

MANOHAR MALGONKAR'S - FICTIONAL WORLD

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Abstract

Manohar Malgonkar a significant Indian Writer in English is versatile and prolific. Malgonkar entered the domain of Indian English Fiction during the 60's and 70's ; yet stands remarkable and is highly known for his experimentation.

His fictional writing reveals a purpose--- It traces the tensions of the Indian Political and Social history. The richness of his writing style, his approach towards fiction is powerful. His heroes speak the truth of life. The perspectives make us read him many a times. The theme of alienation in his literature is outstanding. This paper portrays Manohar Malgonkar as a social realist. It puts him in the rank of Indian Fictional Writers who believe in writing the real experiences so as to carry some message to the society..

His works published during sixties and seventies were appreciated by great writers like R.K.Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Khuswant Singh and many others, yet Critics like H.M.Williams and M.K.Naik commented that he had no social concern nor any commitment towards the society, instead they considered him to be a realist who strongly believed that art had no purpose to serve but was pure entertainment.

This paper of mine is an attempt to explain that the charges against this great fictional writer are unfair and a clear understanding about Malgonkar is a must as his contribution to the genre should get acknowledged.

Manohar Malgonkar a significant Indian Writer in English is versatile and prolific. He has published four collections of short stories, ten novels, a play, a Biography, three historical works, five prose works and a good number of articles of general interest.

The three masters---Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan lead the way in Indian English fiction as the explorers. They stand to be the beginners.

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His fictional writing reveals a purpose--- It traces the tensions of the Indian Political and Social history. The richness of his writing style, his approach towards fiction is powerful . His heroes speak the truth of life. The perspectives make us read him many a times. The theme of alienation in his literature is outstanding . This paper portrays Manohar Malgonkar as a social

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He handles many themes in his fiction because of his varied and vast experience.

His English novels: Distant Drum, Combat of Shadows, The Princes, A Bend in the Ganges and many other novels present the novelist as a Universalist and has a viewpoint of humanity. It is more about the army life and about the lives of princes, landlords, officers and bureaucrats. The novelist here respects the dedication, honesty and the sacrifice of all Indian soldiers working for British army.

Malgonkar through his novel “The Princes” writes about the ups and downs of princes in their aristocratic life. There is Realism, Romanticism & Authenticity in the description of not only the princes but also their followers. The descriptions of certain events are realistic & authentic.

Malgonkar’s preoccupation with the theme of aristocracy is once again evident in his Novel The Devil’s Wind. He has described the life of historical personalities like Nana Saheb, Rani of Jhansi & others. Descriptions about the corrupt practice of the rich politicians and ministers are well highlighted in the above.

A careful study of his novels and short stories reveal that he has also dealt with the theme of commonality in his works like “Combat of Shadows”, “The princes”, “A Bend in the Ganges”, “The Devils Wind” and “Open Season” thus showing his concern towards common people.

The theme of espionage is also figured in his novels such as Spy in Amber, Bandicoot Run, The Garland Keepers and Shalimar speak of evil deeds and their detection by the honest officers. His novels and short stories dealing with the theme of espionage are highly entertaining and keep the readers in great suspense till the end.

A strong belief says that an artist with the alembic of fancy and creative imagination transmutes the reports into works of art .Here Malgonkar stands true as his works are informative and authentic.

Social problems like discriminations on the basis of caste and religion prevailing in society are shown by the author, actually described in an analytical way. Pungent sentiment, agony, ill-treatment, injustice is seen in his characters at different levels of life.

The status of women in the society, her position, the inspiration from her makes Malgonkar engage his female characters in self-analysis.

Being an Indian novelist, Malgonkar's world view is coloured by a sense of destiny behind the lives of human beings. His novels show the defects of the nuclear and the joint-family. They give a truthful account of parent-child relationship. The most striking of the familial relationships in the novels is the poignant picture of the surrogate mother in the elder sister in Bend. At the outset the author shows the concern of a father for his daughter’s welfare; but his traditional views and consequent actions regarding the marriage of the daughter are proved futile for her.

Malgonkar has a few similarities with R.K. Narayan. Both are contemporary Indian fiction writers in English and have experimented with the English language. Both Malgonkar and Narayan believe that the test of a good writer is his readability. If a novel cannot hold you from the very first page, it is not worth bothering about. But this must not make us conclude that what is so easy to read must be superficial. R.K. Narayan does not deal with the themes of army life, aristocracy, violence, Partition and hunting. His characters are mainly drawn from the middle class and they spring from the mud and river of Malgudi. Men, women, boys and girls come

from this particular region of South India. Whereas, Malgonkar has drawn characters India and abroad. Narayan's attitude towards sex is the conventional, mid-victorian attitude. Unlike Malgonkar he hardly describes physical passion in any of his novels.

To conclude, this paper of mine is an attempt to explain that the charges against this great fictional writer is unfair and here One needs to understand that Malgonkar needs great attention .Though his works published during sixties and seventies were appreciated by great writers like R.K.Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Khuswant Singh and many others, Critics like H.M.Williams and M.K.Naik commented that he had no social concern nor any commitment towards the society ,instead they considered him to be a realist who strongly believed that art had no purpose to serve but was pure entertainment.

Let us not forget this person who often described as “The John Masters of the Indo-English fiction”, is undoubtedly one of the great Indian fictional writers in English with certain qualities making him truly prolific and connected to society.

He certainly deserves a better treatment and needs a special study with a focus on his themes and technique.

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