PREFACE

Indo-English Literature was predicted to meet with a lamentable demise by A.D.. 2000. That it has not happened is a matter of great joy. Greater is the room for joy when we think of the prizes and awards it has brought in the field of fiction. The prophetic vision of Henry Derozio, the first Indian English poet who saw ‘fame in the mirror of futurity’, has already been fulfilled. From Bankim Chandra Chatterjee to Arundhati Roy, Indo-English fiction did not have to drag itself on a very long path. Within a comparatively short time since its flowering in the post-Independence period, it has compelled international recognition. All over the literary world, the ‘trimurti’ of Indo-English fiction—Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, and Raja Rao—have gained a secure stand. Manohar Malgonkar, a contemporary of these three, also is well-known.

This study is an attempt to probe into the treatment of human relationships in Malgonkar’s fiction, and to trace out the psychological and sociological factors that form the basis of these relationships.

In India, more often than not, the study of a novel is the study of its content. It is not because it is easier to discuss the content or ideas in a
novel than its craft, but because the former are more important in the Indian context, especially of Indo-English fiction for its historical and sociological orientation. Besides this, traditionally Indian literatures are didactic, giving importance to moral ideas and human development on the basis of these. So a privileging of content over form is natural in the discussion of Indo-English fiction. Succumbing to this temptation also, this attempt to study the various human relationships in Malgonkar's fictional world is made here. A study of it would not be complete without a look at his shorter fiction because life as it is depicted in his novels is totally serious, but it is not so in reality. It is in his short stories that life is shown in the lighter vein, teeming with fun and humour. Accordingly I have tried to look into the world of his shorter fiction also wherever possible.

In this study I have taken up his five full-fledged and mature novels—Distant Drum, Combat of Shadows, The Princes, A Bend in the Ganges, and The Devil's Wind—and others like Open Season and Bandicoot Run which are thrillers and novelizations of screen-plays are left out of consideration. Quotations from the novels and short stories are parenthetically documented with shortened titles as given in Abbreviations, and these shortened titles are used in the text of the dissertation also.
The context and background of the study are enunciated in the introductory chapter. It also includes a discussion about the different types of characters and the important events which affect them and their relationships. Here an attempt to briefly compare and contrast Malgonkar’s portrayal of human relationships with that of some of his contemporary writers also is made. The first part of chapter I describes the marital relations portrayed by the author, and the next part brings out the extra-marital and pre-marital ones. In the chapter entitled “Indo-British Relationships,” the political, personal, and racial relationships between the Indians, the British, and the Anglo-Indians are discussed. Chapter III is about the relationships between parent and child, brother and brother, grandmother and grandson, and brother and sister. Chapter IV concentrates on other social relationships—interpersonal, official, master—servant etc.

This study, it is hoped, will be of interest to the students of Indo-English fiction and to the general reader. Equally, it may be of interest to the students of history and sociology, and even of psychology, because they will find some of the movements and theories, which are exemplified in terms of the novel, discussed in the following pages.