INTRODUCTION

One of the results of British impact on India was the rise of the Indian novel in English as early as in 1864. Indian writers of fiction adapted the Western form and medium to their own tradition of storytelling. This was able to attract attention as a novel experiment in creative mutation. Though there were such stray experiments, no novelist with a "substantial output" appeared on the Indian literary scene till the early 1930s. Before this, Indo-English novels were devoid of the contemporary social and political realities. With the advent of Gandhiji on the Indian political scene, some writers came to be inspired by his principles which made them acutely conscious of these realities. As Rama Jha said, the Gandhian whirlwind supplied them not only with their themes, but also with their style. Thus it is no accident that the Big Three of Indo-English fiction—Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, and Raja Rao—appeared with their first novels, the first two in 1935 and the third in 1938. These writers continued to creatively express the social, political, and spiritual aspects of India.

Along with these three, Kamala Markandaya, Nayanatara Sahgal, and Manohar Malgonkar came up. But Malgonkar, unlike the others, often
dealt with historical themes. He has written novels, thrillers, biographies, travelogues, books on history, a period play, and a large number of short stories. He has been accused of concentrating his attention "more on the exotic and melodramatic than on the worthwhile aspects of Indian life." The aspects of Indian life he portrays in his major novels are Indo-British encounter especially in the army, the disintegration of princely India, the Freedom Movement—the Gandhian struggle, the Terrorist Movement, and the Sepoy Revolt—and life in the Assam Tea Gardens. Though these are the themes in his novels, they are so only superficially. What he is chiefly concerned with is the portrayal of man's predicament in a world where values are changing too fast for his comprehension and adjustment, as N.S. Pradhan perceptively observed. What he exposes is the crisis in Indian life brought on by the winds of change in the traditional Indian society. What he argues for is a sincere adherence to our traditional values like honesty, integrity, and a sense of justice.

"The novel is a perfect medium," says D.H. Lawrence, "for revealing to us the changing rainbow of our living relationships." Malgonkar reveals the colours of these relationships in his novels and short stories, and they are a remarkable phenomenon in modern Indo-English fiction.
Branded as an entertainer and story teller, the deeper qualities of his fiction have been neglected or unperceived by many. There are only two full-length studies on his fiction by academic critics, namely G.S. Amur, and James Y. Dayananda. N.S. Pradhan takes up only one of the novels—*A Bend in the Ganges*—for a detailed analysis. H.M. Williams too does not make a sustained study of Malgonkar's fiction. The various articles by commentators do not seem to bring out the merits of the author as a significant novelist of Indian life. The few researchers who have taken up his novels seem to have failed to highlight his capacity to portray Indian life in its various nuances. The fact is that, in his fiction, he deals with the social and political changes in the twentieth century India with a keen awareness of the historical forces that shaped the destiny of the nation. His major novels and short stories taken together reveal him as a writer keenly interested in Indian social life.

Critics of his novels, like James Y. Dayananda, H.M. Williams, N.S. Pradhan, and V.M. Madge have expressed the view that he has not received full critical attention as a significant Indo-English novelist. The general tendency in the sixties and seventies was to dismiss him in a hasty pell-mell fashion. It is only in the eighties and nineties that he slowly, though
partially, emerged from neglect and underrating. Here, one is reminded of Madge who spoke of the "conspiracy of silence among Indian critics over Malgonkar's achievement as a novelist" at the UGC seminar held at the University of Poona in 1986. This undue denigration was the result of a woeful ignorance of his merit and the lack of indepth studies. A casual reading of his novels may make the reader fall in line with the biased comments made by earlier critics. This study takes up such comments also, and tries to prove that they are not justifiable. It is also intended to bring out a balanced view of the greatness of the author.

Malgonkar's novels being attuned to the portrayal of historical developments in India at the time of the British and soon after it, some may not take a study of the human relationships in his fictional world as relevant as in Anita Desai's, for example. This is only a superficial view, for, in spite of the temporal and spatial constrictions, his fiction has a universal relevance beneath it as stated above.

Though a late entrant in the field of Indo-English fiction, Malgonkar has earned a considerable place with his five novels and four volumes of short stories. The geographical location of his world is the Indian subcontinent ranging from the Himalaya in the North to the islands of
Ceylon, Malaya, Singapore etc. in the South, from the Burmese jungles in the East to the Andamans and the western regions of undivided India. He has written about the things and people he knew mostly from his experience, in simple British English, without making use of the vernacular, except when justified by the occasion. He belongs to the Sanskrit tradition of writing 'Katha', the plot of which is pure invention, and 'Akhyayika', built round real people and incidents.

The primary aim of a novel, as Raji Narasimhan said, is to tell a story as the reader wants such familiar ingredients as action, plot, movement, and drama. Malgonkar's novels and short stories provide all these which make them easily readable and enjoyable with his varied techniques of narration like 'the first person point of view', and 'omniscient author'. His fiction is 'well-made' and often begins medias res. Though his preoccupation often is with the outer world of action, it is not devoid of the inner world of introspection. The Western dramatic techniques of fiction are there along with the oriental recitalist manner of story-telling. He seems to follow Raja Rao's assertion that the epic method of story-telling, where episode follows episode, is the most suitable for the Indian temperament.
Malgonkar's sense of history finds exemplification in the portrayal of the two forms of India's struggle for freedom—the Great Revolt of 1857 in *The Devil's Wind*, and the violent and non-violent struggle in *A Bend in the Ganges*. In the latter novel he makes a reference to the INA also. Contrary to the monolithic approach of the pre-Independence novels, his novels show "a pluralistic method of depiction of politics." He gives importance to the Terrorist Movement of the 1930s. While he concedes that Gandhiji won freedom for India, there is a thorough questioning of the validity of 'ahimsa'. His deviation in his depiction of the diverse movements for freedom is his unique distinction.

As a Commonwealth writer he too is "handcuffed to history." He portrays the 'Imperial Embrace' and its effect on the Indian way of life, language, and ethics. The partition of India, and the riots before and after it, figure prominently in three of his novels—*Distant Drum, Princes*, and *Bend*. He portrays the growth of communalism, and the reader is given to understand that the assailants at first were the Muslims. The Second World War and its effects on the Indians are referred to in all the novels. Most of the battles in his fictional world are fought at this time. In *Princes* Abhayraj's well-ordered life turns topsy-turvy. In *Combat of Shadows*
Henry Winton’s relationship with Sir Jeffrey Dart is broken as the latter withholds the former’s application for Commission. It is as a result of the Japanese attack on the Andamans that Gian Talwar and Debi-dayal in *Bend* are able to come out of their imprisonment.

Hunting, the war of men on animals, is seen in abundance in *Princes* and *Combat*. Apart from tigers and elephants, birds also are the targets. Though it was a pastime of the ruling British, and of the Indian princes, it is not as a gratuitous incident that Malgonkar brings it in his novels. More than a pastime, it has political aims and uses. By offering shootable tigers to high British officials, Heroji in *Princes* hopes to wangle favours from them. In his case the Kolarus Giant (a huge tiger) becomes a source of liberation from despair also. Hunting is shown to bring out human corruption. As the Kolarus Giant appears both as the hunted and the hunter, so does the one-tusker in *Combat*. Henry is haunted by the thoughts of it. It symbolizes his fear, not only of the Indians, but also of his own failure. Malgonkar’s description of jungle and hunting “merits comparison with that of the best hunters of the world like Jim Corbett.”

Hunting and princely life, understandably enough, are intertwined. As of the former, Malgonkar has a firm grasp of the latter acquired through
his contact with ex-princes, heresay from relatives, and his own extensive research carried out for the purpose of literary production. In his period play, *Line of Mars*, and in the two novels, *Devil's* and *Princes*, he exposes princely life in India in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The "uncompromisingly masculine world"\textsuperscript{11} of the princes is unveiled in the story of Nana Saheb, and the disintegration of the same is revealed in *Princes*. Thus he shows his great fascination for Indian history right from the Great Revolt to the post-Independence days. In this "massive flux of life"\textsuperscript{12} he shows us an impressive gallery of human beings.

Before he took to novel writing at the late age of forty seven, Malgonkar had gathered life-experience from a number of careers. He was an officer in the British-Indian Army. After 'chucking' it he became a businessman, planter, and politician. He was a shikkari also. For all his contact with the high-class, he knows of the existence of the quivering poverty and casteism of India. But he does not give prominence to them in his works. He has made it clear that he will write only about people of whom he has first-hand experience. And the people he is familiar with are the aristocrats and the middle classes—princes, politicians, army officers, industrial magnates, planters, and businessmen—both British and Indian.
Low class men—untouchables and coolies—appear in his fiction, but they are seen in connection with their masters. They don’t have a life of their own. The only two cases of poor people he has portrayed in detail are Gian in *Bend* and Kanakchand in *Princes*. He portrays them truthfully in contrast to their rich friends, Debi and Abhay respectively.

Malgonkar’s characters “hail from different communities, countries, and social status.” There are civilized and uncivilized ones. In addition to the Indians, Anglo-Indians, Britishers, Americans, and the Japanese, there are the primitive tribes—the Bhils, the Ramoshis, and the Jaoras in the Andamans.

Among the Indians there are men who are anglicized and orthodox. There are two types among the anglicized. The first is the Western educated, like Aravind Mathur in *Drum* and Gopal Chandidar in *Bend*. These people belong to the sophisticated set, and are hated by the masses for their lack of contact with them. The second type—Kiran and Abhay—though not educated in England, has acquired the British public school code of conduct through army training. The orthodox Kamala Kant, and the revolutionary Debi and Shafi, hate the British while Gian, Hari, Tekchand, and Hiroji are subservient to them.
Like the two types of Indians there are two types of Britishers--those who hate the Indians out of racial superiority, and those who love them. Henry, Dart, and Mrs. Scobie (in Devil's) are seen holding fast to the special rules of behaviour incumbent upon the Whiteman in the East. Out of their racial arrogance they ill-treat the Indians, allowing them the use only of the backgate and the backverandah. Their attachment with the Indians is in the matter of menial jobs. On the other hand, there are people like General Wheeler and Capt. Cockburn who have 'turned native'. They have great love for India for which they are officially ill-treated by their compatriots. Wheeler is not made C-in-C for all his ability, experience, and seniority. Cockburn also is not given promotion because of his Indian connection. Both of them want to die in India, and do so. They are like Col. Balustrode (in John Masters's Nightrunners of Bengal) who is affectionately called Curry Balustrode for his genuine love of India. Jean Walters (in Combat), with her Indian background, understands the Indians, and likes them.

Anglo-Indians also figure prominently in the world of Malgonkar. In Devil's, Wheeler's daughters, being Eurasians, find it very difficult to get husbands, and the son to get a job. Toad Saheb is a blind supporter of the British for whom he acts as a spy. In Combat the portrayal of the attitude of
the Mirandas towards the British is a mixed one of resentment for, and identification with, them. Numerically insignificant, and economically poor, the Anglo-Indians leaned heavily towards the ruling race, and imitated their customs, manners, and life-style. At the same time they despised the native Indians. Since the British did not accept them as their social equals, and the Indians hated them for their socio-cultural and political identification with the British, they suffered from emotional disillusionment. Malgonkar lays bare their lack of education, employment, and financial stability. He presents a multifaceted account of the colonial encounter with the British at the centre, and the Indians and Anglo-Indians around them, as Mathur said.  

Like many other writers, Malgonkar too has recorded the “trauma of the pre-Independence period in terms of ethnic anxiety,” not only of the Anglo-Indians, but also of the Muslims. Shafi and Hafis Khan (in Bend) are representatives of such Muslims who feared subjugation by the majority, the Hindus. They are not ready to be second-rate citizens which they fear to happen once the British quit. Being fearful of enslavement, they turn fanatic and fight with the Hindus.
A striking feature of Malgonkar's army world is the comradely ideal and personal amity among the officers and men, both British and Indian. People of different provinces, faiths, and castes, unaffected by politics, remain as a single unit. British army officers, like Ropey Booker, Bertie Howard, Tony Sykes, and Punch Farren, and British-trained officers like Kiran Garud, Spike Ballur, General Torgal, and Brigadier Shindey exhibit their comradeship untainted by racial and political barriers. People like Col. Watson who hated Indian things, and Kamala Kant who hated everything British, are rare exceptions.

Kamala Kant's "unctuous toady ing to Indian politicians" tells us of the corrupt nature of politics and officialdom in Malgonkar. He denounces upstart politicians like Lala Vishnu Saran Dev, and ministers like Kanakchand, and their time-serving allies. Indian officials without integrity and sense of justice, like Balbahadur and the police-inspectors in Bend and Combat, are also denigrated. These are the villians in his world. His characters include "both types and individuals." Minor characters are the types, and the individuals are the protagonists—Kiran, Henry, Gian, Debi, Abhay, and Nana. Their "quest for fulfilment" is achieved through the various relationships they undergo, especially with women.
James Y. Dayananda finds only “three stereotyped images of women” in Malgonkar’s novels. A close reading shows that there are six types of them. The first is the Sita-type woman, submissive and self-effacing, and the victim of orthodoxy. Kamala in Princes is the best example. She finds fulfilment in blindly serving her husband. The second is Radha in Bend, who shows her individuality while being a dutiful housewife. She is an emancipated woman who can argue with her husband, and yet obey him. Kamala does not come to this status.

The third is the Nora-type women—Sundari and the Maharani—who wait for a considerable time, seeking satisfaction in marital life before they go out of the bond to seek it in extra-marital relationship. They are not content to languish in the traditional shroud of the pativrata. The traditionally permitted sources of self-expression for women—marriage and child-bearing—are inadequate for them. So they tear themselves away from the framework of tradition and religious orthodoxy with their “unsettling sense of individuality.” In his portrayal of such women, Malgonkar is “spelling a refreshing break from the mythological image of Indian women in earlier fiction.”
The presence of the European and Anglo-Indian women is a unique feature of Indo-English novels. They are quite often sensual women in Malgonkar. Margot Medley and Minnie Bradley are two such characters. Ruby Miranda also is one such though she is different in certain respects. Margot is a nymphomaniac thrusting herself on men. It does not matter to her what her husband thinks of her or does to himself. Minnie is an employed girl who seeks the company of men because of her love of lucre. Such women are presented as the initiators of the Indian youth in the mysteries of sex. But the Anglo-Indians are given a “worse deal” in Malgonkar, as in Anand. Along with these sensual women, there are Indian prostitutes like Malini and Mumtaz. They are satisfied with their lot. Malini is seen causing unhappiness to Sundari as the wife of Gopal.

The sixth type is the concubines in the palace of princes. They were professional entertainers; one could never apply that ugly word prostitute to them. They are companions of men’s leisurely hours, who also turn to be their mistresses. Like Bibibhai in Princes, they take pride in their profession, and in their ability to make men joyful, like Champa in Devil’s. Quite often they were elder to the men to whom they were supplied or by whom they were bought. In the days of child-marriages they were useful as an outlet
for men's passions which were injurious to the child-brides. In the medieval times these concubines occasionally performed various roles, as we see Champa doing. Though a concubine, she gives birth to Nana's daughter. Then she withdraws from sex-life, takes the role of the Queen Mother when she supplies him with another concubine, and suggests to him to marry Eliza Wheeler. In the last part of the novel she appears again like a devoted wife ready to perform sati.

As an earnest historian, and ardent fictionist, Malgonkar has portrayed the different facets of human relationships—man-woman, familial, racial, and other social ones—in the period depicted by him. The novels taken up for study present a truthful account of the sociological development of conjugal relationship in India. Devil's shows how superstition affected marital relation, and resulted in the wife being cast away in a corner to languish in darkness. The story of Nana and his wives tells us about child marriage and its evil effects. When we look into Princes, we see, again, the effect of superstition on marital life. The marriage of the Maharani to Hiroji, the king, was necessitated by circumstances. And she was relegated to darkness as she was believed to have a curse on her. In both of these novels the men enjoy the freedom of permissiveness while
their women have no means of satisfying their passion. But they are not ready to waste themselves away with their youthful desires unslaked. They create opportunities, or grab them for fulfilling their self.

The case of Sundari in Bend is another one in point. Her husband, Gopal, because of her frigidity at their honeymoon, takes to Malini, a prostitute known to him earlier. As a sort of revenge on her husband, she gets entangled with Gian, an employee under her father. Her marital life which goes breaking, is in sharp contrast to the happy life of her parents. In Combat we come across the marital lives of the British, and of the Anglo-Indians, which are also unhappy. Here, like Sundari–Gopal relationship, Henry–Jean relationship breaks down because of their infidelity, and lack of mutual understanding. On the other hand, in Princes we find the marital life of Abhay and Kamala, in contrast to that of his parents, growing into a happy one. The love affair between Kiran and Bina, in Drum, leads to their marital union because of their mutual love and regard. In all these novels what women want is the love and regard of their husbands. They also want their husbands to grant them their rightful place in their lives. When they do not get such a treatment, they rebel against male domination, and go outside the bonds of marriage. So there are extra-marital and pre-
marital relationships in Malgonkar's world in abundance, as in Kamala Markandaya's and Nayanatara Sahgal's.

In Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* Nathan has it with Kunthi, and Rukmani with Kenny. In *A Silence of Desire* Sarojini has it with the swamy, and Pramela in *Some Inner Fury* has it with Govind. But these are not often thirsts for physical love as are the nymphen needs of Caroline and Annabel in *Possession*. "There is a strong and obvious element of sex in their relationship, and yet there is as strong and obvious an element of asexuality." But there is no element of asexuality in Malgonkar's treatment of such relationships.

Nayanatara Sahgal does not portray human relationships in such various contexts as does Markandaya. Concerned with the middle classes, Saghal deals mainly with the affluent elite among them. But contrary to Malgonkar, women are seen to occupy the centre of her attention. They are full of intense desires for the satisfaction of which they go outside the conventions of society. In her novels which are primarily of social criticism, the drama of personal relationships is enacted in the context of larger socio-political situations in the country as Rama Jha said. Through them she argues for the need of freedom for women so that they can
become aware of their individuality. But Malgonkar does not make such a strong case for women.

Sahgal is angry, like Vishal Dubey in *Storm in Chandigarh*, with the double moral code of society. She analyses the question of social and emotional relationships as regards women. She portrays the traditional pattern of arranged marriages in *A Time to be Happy* and *This Time of Morning*. There are couples like Kailas Vrind and Mira who find happiness in the confines of tradition, and there are those like Arjun Mitra and Uma who do not find it. Such couples are found in Malgonkar also. Sahgal, like Malgonkar, shows that close and powerful relationship between man and woman can grow only out of mutual understanding and love.

In her earnest plea for intimate man-woman relationship based on emotional as well as physical involvement, Sahgal is highly modern. Like Malgonkar, she is against the traditional attitude of relegating woman to a subordinate position and subverting her individuality. She considers marriage as a bond of love without the loss of individuality of both. As regards moral behaviour, she has a revolutionary concept of virtue and chastity. She interprets such things “by studying the aesthetics of the situation... which disregards conventions and upholds the freedom of the
individual to work towards self-realization and involvement."  

As an exponent of the political novel, she has written about the political issues in India. But she is faulted for not integrating them into the domestic tension to cause repercussions on individuals and society. On the other hand, we find Malgonkar having artistically achieved this in his novels.

This new marital morality based on the positive liberal values seen in Sahgal, and to a certain extent in Malgonkar, is contradictory to Raja Rao's attitude. This is because he deals with "the spiritual or metaphysical essence in the manner of a poet or seer." In The Serpent and the Rope, The Cat and Shakespeare, and Comrade Kirilov, Rao gives his view of man-woman relationships. He exposes the futility of marriage as a social arrangement, a union of a man and a woman. Rama and Kirilov, both Indian Brahmins, are married to Madeline, a French woman, and Irene, a Czech one respectively. These women are the products of the Western culture and sensibility which are unlike the Indian. The two husbands who remain Indian at the core, are unable to unite themselves totally with their wives. Being the representatives of two contrary cultures, they bend under the yoke of marriage to the extent of breakage. The advaitin, Rama, wants his wife to efface her self, and mingle with him, like Prakarti and Purusha, to
rejoice in the realization of the Absolute. But Madeline is able to recognize marriage as a social institution only. The Christian that she is, changes to the Buddhist because both religions affirm the separate existence of man and God.

Contrary to Irene and Madeline who are unable to totally identify themselves with their husbands, Savithri and Saroja in *The Serpent and the Rope* are examples of Indian womanhood. These two have a strong sense of the Indian tradition, and are able to sacrifice their personal interests to the impersonal principles of marriage. Though Savithri is much more modern, she is able to have a mystical relationship with Rama. His thirst for the realization of the Absolute finds fruit in his relation with her who aspires only for a blessed state of Platonic union with him. Thus "Mr. Raja Rao has demonstrated in very convincing terms, in terms of fiction, that human relationships, no less than man's union with the Absolute, are the result not of bridges on rivers or bridge parties but the 'temporary suspension' over 'gurgling space' and alone with silence." 27

Like Malgonkar, R.K. Narayan too gives great importance to man–woman relationships in his novels. He implicitly suggests, like Raja Rao, a solution to the dilemma of women in their relationship with men. While
The English Teacher presents a picture of marital harmony, The Dark Room gives one of marital disharmony. Savitri adjusts herself, Sita-like, to the changing moods of her husband. But he taunts her for her pativrata image. While she is ready to forget and forgive, he considers her as a plaything he can caress and kick at as he fancies. Through her quitting him, and her abject return to him, Narayan portrays the pathetic position of women in Indian society. Marital disharmony and sexual relationships outside marriage are portrayed in The Guide, Mr. Sampath, and The Painter of Signs.

Malgonkar and Narayan portray the miseries and mirth of matrimony. But they are different in their attitude to sex. As Ramesh Dnyate says, Narayan always opts for distilled sex in his novels, and prefers to take a moralist's outlook in the portrayal of sex. He keeps sex at the barest minimum since unsanctified sexual relations are deviations from the norm of his world which is strictly moral. While his attitude to sex is of the old world, Malgonkar's is modern. He permits his characters to grow and enjoy sex freely as a part of the growth of personality. Unlike Narayan who wants women to strictly adhere to Indian tradition, Malgonkar allows them freedom from the shackles of male chauvinism. But he wants men and women to be companions to each other.
Paul Verghese, S. Batra, and Ayyappa Paniker have faulted Malgonkar for introducing scenes of sex and melodrama to compel the reader’s attention. Critical opinions like this are the result of not viewing his novels in their proper perspective. All the novels taken up here deal with the moral growth and maturity of the central characters, and have an ‘initiation’ theme in them. Sexual scenes are part of this theme, but commentators fail to see this. For example, the Jaora nude dance in Bend, according to Asha Batta, is symbolic of the mating season of nature.”

She does not connect it with the theme of the novel. A casual reading might make the episode seem irrelevant since Gian only watches it from hiding at a distance. When the novel is taken as his journey towards moral growth and maturity, which it really is, this watching of the nude dance is part of his initiation into the mysteries of life. Such a situation is created by Streinbeck in The Red Pony where Joady, the boy, is made to watch the copulation of horses.

Like Kipling, Kamala Markandaya, and E.M. Forster, Malgonkar finds the interaction between the Indians and the Westerners of absorbing interest. Like Meadows Taylor who attempted the theme of East-West confrontation, he is an idealist who shows his determination to forge new
and lasting relationships between the two nations. While the British encounter is, for Taylor, a momentous clash between the forces of civilization and savagery, as Amur says, it is for Malgonkar a tremendous influence prompting the two cultures to come together. Like Taylor, he too is deeply humanistic. But his strategy, slightly different from Taylor’s, is to recreate history, and to experiment in the field of human relationships. It can be seen in his accurate portrayal of Indian history, and the working out of intercultural and interreligious affiliations.

It is in Devil’s that we find the portrayal of Indo-British relationship as it existed in the nineteenth century. Here the British are portrayed as suffering from overconfidence due to a sense of racial superiority. But when we come to Drum, we see human sympathy, tolerance, and mutual camaraderie among the men of the army. This might have been true because the British wanted to keep the army totally isolated from national life, and away from the political realities of the time.

Malgonkar’s novels might seem to be unilateral in dealing with Indo-British relationship. For example, critics see Drum as a novel dealing with this at the personal level only. The truth is that it deals with the personal, political, and cultural aspects as we find in Kiran’s relationship with the
British officers, Lala Vishnu Saran Dev, and Kamala Kant. Not content with the treatment of this till Indian Independence, the author shows it as continuing in Kiran’s friendship with Bertie who comes to see him on his way to Malaya, and in Ropey Booker’s magnanimity in coming for the Satpura Reunion. The cultural opposition to the British, which some Indians felt, and which they could not openly show in the army, is expressed by Kamala Kant who wanted to demolish everything connected with them.

A clear case of hatred between the British and the Indians is seen in Combat when the author shows the interaction between the Indian coolies and the British planters. While Mulk Raj Anand, in Two Leaves and a Bud, shows the exploited and cheated coolies living in dirty and diseased circumstances, Malgonkar does not turn his camera on these aspects. There is only the indication that they have no place to go if evicted. Anand’s picture of the exploitation of the coolies is implicitly corroborated by Malgonkar who makes them conscious of their privileges through Kishore, the labour leader. While the former portrays the British as generally contemptible, the latter does it the other way. The coolies, in Malgonkar also, are afraid of the Sahibs who hate and distrust them at times. But this
attitude of distrust does not make them adequately armed like Charles Croft-Cooke in *Two Leaves and a Bud*.

Meenakshi Mukherjee blames Malgonkar for putting a premium on the British at the expense of the Indians. That this is not true can be seen from the portrayal of Kiran and Henry. Both follow the British public school code of conduct, and have a developed moral consciousness. Kiran only sharpens and elevates it while Henry, knowing that it is unsuitable to successful living, eases it. The former, even after knowing this, does not do so. So the Indian is allowed moral regeneration while the Britisher is punished for his moral degeneration. Again, Kiran, who is a British-trained colonel, is found out-Britishing them in his dedication to the army. Thus he appears as more satisfying than his masters. We need take only Debi, the idealist-terrorist, to learn that Malgonkar is appreciative, not only of the British in their idealism, but also of the Indians. The thing is that he is so only when he finds commendable qualities. In this respect he is like Anand who, at times, idealized Englishmen as in the portrait of Dr. Havre, was ready to find virtue wherever it was, and condemned vices whether in Englishmen or in Indians.
Malgonkar’s treatment of Indo-British relationship offers a contrast to E.M. Forster’s in A Passage to India. Forster, taking up the question of friendship between the Indians and Englishmen, answers in the negative since the two races were interlocked in political affairs. Malgonkar goes many steps forward, and tells us that they can be on friendly terms as shown in Drum and Princes. But in Combat the British are represented as ‘sun-dried bureaucrats’ with a wide social gulf between them and the Indians. Henry, like Ronny Heaslop, believes that the British are not to behave pleasantly to the Indians. Both are products of the public school system which, V.A. Shahane observes, created, among good qualities, narrowness and a feeling of superiority to make them blind to the value of personal relationship.32

“The great relationship, for humanity, will always be the relation between man and woman. The relation between man and man, woman and woman, parent and child, will always be subsidiary,” said D.H. Lawrence.33 In Malgonkar, except in Princes, parent-child relationships are subsidiary. In Princes the whole story of princely life is unfolded through the parent-child relationship between Hiroji and Abhay, and Abhay and the Maharani. The lack of parental love causes great emotional
disturbances in Abhay, and his life runs wayward. Debi is recruited to terrorism, not only because of his personal grievance, but also because of the difference of opinion with his father. Tekchand had not cared to win his son through love.

The familial relationships in Malgonkar’s novels evince his firm grasp of Indian life. The surrogate mother in the elder sister, as found in Sundari, is not a strange phenomenon in India where familial values are not extinct. In Drum we find Govind Ram Sonal, Bina’s father, asking his sister-in-law to find a suitable bridegroom for her. So far they had no contact. How traditional a modern Indian father could be, is seen in him who does not allow her to marry the man of her choice.

“The meaning of social change in fiction,” says Rajendra Yadav, “relates, not to the details of events and situations, but to the changing attitudes of man-to-man relationship under new stresses and strains.” Malgonkar has portrayed this in almost all his novels, especially Drum, Bend, and Princes. Kiran-Jamal friendship is subjected to stresses and strains, but it survives them all. Abhay-Kanakchand relationship shows friendship changing under the stress of circumstantial peculiarities. Nana’s relationship with his British friends also evinces this.
An ideal relationship in Malgonkar’s fiction is friendship, intraracial and interracial. Nana asks: “Were friends in the ranks of the enemy still friends?” (Devil’s 140). The question, delved out here, is further discussed in Drum and Princes. The author seems to say that they cannot be so because of the changing social and political conditions. Kiran’s friendship with Jamal and Mansingh is enviable and divine. So is his friendship with Bertie and Ropey, Abhay’s with Punch and Tony, and Tony’s with Jamadar Dongre in Princes.

The personal friendship and jealous animosity that Kiran confronts, are a reflection of the same existing in society at large. Malgonkar portrays circumstantial enmity in the relationship between Kiran and Shantilal, Abhay and Kanakchand, and Nana and the British. This shows the novelist’s wide and deep observation of life. He also portrays masculine jealousy camouflaged in generosity in the episode of Henry and Eddie’s application for Commission in the army.

Unlike Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal, Malgonkar does not blame anyone particularly, for Partition. As Kalinnikkova said, he attacks both the British colonizers and the extremist Hindus and Muslims. He describes the magnitude of violence due to Partition after bringing about
images of the same in his narrative. If Khushwant Singh makes the village of Mano Majra to represent the larger India, Malgonkar makes two families, and a club, to represent it. Milan Kundera says that a good novelist tries to bring together different novelistic stories to create a semblance of polyphony. Malgonkar also gives a polyphonic structure to the narrative in *Bend*. His use of history is such that he is able to evolve a pattern from the individual events. Partition is portrayed through the theme of separation both in familial and friendly circles in this novel. The breaking asunder of close ties of friendly and familial life is the metaphor for this. A notable feature of Malgonkar's protagonists is that they are all seen moving towards an independent state. This has a symbolic connection with the theme of the novels which deal with Indian Independence Movement.

A study of Malgonkar's fictional world will be incomplete without a glimpse at his shorter fiction. The locale of this world, like that of his novels, as said earlier, is the Indian subcontinent. The background is army life, hunting, mining, smuggling, business, politics, and domestics. The inhabitants are grown-ups, and children are seen very seldom. Running through all the stories, there is a hard core of personal experience. They are
remarkable for the variety of situations and characters, and some of them present illuminating glimpses into human psychology also. Unlike the novels they are mostly in the comic mood. They also show that the author possesses a creative imagination capable of successfully accomplishing that 'willing suspension of disbelief' in their readers. Here also he deals with man-woman relationship, Indo-British relationship, and other social relationships. "The human relations he describes in these stories—and these are a serious concern for him—are true and credible and the fun not unduly exaggerated."37

It is in his novels that we find man-woman relationships portrayed comprehensively. In Devil's and Princes we see superstitions affecting this relationship so that the marital bond is only an illusion. While men have other means of satisfying their passion, women suffer for lack of it. But when they get an opportunity, they make use of it. In Bend and Combat pre-marital and extra-marital relationships snap the marital bond. It is seen to continue even after infidelity though not known to each other in Radha–Tekchand relationship in Bend. In Drum he portrays the anguish of two lovers who find it difficult to distil their love in marriage due to the differences in their economic status. Indo-British relationship forms a
considerable part of his fictional programme. In his novels we find a variety of familial relationships along with other social relationships among the Indians and the British. In the treatment of these various relationships the seriousness of his purpose as a novelist can be seen. The study of these relationships done in the following chapters is expected to be a revelation of the enlightened mind of the novelist regarding the vital "expression of the deeper human perception which the novel has traditionally sought to represent."
REFERENCES


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12 N.S. Pradhan, 140.


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