandicoot Run, the problem of identity of Eurasians, which
may be considered in the general context the problem faced by Anglo-Indian minority in Indian society.

*The Eurasians or Anglo-Indians are a race by themselves, by-products of Britisher’s lust in India, the European men fathering children on Indian women. The children hardly are identified with the natives because of the complexion and cultural heritage from father’s side; equally unwelcome are they into the white European community because of the peculiar traits inherited from mother’s genes.*

*Thus they confront, as they grow, an acute problem of identity. Most children strive to seek identity with the race supposed to be superior – the European, and get frustrated in their efforts. The tension the Eurasians suffer and consequently create in the Indian society may be termed and examined as a social conflict*.7

In manners, dress and language spoken, these Eurasians appear their paternal counterparts. They could insult the natives by their posture of superiority and get humbled by the Europeans as an inferior race.
There are innumerable references to the westernised characters in Indo-Anglian fiction – mostly uncharitable. The general trend appears to satirize the mode of lives lived by the Indians either directly influenced by Western civilization or at a second remove. In *Distant Drum*, Mathur was educated at Cambridge. He was a member of the “Wellington Club” – the sign of prestige and privilege. Similar was the status of Gopal Chandidar in *A Bend in the Ganges*. He was rewarded with a “lucrative job in a British firm”. Gopal had to marry Sundari for the sake of honourable kinship. After his marriage, extra-marital relation with a girlfriend Malini, appeared to him normal, his conscience never pricked him.

There is hesitation on neither side, they had taken to each other as naturally as fish taken to water. Persons like Gopal Chandidar discovered to their dismay, most Indians did not accept their ways of life, more particularly after the departure of the British.

The ethnic conflict appears at two levels – Personal and social – in the Indian novel. The cultural conflict between the same ethnic group is due to a two way contamination. Contamination by way of stay in the West and contamination by way of European infiltration resulting into a blood relationship, during the period of feudal India. The resultant race, identified as Anglo-Indian, have a strange Predicament in trying to identify themselves with the main stream of India.
The word ‘Anglo-Indian’ to denote the Eurasian, was commonly used during the British rule: the term connoted for the children of the British residents of India on women of Indian origin. Then it was generally used to designate Eurasians to enable them to identify their British Parentage. English, during their last years of rule, seemed to drop their imperial connections with India and also the term Eurasians. Malgonkar was acquainted with the Predicament of the Eurasians and their fears of rootlessness. He has created characters like Miranda, Minnie, Eliza, Eddie and explored the potentiality of the ethnic duality of such personalities on the frame of his novels continued to struggle for identity.

c) Anglo-Indian And British Characters In The Writings Of Manohar Malgonkar:

The Eurasian Miranda family in Combat of Shadows looks like a small group-oriented towards continuous, acute craving for belonging to the white race of Sahibs. The above novel is a sensitive portrayal of an Anglo-Indian girl’s search for identity in the rapidly crumbling British India.

\textit{It is also a saga of 'the moral disintegration of European on foreign soil'}.\footnote{8}

Amur praises the skilful treatment of the theme, Malgonkar’s narrative technique in this novel shows competence and confident ease.
His creative achievement is evident in shaping his personal experience with the British and the Anglo-Indian into validly realised fiction. The symmetry of form, the poignant human relations depicted in the lives of Henry Winton, Ruby Miranda, and Jean reveal Malgonkar’s great depth of understanding. *Combat of Shadows* has closer comparison with John Masters’, ‘Bhowani Junction’ as it presents the problem of rootlessness confronted by the Anglo-Indians. Victoria Jones of ‘Bhowani Junction’ is in an enviable position as she fails to identify herself with the Hindus in spite of her favourable leanings towards them. She is also unable to find a peaceful union with the British. Similarly Ruby Miranda of *Combat of Shadows* gives up her Anglo-Indian lover Eddie Trevor to fulfil her longing to become a memsahib in the world of British. Malgonkar introduces the theme of revenge as Ruby Miranda tries steadfastly to be avenged on Henry Winton for his ruthless betrayal in duplicity. The Anglo-Indian characters intended for study in this research work are: A) Ruby Miranda, B) Eddie Trevor, C) Minnie and d) an Englishman Henry Winton.

**II) RUBY MIRANDA**

**a) Rootlessness and a craving for self-identify:**

Ruby Miranda represents the throbbing compulsive craving of Anglo-Indian to seek kinship with the west. She wants to spare herself
the humiliation caused by her penury and her despising social status as an Anglo-Indian in the teeming brown-world of India. So she longs to become 'a sahib's lady going into the reserved, all white clubs with her head held high, escorted by an Englishman without the slightest trace of coloured blood. She does not hesitate to sacrifice her Anglo-Indian love Eddie Trevor for the fulfilment of this dream.

When Henry offers her the job as headmistress she readily goes to join with the intention that she can attain the "passport to the dream-world of Eurasian Womanhood". Henry loves Ruby, but only to seek animal pleasure. Ruby wants to be his wife and get the rightful status. She craves to lift their relationship from 'a hole and corner affair of passion to the sphere of love' but in vain. Her frankness is in contrast to the guileful nature of Henry. She even speaks to Henry about her former love for Eddie Trevor.

Ruby's fond dreams are cruelly shattered when Henry returns with Jean, an Englishwoman for his wife. Eddie's forecast that Henry will 'have all his fun and then the bugger'll drop you in the muck' is proved true. Henry insults her as 'chi-chi-street walker' and 'half caste slut'. She could not brook the humiliation. She fiercely swears to kill him:

*I will kill you for this, Henry Winton she said*

*very coldly, her face looking more like a*

*bloodless papier-mache mask than ever. "No*
matter how long it takes, I shall kill you for what you have said.

She finds herself in a situation of social tension due to her origin. She knew that her parents were the off-spring of an Irish Tommy and Gurkha coolie. Ruby tries to establish psychological rapport with Henry Winton through communication, through chattering, through revealing her innermost hopes, fears and visions, anticipating reciprocating. Henry silently listens without ever reacting to her inner quivers – he sought the pretty, impudent girl and got her. Ruby could not imagine Henry who is ‘full of lust without love’ while surrendering her body to him.

She flouted the well meaning resistance of Eddie whom she has so passionately loved and would have married but for his utter poverty. She rejects his ominous warning:

The bloody English Swine will give you a brat.

He will have all his fun and then the bugger’ll drop you in the muck. That is what he is sending for you, for, after coming and inspecting, the whole lot of you railway colony girls at the Gala.¹⁰

Ruby Miranda could not convey the Eurasian community’s craving for identity, an identity with the culture of the West which incidentally
brought them into existence. Their existential struggle for roots is deep-seated Malaise as Ruby speaks about the

Deep-seated, more widely spread cancer, the awareness of rootlessness of not belonging, not being wanted, even of being despised on the teeming brown world of India. The throb of the compulsive craving of Anglo-India to seek living kinship with the west; the desperate, daily struggle of separation and alignment, the tight clutching of the tenuous after imaginary strands of relationship with the sahibs, the constant vigilance against further assimilation with the smothering, enveloping peoples of the Indian soil.11.

B) Urge to mingle with the Whites:

Added to this sense of alienation from their patriarchal Western culture and smouldering fear of absorption into the teeming millions of Indians with inferior cultural moorings, Ruby Miranda suppresses her love for Eddie due to the over riding urge to marry an Englishman: for all the accompanying glamour of becoming
--- a Sahibs’ lady, going into the reserved, all
White clubs with his head held high, escorted
by an Englishman. Without the slightest trace
of coloured blood; of bearing blue-eyed, flaxen
haired children of going to London for a dizzy
round of the town and to gaze at the king
himself, and then of setting down in a cool,
antiseptic wholly, English suburb and washing
away the contamination of India and Tinapur.¹²

Malgonkar draws a realistic picture of the Miranda family, each
member conscious of the others, inferiority and both taking pride in their
beautiful daughter who would enhance their social status by way of
marrying an English (White) man.

Mr. Miranda wants his daughter to support the family by accepting
the job of a teacher in the ‘Silent Hill’. Side by side Mrs. Miranda, after a
long hesitation, persuades her daughter Ruby, to infatuate and trap Henry
into marriage by way of serving a magic potion that she had obtained
from the local “Bichava Baba”. Mrs. Miranda envisions a great future for
her pretty daughter Ruby.

To the great distress of Ruby Miranda, Henry exploits her
weakness – a willingness to be courted in order to fulfil her mother’s
aspiration of elevation in society. He contemptuously discards her to marry an all-white lady. Ruby regrets her decision to discard her old flame Eddie whom she has cheated.

Ruby’s monologue convey her predicament as Henry silently listens lying beside her, Ruby’s disinterested association with Henry appears rather dispassionate. It is a matter of convenience for her father to offer Ruby for seduction.

_Dad was all for it, it was Mum who raised the_ 
_Shindy, Mum wanted me to stay right in the_ 
_colony and get married gives a fag^{13}._

Magonkar presents through this monologue Ruby Miranda’s predicament – as an Indian girl, she is required to stay at home and get married. But the other strain represented by Mr. Miranda – a drunkard, a man of easy conscience, persuades his wife and projects the Anglo-Indian appetite for social climbing, more money and greater respect. Ruby ultimately is reduced to the status of an unpaid mistress, with no moral authority over Henry.

Neither her love nor her dreams or for that matter even the holy ash magic potion obtained with the blessings of Bichwa Baba could secure Henry as Ruby’s husband. She finds adjustment difficult till the Highland Club opens its doors on her – she finds solace in social service.
III) HENRY WINTON

a) A Colour Snob:

Another minority character belonging to the British minority as depicted by Malgonkar is Henry Winton.

Henry is a man of wavering mind with his weakness for women. He loves Ruby Miranda at first sight, and is equally in love with Jean Walters too. He is also impressed by Gauri, a coolie woman working in his estate.

Henry is torn in conflict between “desire and aversion”. A man of no integrity, he fails to establish viable relationship either with Ruby Miranda or with his English wife Jean. Even as a young boy he fervently aspired to play rugger for oxford but the sudden death of his father thwarted him from realising his ambition. His career as a salesman in a firm of second hand motor car dealers and as the owner of a used-car business did not fetch him much. He realises that his temperament, upbringing and Public school education have not prepared him for “the world of commerce in the cut-throat days of the great depression”. He is forced to leave his native-land when chance gets him the job of Manager of the Brindian Tea Estate on the hills of Assam in India.

Henry Winton is a Junior Manager of Silent Hill, a tea garden complete with a factory of the Brindian Tea Company. Somewhat cut-off
from the world, Silent Hill is forty two miles from Chinnar, the
headquarters of the tea district where the Resident Directors of the tea
companies live. British officers often go to Chinnar because the center of
Chinnar is the Highland Club, part hotel, part sports club, a place for the
normal relaxation of an English way of life – boating, trout fishing,
cricket, golf, tennis, squash, clay pigeon shooting, dancing etc. Winton,
nearly thirty years old, has put in five years of service and is still an
eligible bachelor.

He has begun to like his way of life and has become used to the
Highland Club, accepting its values without question and sharing its
taboos. He would not have given up his life-style for anything else in the
world.

Henry’s hunting adventure or his encounter with the one-tusked
rogue elephant throws light on yet another side of his character, a failure
as a hunter. Barloes telegram that the one-tusked elephant had shown up
again forces Henry to make plans to set out with his shikari or tracker,
Kistulal. Henry calls Kistulal

by far the best tracker in Assam ... This
fellow's already lame, one leg mauled by a
bear, but he is still the best damned tracker in
the Province¹⁴.
Henry and Kistulal set out at crack of dawn. The elephant's tracks were already a day old, and so they did not follow his tracks but decided to move merely in the direction of the tracks. Henry carries his favourite gun, his four sixty five double barrelled gun and a box of twenty cartridges; Kistulal carries no gun. Late in the afternoon they reach a paddy field and wait for the elephant.

All of a sudden a change comes over Kistulal's face, his perpetual grin disappears. The elephant had come unhesitatingly into the field, huge and gray, wriggling the end of its trunk. Then it located the human scent and charged. Henry though nervous, raises his rifle, aiming it at the root of the uplifted trunk, and presses the trigger but hears nothing but the cold snap of the hammer pin instead of the roar of the shell going off. He presses the trigger a second time and hears another dead click. He remembered later loading two more cartridges with the elephant barely twenty yards away. They too did not work. He ran wildly with panic in his heart. Kistulal in the meanwhile was crushed to death, stamped into the ground in a mess of mud and blood. After walking miles and miles Henry reached cock burn's bungalow, wet dishevelled, numb with cold and fear. Cockburn gives him some hot grog and puts him to bed. Next morning Cockburn sent one of his servants to collect the dead cartridges that were dropped in the paddy field. Cockburn advises Henry to make up a story rather than tell the truth.
Well, it won't do you a bit of good as a hunter; and it won't do you any good as a man—a career man. They'll say damaging things, they'll even say you got scared at the last moment and ran away. Even the most sympathetic will always say that you were careless in not testing your cartridges before you went out shooting an elephant; a known rogue—a killer ....

Cockburn and Henry agree to make up the following story: Henry was not at the scene of the accident but two hundred yards away from the edge of the field. Kistulal crossed the field where the elephant caught him and killed him. Henry only managed to wound the elephant with one of the cartridges. He did not follow him up and finish him off because he wanted to report his shikari’s death. He missed his way coming back in the dark.

Everybody believed Henry’s story but Henry himself was worried about the evidence of the missing cartridge. He found himself often in the grip of a heady depression.

The elephant is again reported to be in the valley. The elephant had come right into the Koyna valley which Henry could overlook from
his bungalow. Henry is once again asked to go after the rogue elephant even though he doesn’t like to do so now, a year after the accident. Oscillating between extremes of confidence and despair, he prepares himself for the hunting trip – tests a box of fresh cartridges, checks his rifle. He goes alone with his rifle and binoculars into the impenetrable jungle in search of the elephant for days, but he does not see it! On the day he finally locates it, he has an accident at Wallach’s Folly and twists his ankle, and therefore cannot walk to the jungle to shoot the elephant.

Eddie Trevor wants to finish the job. He asks Henry to lend him his four sixty five and cartridges. Henry is perfectly willing to let Eddie shoot the one-tusker, as he is aware of the danger of the mission. Henry is seething with jealousy for Eddie from the time he came to know of his engagement with Ruby. Eddie and Jean had travelled in the same boat once. They had even danced and won a competition together. At ‘Silent Hill’ they renew their friendship and friendship gradually turns into sexual passion. They meet each other secretly and spend hours together. Bitterness and anger rise within Henry when Gauri points out Eddie and Jean at Wallach’s Folly, lying side by side on a small blue rug spread under the branches of a tree.

*He could not bear to see what he saw and yet he went on looking spellbound. Just as he had gone on looking at the elephant trampling down*
Kistulal. And what he saw now was far more horrible than the death of his Shikari... He felt a sudden nervous shiver run down his body...\(^{16}\).

Henry wants to shoot them on the spot but could not do it with the rifle. He could do it if he had the 265 Mauser handy. When Eddie asks for his rifle he is more than happy to give it. He plans Eddie’s murder carefully. The cards were falling just right. He gives Eddie his big elephant gun and a box of cartridges – the very box from which the faulty cartridges were taken earlier. The murder is foolproof. Eddie goes out hunting with Pasupati and never comes back. He is killed by the elephant, his body trampled and broken and gored.

B) Henry’s Relationship with Ruby Miranda:

Henry Winton meets Ruby Miranda for the first time at the Railway institute at Tinapur.

*He is struck by her ‘lush, overflowing loveliness’\(^ {17}\).*

Henry is thrilled by Ruby’s physical features of beauty.

*She had strong even teeth and a glowing olive skin, impudent eyes and glossy black hair*
falling in a soft roll over her shoulders – (she was) – twenty three beautifully proportioned, the eyes of the real Chandni-Chowk whore, black and bold.

Henry feels that Ruby is a ravishing beauty as narrated in Lascivious poetry. Henry soon formulates a scheme and offers a job to her in Silent Hill, which offers scope for advancing and quenching his carnal desires. Mrs. Miranda and Eddie dislike the idea of the job opportunity, for they suspect the Whiteman’s integrity in making the offer.

In fact Mrs. Miranda resists the idea of sending Ruby away, for fear of her security and chastity; but her husband himself a half-bred, aspires for a higher social status, through his daughters adventure with her beauty and talent. He tempts his wife into accepting the proposition by dangling the prospect of Ruby marrying a real Whiteman like Henry, to climb higher in the social ladder, and also enhance the respectability of her parents.

Henry manipulates the situation to ensure that no scandals spread about his interest in Ruby Miranda despite Mr. Sarkar, better qualified than the girl for the teachers position, has the right to protest and create an unpleasant scene.
Fortunately for Henry, Mr. Sarkar is a docile, servile babu.

When Henry takes Ruby as a teacher in his school. He sees her through his lustful eyes and reduces her to an object of sex. He finds her splendid in looks if not perfect in her accent and pronunciation. Whereas his colleagues mostly go for coolie women, Henry has shown himself as a man of taste in the choice of a mistress and he congratulates himself upon his choice. As Henry wants to make a success of his career and as he places his career above everything else, he does not, until he is made permanent, wish to get involved with a native woman, however beautiful she might be, and however close she might be to his own race. He knew from experiences of others that his career would be ruined if he failed to see ‘the thin line that divides fun from serious involvement’ as his boss Sir Jeffrey Dart puts it.

Knowing as we do his exclusive sexual interest, we can see how he feels uncomfortable when her talk veers towards the subject of marriage.

During this early period, Henry does sometimes sincerely appreciate Ruby’s qualities. She is he recognizes

*the rare mixture of submissiveness and the surrender of oriental womanhood with the freedom and gaiety of the West and of course the breath taking figure and good looks and colouring which had been a gift of both the*
West and the East she was not the kind of woman who analysed your shortcomings, Ruby Miranda was content with him the way he was, even prepared to sacrifice the love of her childhood sweetheart for him... 19

If the idea of marriage comes to Henry's mind when he is in such an appreciative mood, Eddie's application for a job arouses his suspicion of her loyalty and he quickly brushes aside the thought of marriage. Being a man of pride, he cannot bear a Eurasian as a rival in love. At once his attitude towards Ruby Miranda changes. We see Henry's conceit and pride in his reaction to Ruby's angry outbursts at the meeting which takes place in his bungalow after he comes back from England, married. He is shocked to realize that she had greater expectations.

Though Henry protests later on against Jean's accusation that he did not marry Ruby because of his sense of racial superiority he cannot really be said to be free from racial arrogance. The way he reflects upon his relationship with Ruby retrospectively clearly shows that his pride comes from a sense of racial superiority.

c) Henry's Failure:

Henry Winton inspite of his tact and cunningness is a failure, he is a failure in love. Due to his social superiority, he does not marry Ruby
but an English woman Jean Walters who also ditches him. Henry has nowhere to go. After Henry’s marriage with Jean Walters, Henry continues to lust after Ruby Miranda. And when Ruby refuses him, Henry explodes and reveals his real prejudice against Anglo-Indians.

_You half-cast slut ... you don’t deserve anything
better than your colony and you half breed
lovers... speaking your own brand of the
English language..._.

Later Henry’s wife too dislikes him and leaves him. Malgonkar presents Henry as a thoroughly corrupt and despicable Britisher with no redeeming qualities.

Amur rightly comments that “the story of Winton’s relationship with Ruby is one of betrayal – betrayal of passion through fear”. Ever since Sudden Dart’s advice, we find Henry obsessed with the fear of losing his career if he had too much involvement with Ruby. Besides this Henry is just incapable of loving a woman wholeheartedly. His craving either for Ruby or for Jean is merely sensual. A man of guilty conscience, he further entangles himself in the noose of jealousy, suspicion, cowardice and treachery. All these betray his look of integrity and no woman can put up with such a man for long. Ruby and Jean both have their own integrity and simply reject Henry. Henry’s moral
obtuseness thus incapacitates him to realise fulfilment in love. The character of Henry Winton appears to reveal as Dayananda believes, Malgonkar’s preoccupation with the darker side of the nature of the ruling British.

He has never been able to go beyond the conflicting “desire and aversion” in his dealings. He has failed to attain knowledge of reality.

Even as a hunter Henry proves to be a failure, it was due to his negligence that he did not test the cartridges, had he done so, he could have saved Kistulal’s life. Henry presented a cock and bull story to the villagers, though they believed him he is constantly pricked by a feeling of guilt. Out of jealously he plans to kill Eddie Trevor, in which he is successful. But Sudden Dart, sees through the plan and even Pasupati, the son of Kistulal, is suspicious about Henry. And Pasupati along with Sir Jeffrey and Ruby Miranda plans Henry’s murder perfectly as he had planned Eddie’s earlier.

Sudden Dart kills the rogue elephant finally and discovers no wounds reportedly caused by Henry earlier in his bid to rescue Kistulal from the charging elephant. It confirms the falsity of Henry’s story and also subtly unveils the plan behind Trevor’s death. Dart sends him to the Game Cottage on the pretext that he should inspect the artificial moon. Ruby is another lure for him to go there. When the contrived fire engulfs him, he suddenly finds the ear-rings returned by Ruby and the empty
cartridge. The ladder is cut. He confronts the inevitable fact that his falsity, arrogance and meanness have led him to nemesis.

His failure and fall become all the more tragic against the background of the well-known British integrity.

IV) MINNIE BRADLEY

a) An important element in shaping Abhay’s character:

In the novel *The Prince*, Malgonkar has portrayed another Eurasian girl, Minnie who plays an important role in shaping the personality of Abhay. She recurrently appears in the course of the novel, stages when Abhay’s life takes a decisive turn – adolescence, youth and maturity. Abhay the Prince met Miss Minnie Bradley when he visited Simla for an interview, and he could not take his eyes away from her: She was

\[
\textit{somehow a part of the morning, of the verve and vitality of spring, volatile and blooming...}
\]

\[
\textit{shim as a bamboo and fresh as the morning dew}\]^{21}.

He was hit by her earthly sensuousness:

\[
\textit{At the same time I did not think that she was either beautiful or appealing. My only feeling was of anger and annoyance, and yet she must}
\]
have left a wealth of desire somewhere within me" \textsuperscript{22}.

He was very nervous when he took her out a few days later. It was a marvellous feeling, taking out a girl for the first time. He was only nineteen but she was twenty one. They enjoyed dinner, music and dancing. Abhay enjoyed holding Minnie's warm hand in his own. He enjoyed her perfume and the brushing of her hair against his cheek. Before the evening was over he gathered her in his arms and kissed her:

\textit{That day was ours, Minnie's and mine and for me it was a day of growing up, of coming of age, almost discovering myself...} \textsuperscript{23}.

\textit{I held her head in my hands and kissed her'. I had never imagined that a kiss would be a searching, revealing, intimate experience...} \textsuperscript{24}.

He longed for Minnie when he went back to his palace in Begwad. He wrote letters to her and carried her picture with him even to wars. His longing for Minnie formed the background to all the thoughts, he desired her and loved her with a passion he had never known. Months later he proposed to her and was determined to marry her. But the Maharaja intervened:
For people in our position', my father began, “marriage is a sacred thing. It is not a private, purely, personal matter at all, but an affair of state. Even the political department has an interest. There is a duty, an obligation to marry someone suitable. Someone whom the people will one day have to accept as their Maharani”.25

b) Selfishness and a lust for material gains:

The Maharaja wanted Abhay to choose a girl from the royal families. He even sent his Chief Minister, Lala Harikishore, to meet Miss Minnie Bradley and offer her ten thousand Rupees for Abhay's compromising letters. But Abhay was determined to marry Minnie. It was only later, during the war that he made the shocking discovery in a letter that Minnie had written to Tony Sykes, her English friend – that his love, that is Abhay’s love – meant ‘nothing’ to her. Tony, whom Abhay had seen die on the battlefield, brought him not only this disillusionary experience, but also a sense of humility.

Oddly enough it was Tony that I kept thinking, not Minnie, he had never once given me an indication that he was in love with her. Nor
had he even shown any ill will towards me. Ours had grown into a clean purely professional relationship, untainted by rivalry ...
he was a man complete in himself, he was the prince, not I. And if he was in love with Minnie and she was with him, it was I who was the outsider, the third man. I felt no bitterness. I sat for a time, overcome by the aura of humility which death leaves in its wake.... 26

Malgonkar’s creation of Pretty Eurasian girl Minnie is a riot of his imagination coupled with realistic details. Minnie in The Princes emerges from an insignificant parentage – daughter of a railway employee sent away to Simla to work as a clerk, to eke out a livelihood, living in a working women’s Hostel, an ideal place of residence for young girls to live in a sort of company to further their prospects in this world of money and pleasure. Minnie is described as a tantalizingly beautiful young woman, with a body so proportionate as to challenge the eyes of appreciative young men.

Minnie was endowed with attractive features and the peculiar Eurasian ‘corn-gold hair’ swaying on her shoulders. She prefers exquisite
garments, mostly imported from England and France, bestowed on her by aspiring and adoring lovers. Abhay finds her one day in a

*pearl-pink dress with little springs on it... Silk scarf with a design of bamboos on it, knotted under chin – and a man’s green knitted shirt, a tight blue-grey skirt...*  

Minnie has the talent to dress herself in an alluring mix of light and shade, that should catch the appreciative looks of males.

The bloom of this girl aroused inquisitiveness in the adolescent Abhay to such an extent that he hardly could erase her appearance from his mind. Her desirability increases in Abhay’s estimation with her advances like implanting her lips on his ‘Working Eyes’ of pressing his palm while shaking hands.

Minnie teases Abhay to arouse masculine passion in the boy of nineteen – ‘a little boy on his first date to strive for that intimacy through sex that initiates him into the adult world. She insinuates the Prince to invite her to a picnic in the woods to take her away from the dreary reality of the hostel on her 21st birthday.

Abhay obliges her – she gains entry into the world of Princes.

Abhay’s infatuation for Minnie intensifies as he discovers two more rivals to her affection – a silent introvert Tony Sykes and another –
a lucre-lured Farren. His disenchantment for Minnie synchronizes with the death of Sykes. Letters in his wallet from Minnie blasts all his visions of pristine love. Abhay realizes that Minnie has loved him only for his money, for his status — her meaningful remark that he may not find life much complicated since he is a Prince — glares before his eyes. She successfully arouses his passions without ever caring for him, for his pearl-necklaces; and expensive gifts. He also learns that his letters were considered worth Rs. 15,000 that Lala Harikishore bargained to and settled for.

In fact Abhay never contemplates the possibility of estrangement from Minnie; he even imagined how she would look in Pearls and the Hindu traditional dress; how unwelcome would be her Anglo-Indian skirts in the Begwad Palace. He reconciles with the considered opinion of his father Hiroji who has no qualms in calling names and ilk — they could become concubines but not wives.

*They take boys and leave them, that about sums*

*up.... the leaving part is just as important as the*

*taking part possibly much more important...*28

Hiroji makes sense when he tells Abhay that private desires should not interfere with the dignity and welfare of the state, which demand acquiescence to the established traditions. Abhay could appreciate the
sagacity in his father when confronted with the fickle and business-minded Minnie, who visits him with her husband Farren. She invokes her past friendship with Abhay to strike a good bargain. Sex for her is a means to achieve her goal of wealth and luxury in uninhibited freedom.

Abhay refuses to yield to her proposition of transferring wealth to “a number account; though appreciative of her business instinct. Women are wise by instinct and foolish through pre-mediation, is an axiom which defines Minnie’s quest.

Minnie in The Princes has a place in the unfolding of the complex plot of the novel which is the life-story of Abhay. Due to her intimacy with Abhay, the princely state of Begwad gets worried – the Prince marrying a woman like Minnie would have entailed in the breaking of convention.

Hiroji extricates Abhay from the pitfall – rescues him from the possible embarrassment and misery by ensuring Minnie’s dissociation through a handsome settlement. If Abhay could buy Minnie’s love with a pearl-lace, his father has bought her silence with Rs. 15,000/- enough to purchase a goodly house in a respectable locality.

Minnie’s involvement with Abhay has caused heart burn to two more courtiers of her’s – Tony Sykes and Farren. Farren considered her a ‘hot little number’ wonderful company during short vacations who offers pleasure in full measure.
On the other hand Sykes takes her more seriously than a mere piece of entertainment on visit to Simla – he in fact courts her more seriously and lives in the hope of reciprocal love. Her letters full of passion, imploring his steady association, are held in great value by him. His death perhaps relieves him from an assured embarrassment of finding out Minnie’s infidelity.

Farren becomes an ideal foil to Minnie – both her hard-boiled business acumen, both know how to make money and rise vertically in social hierarchy; both are social climbers. In a sense they are pests to devour social morality and destroys social cohesion. Minnie, in particular, has mastered the cancerous art of larceny through seduction and lechery.

The credit of Abhay’s final plunge into the reality of the world goes to Minnie. He rejects her and adjusts himself manfully to the reality of lost privileges – he refuses to launder the wealth of Begwad by going in for a Swiss number account. Abhay’s rejection of Minnie and her cult does great honour to the Indian Prince.

Minnie employs seduction as a means to prosperity, thus making love a marketable commodity. Her frolicsome association with men is consistently aimed at clinching a profitable proposition. Minnie’s conviviality and comeliness are snares to unwary amorists who adore her fervently. Minnie’s personality gets frozen in symbols of money – her quest is for material prosperity, hence frivolous.
V) **EDDIE TREvor**

a) **Hatred for the Whites**:

Eddie Trevor is a Eurasian by birth and upbringing. The reality is that he is the son of Sudden Dart and a coolie woman but Dart out of prestige doesn’t marry the coolie woman, he bribes John Trevor to accept as wife the coolie woman whom he impregnated.

Eddie has no love lost for the whites – he in fact detests them and doubts their sincerity of purpose. He even admonishes Ruby for her intention of accepting a job at Silent Hill. Ruby obeys her parents instructions and feels perhaps, there is wisdom in their point of view. Ruby accepts non-marital relations with Henry Winton – the complete White, with a hope to set up a house for herself. In the process, she sets up rivalry between two men – Eddie and Winton representing the different groups – Eurasians and the White. Each character has an unpredictable behavioural trait in the novel.

Eddie looks bony, pale faced, topped with a thick map of lustrous black hair, and with large raw looking hands like Sudden Darts. He has the appearance of a mixed breed.

b) **True love for Ruby Miranda**:

On the day of the Gala, Henry discovers Eddie dancing with Ruby. Henry feels stabbed and an unreasonable pang of jealousy overtakes him.
When Eddie Trevor applies for the vacancy caused by Jugal Kishore’s exit, Henry stoops to suspect that Ruby had advised Eddie to apply for the post so that she could continue her earlier relations with her lover.

Eddie Trevor becomes intimate with Jean and excite Henry’s jealously. He suspects that they might be in love. Jean rejects his insinuations and taunts him boldly for his earlier flirtations with Ruby Miranda.

Henry asks Ruby foolishly about her engagement with Eddie:

*Ruby turned as though to look at him, peering at his face in the darkness ‘Don’t you know? – You, of all people? she asked ...*  

Ruby’s words here carry a subtle meaning that Henry should know that he has broken has her innocent love for Eddie by exploiting her craze for memsahib status.

c) Feeling of revenge and jealousy for Henry:

Eddie evokes Henry’s jealously by being intimate with his wife Jean. Henry is shocked and plans to kill Eddie by a duplicitous device. He lends him his four sixty five with spurious cartridges. This causes Eddie’s death by the rogue elephant in the forest. Although Henry experiences ‘the sweet joy of revenge, it costs him Jean’s love. She is disgusted by his unmanly machinations and also with his mean trick on
Eddie. She has already confessed her love for Eddie. Feeling cheated by his death, she leaves Henry for good Henry’s cup of misery is full with the revelation that Eddie is Sudden Darts bastard son.

VI) NANCY GILCHRIST

Malgonkar experiments with another female character of Eurasian descent in a spy-thriller action packed novel. In Bandicot Run, Nancy the Anglo-Indian lady makes her way into Major Gilchrist’s life. He is a Pucca Sahib who has read thousands of p.s of Kipling. Brian Gilchrist was not a dashing young man and on the contrary Nancy was a small town beauty queen in her day just before the Second World War.

Her mannerisms, which now looked unseemly

in a woman of her age, the arch looks, the
fluttering of the eye-lids, the school-girl trick of
hiding her face in her hands when she said
something which was meant to be daring, the
pouting of her mouth, they may well have
formed her special attractions.30

After Brian’s marriage to Nancy, they were not happy enough as Nancy remained childless which affected her behaviour. In the end she has been abandoned by Brian Gilchrist and she decides to go to Pakistan. She looks like a tragedy-queen with dyed hair and metal capped teeth.
She feels friendless like many Englishmen who have preferred to stay back.

*Who chose to live in India because he had turned away from his own people and married to – to some one who has no country anyhow – not wanted here or there*³¹.

Thus she identifies her fate with a large mass of Eurasians, whose fate it has been to be rejected by both the Countries – paternal as well as maternal.

Nancy persuades her sister Gloria to captivate Kadar. Nancy’s fear of insecurity can be gauged from her persuasion of Sister Gloria to ensnare a dull-headed but wealthy and handsome Pathan, Kadar Khan. Kadar instantly falls in the trap and Courts Gloria.

*He fell in love with the dark-eyed and dolt-like and vivacious and just at the peak of ripeness that only Anglo-Indian girls sum to achieve on reaching maturity – Kadar was a big catch for Gloria, Nancy had selected him from the crop of bachelors as the right man for her sister*³².

Gloria has wonderful time with Kadar, teaching him dancing steps and civilizing him. Her relationship with Kadar creates tension in Pathan
Clan, Khan family. The efforts of the Parents to separate Gloria from Kadar do not bear fruit. Kadar’s infatuation for the Eurasian Gloria has been so pronounced that he could not give her up. Gloria adjusts herself to the newly created situation of Kadar’s marriage to another Muslim girl, in the Islamic tradition. She in fact welcomes Kadar’s second wife to live with them in Poona. She betrays the peculiar, often pronounced Eurasian trait of acquiring security through worldly possessions, betraying the basic feminine characteristic of possessing the spouse.

VII) Eurasians Born Of European Women And Indian Fathers

Malgonkar brings into play another stream of Eurasians – the stream consisting of European women and Indian fathers. It has been fashionable in India to bring a White wife by those who had gone to England in pursuit of higher education. But the Britishers evinced complicity in matters of personal relations between men and women and did not persist with opposition due to a liberal outlook, despite the tag attached to them as conservatives.

In three of his novels, Malgonkar – has introduced such combinations of Indian men in contact with the White women as in The Devils Wind, Distant Drum, and Open Season. It need not be construed as confrontation of cultures as conflict of racial interests; but the novelist makes a commendable effort in bringing together the divergent elements,
that have shaped the criteria for racial identification. These characters are Elizabeth Wheeler in *The Devils Wind*, Margot Medley in *Distant Drum* and Kale Hardings in *The Open Season*.

Malgonkar has created woman characters representing the European culture, and a mixture of the European-Indian, in their variegated aspects. If Minnie consciously tries to exploit the aristocrats with her sensualism; Ruby Miranda abjectly surrenders to seduction due to misconceived notions of future respectability through marriage into the White Clan, Elizabeth conscientiously loves and takes care of Nana Sahib, mothers his child to his great gratification and suffers exile, and last, Kate reforms Jaikumar by helping him discover his roots.

The study of foregoing pages reveals Malgonkar’s preoccupation with the creation of characters which are Anglo-Indians and also White Englishmen (*The Pucca Sahib*).

Malgonkar’s obvious love of plot, story and action in the novels has not impaired his sense of characterization. Malgonkar fits his characters against the backdrop of dramatic action and lets them grow as authentic individuals. It is unfair to call them mere ‘abstractions’ for they emerge with vitality in their agonising quest for fulfilment.

Malgonkar’s fiction reveals his intense passion for human values like equality of justice, freedom, and integrity. The protagonists in his
fiction seek and obtain a sense of fulfilment in their commitment to these values.

Henry Winton fails in his quest because of moral depravity. Ruby Miranda protests violently against the selfish and inauthentic actions of Henry, and her fulfilment lies inevitably in revenge. The efforts of Abhay Raj and his father to preserve the fast vanishing old feudal order are viewed ironically.

[Malgonkar incorporates into the texture of his novels what he knows best – army life, big game hunting, and the private lives of the aristocrats like the Princes, their pride and prejudices; the troubles with the British Raj, which provide him with some sort of capital to work on. These may have inhibited his responses to problems and conflicts in life, but they are the assumptions, ideas and attitudes that shape his sensibility. In form and content, in the vision of life and responses to political reality, Malgonkar deserves to be considered one of the best in Indian fiction writers in English.]

In an interview Malgonkar has himself proclaimed the formation of the characters in his fictional world.

They are sufficiently camouflaged for you not to think of them as real persons. They are actually composite personalities you know, there is no real person. I might disguise the voice or size
of the person and put them into a character which has absolutely no connection with that person. And I think that the mental process is not deliberate at all. It's rather involved and you just arrive at it. What I can speak more authoritatively on is how to make a fictional person into a real person. Take a character like Minnie for instance, and give her the sort of composite attributes of people whom you have met in real life. So that to the reader she appears as some real person you have described.33

[What Malgonkar reveals about is the creative process of fusion where in different elements drawn from a variety of sources get spun into a thread. He offers verisimilitude, which is the quintessence of any artistic achievement. In addition to make his characters live and talk and behave in exactly the same manner as human beings with those peculiarly genuine characteristics would have, Malgonkar strives to make the incident in which he reveals sounds as authentic as real. It is difficult to find fault with his chronology or the occurrence of incidents on the historical personages that fit through his creation.]
Malgonkar seems to prefer endowing women, particularly of mixed blood, with sexual glamour where ideas of material gain creep into the relationship, there does not exist the concept of love – it becomes exploitation of the sexual susceptibilities. Henry Winton, for example, exploits Ruby Miranda only to discard her in preference to Jean Walters, a woman from his race, who betrays him in turn, with similar sinister disdain.
References


5. The Ellsworth American.


10. Malgonkar *Combat of Shadows* p. 98.


13. Ibid, p. 95.


15. Ibid, p. 88-89

17. Ibid, p. 18
18. Ibid, p. 15
20. Ibid, p. 153
22. Ibid, p. 132
26. Ibid, p. 211.
27. Ibid, p. 142-143.
29. Ibid, p. 236.
32. Ibid, p. 304.