CHAPTER IV
OTHER SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Society is the sum-total of individuals, families, and social groups. Social life is the summary of the interaction between them. Since society is the raw-material of a writer, he is sure to reflect the peculiarities of it in his writings. The characters created by him are seen occupying a particular position in the place and time of action. Even in the stream of consciousness technique, where characterization achieves by depth what traditional method does by extension, where characters are presented outside time and place, a sensitive and thoughtful writer cannot ignore society altogether. Thus we can see that the social situation will impinge itself upon the characters. It may be a profile in the existentialists whereas it maybe panchromatic in the case of the traditionalists.

Malgonkar is a writer of the traditional school of novelists. His writings, being mostly historical and political, show an authentic picture of the social reality. In his novels we find almost all types of social relationships some of which have already been discussed. These novels contain interpersonal, official, and master-servant relationships also. In his fictional world, human friendship, though rare, is worth analysing first, not
only because he devotes a great part of his first novel, *Distant Drum* for the exposition of this relationship, but also because it is between a Hindu and a Muslim, Kiran Garud and Abdul Jamal.

Kiran-Jamal friendship, which is one of "the crux of the novel," begins from mutual help in professional matters. Though they had little in common with each other by temperament, they become "close enough for Kiran who was always sensitive about going to stay with other people, to have wanted to go and spend a part of his annual leave with Abdul" (*Drum* 217). It is Jamal's conversation about Margot Medley, and her nude photograph that he shows Kiran, that remove his inhibitions and reinforce his relationship with the nymphomaniac. The same friendship saves him from the crisis created by Bob Medley's suicide due to his wife's relations with him. While, through the Margot affair, we come to know about the extramarital relationship of Kiran, in the enquiry conducted on it later, we get the basis of the close standing friendship between him and Jamal.

Kiran's friendship with Jamal becomes closer as the former comes to know of the latter's viewpoint of the suicide of Bob. Jamal is highly practical in his view of it which, he thinks, is a bad business in itself. He
did not want to add to the complication by dragging in other names. His unsentimental stand befits his soldier’s bearing very well:

There was a war on: people dying in thousands everywhere. And then, some stupid introverted ass who cannot take it, who cannot carry the weight of his own little trouble, decides to bump himself off. Who is to blame? What did it matter?—One extra dead. Why drag in other people’s names? (Drum 39).

This reaction raises him to a high pedestal of friendship in Kiran’s estimate. He is full of elation at the confirmation of loyalty to friendship. Venkateswarlu’s observation that the novelist instils a sense of happy association and liking for the army life in the minds of the readers² becomes relevant here.

Their friendship is so firm that they stand close together in the face of the communal riots created by Partition, when lifelong ties between the two communities were being broken. It stands the test of tense situations. When Delhi was burning in the riots, both of them set out for rescue operations. While Jamal carries the wounded in a lorry, Kiran tries to put out the fires with the help of others. When he sees Kiran going into the Mosque, he stops him even before he stops his lorry. Knowing that it is
dangerous for a Hindu to enter a mosque at that time, he himself goes into it. When Kiran is worried about Jamal's not coming out, he goes inside and is yelled at by the Muslim crowd. Had it not been for the tact of Jamal and his love for Kiran, the mob would have torn him to pieces. Through their strenuous effort and striking companionship, they exemplify the esprit de corps.

The story of Kiran and Jamal is one of model friendship melodiously portrayed. Whether they had been able to do much good during the riots is immaterial. What matters most is that both of them stood close, their loyalties to each other unruptured by the fact of their different religions which were at war, crazed with vengeance and thirsting for blood. "The ties of friendship of young men are stronger than religious duty." Their meeting in No Man's Land, after exchanging New Year Greetings, is typical of both of them whose friendship cannot be broken by political baboos or military taboos. It is so intimate and soul-binding that it will last even after they cease to physically exist. But Malgonkar can only give a fitting finale to their friendship by making them drink the champagne Mansingh (another friend) give Kiran at the time of seeing him off from Delhi.
Jamal who is true to his Muslim tradition feels the pangs of separation consequent on the division of the army all the more. To him the most important things in life are those he finds difficult to talk about. He hadn’t even thanked Kiran who handed over his belongings to him when he recovered from his war-wounds because, “Then there was your whole life to say ‘thank you’ in; now there is no way of showing how one feels without talking about it” (Drum 240). The world in which they can live together, he knows, has come to an end, and their personal relationship is going to be subjected to new scrutinies since, in their new worlds, the subject of private debts is taboo. Malgonkar has strikingly portrayed the soul-stirring conflict in the minds of the two soldier friends whose relationship is going to be subjected to new values exerted over them with contorted limitations.

Kiran could immediately experience it when his superiors viewed their meeting seriously. They thought it would tell upon the morale of the men under them as a case of conduct unbecoming an officer. Yet here comes to Kiran’s rescue, the friendly regimental tie and lenient attitude of his superiors, Brigadier Swarup Singh and ‘Spike’ Ballur. And so General Torgal, after admonishing him, warns not to repeat it. This exculpation of
Kiran, after his fraternization with the enemy, sounds unconvincing to H.M. Williams. Like Kiran, perhaps, the General too has a sense of human values above and beyond the military laws.

The camaraderie of Kiran and Mansingh which lasts even after lack of contact for years is another case of friendship. In Delhi, Kiran is lucky to have him round. Otherwise, he would have run into more trouble and more often than he did. Unlike these two cases of friendship, Abhayraj's with Kanakchand, in The Princes, causes him unbearable trouble and more often. The complex relationship between royalty represented by Abhay and poverty represented by Kanakchand is also the crux of the novel. It is in the Ashokraj High School that the prince comes into contact with Kanakchand, the cobbler boy, after he is pushed into a pond as a punishment for his 'arrogance'. The quarrel and its result bring him more information about the poor boy. Without it he would never have noticed him, he says, and their destinies would never have been "inextricably interwoven" (Princes 40).

Abhay is full of sympathy for the poor boy that he gives all his books to him. After Kanakchand returned the Highroads Treasury, inadvertently given him by Abhay, they become friends helping each other in their
studies. Abhay admires the hard-working and diligent boy. They exchange playthings, and one day, seeing the poor lunch of Kanakchand, Abhay offers him a chocolate. Since he does not show any princely inhibitions, Kanakchand is so pleased with him that he comes to the palace-gate enquiring after his health when he is ill. Abhay avoids all his companions when he recovered and spends his time with Kanakchand. He even invites his friend to the palace for the annual party. His friendship with Kanakchand forms a good opinion of the latter as a young boy "sound as a silver rupee" (Princes 46).

In the portrayal of the friendly relations between Abhay and Kanakchand, the prince and the pauper, we have repeated pictures of the contrast between the very rich and the very poor. Full of admiration for the hardworking boy, Abhay knew that he would not be able to continue his studies without a scholarship. So he prepares an essay at the latter’s bidding. But it results in the King’s horsewhipping the poor boy for cheating. Abhay is so anguished and remorseful that he is relieved of it only after his mother’s promise to compensate by bearing all expenses of Kanakchand’s higher education. But after this incident, Kanakchand does not come to him even when sent for. He keeps himself away thinking that
it was Abhay who betrayed him though the culprit was Abdulla Jan. It is a case of circumstances and misunderstandings creating gaps in human relationship and making it sour. Abhay has only a good opinion of his friend though the latter hates him. Hiroji’s remark in this connection is a pointer to the irony of the situation: “And the way he shows his gratitude is by not speaking to you” (*Princes* 14).

“The characters of Malgonkar,” observes R.S. Singh, “are creatures of strong feelings. Humiliation always prods them into action. They don’t hesitate to take revenge if they feel challenged or insulted.”⁵ Abhay-Kanakchand relationship, hereafter, moves on these lines. When Kanakchand comes back from deportation, after Independence, the relationship between the two becomes more hateful. As the ‘mandal’ leader in Begwad, he works for the dissolution of the princedom. While Abhay and the king are full of restraint at the turn of events, he and his men rise in their arrogance. They display unwarranted enthusiasm to pooh-pooh them as when they return from New Delhi. To Abhay who questions him about his ingratitude, he says that he is standing for the birth-right of the downtrodden, and that he wants nothing for himself. But he shows his real intention when he narrates the inequities he and his family had to suffer for
being born as untouchables. Surely it is the inequity of circumstances that
turns him against the high class. His is a class struggle wherein there is no
room for personal considerations. But towards the royal family that helped
him to socially rise up, he should have behaved gratefully. At least he could
have prevented himself from making things more difficult for them. (But
Kanakchand might argue that it was the Maharani, now no more in
Begwad, who helped him out of her own resources, and that the king only
horsewhipped him.) No wonder, his vehement and arrogant words that he
shall say and do anything appear like poisoned barbs of hatred to Abhay.
His action of persisting in dishonouring the king, even after knowing that
things are favourable to him, shows that he stoops to the level of personal
revenge from his professed aim of national uplift. And this attitude
certainly earns him the appellation of ‘disgruntled goonda’.

When it comes to preserving their prestige, the former friends move
poles apart. Abhay tries to preserve his princedom in the face of his father’s
apathy for State affairs. He is surprised and displeased that his former
friend is able to act against him. Not having the correct idea of the person,
he goes to question him. Unconvinced by his “camouflage of moral
idealism”, he tries to buy him off. The last thing that he wants the man to
do is to keep away from insulting his father. When his just arguments fall in the deaf ears of Kanakchand, he threatens him: "But if you make my father suffer any public dishonour, I shall flog you. This I swear" (*Princes* 276).

Though he swears, he does not persist in revenge, perhaps because he takes upon himself the guilt of turning the ambitious boy into a malevolent revolutionary. Even at the abdication ceremony, while Kanakchand’s speech strikes a discordant note with his bangs and threats, he does not lose his self-control; he only shows an amiable attitude towards the new set up. It is only when he is personally challenged by Kanakchand that he goes forward and whips him in public at the school function. Thus the friendship, which started in the same school, ended in enmity there itself.

Malgonkar has presented not only the impact of failure on the princes, but also the impact of success on the upstart politician, Kanakchand. Through his picture as a simple, humble, honest, and innocent boy growing into a mean and malicious politician, it might appear that it was politics that turned his head and made him a stunted, ungrateful soul.*

* Madge in his article (p. 15) says it is so.
Alfred Adler's theory of inferiority complex and analysis of compensatory processes explain Kanakchand's activities and his relationship with Abhay who stands for royalty.

The experience of inferiority, and the need to compensate for it, is something universal—a fact of common human nature. Everyone is aware of his or her limitations, and tries to deal with them. Lewis Way, explaining Adler, says that poverty and the influence of social disgrace such as being born in a dissenting religious sect etc. may make a person rebellious, and take up the fight for social justice and equality. Inferiorities are the stimulus to compensation and the pointers towards the goal of individual and racial improvement. As Adler said, a thousand talents and capabilities arise from the stimulus of inadequacy, and through inferiorities is produced that variety of careers and accomplishments by which society is enriched.7 Kanakchand's actions of ingratitude, and callous behaviour are part of his constant pursuit of superiority. Also, he shows those traits of arrogance and self-importance to be noticed in all neurotic persons.

While Abhay-Kanakchand relationship is one of close friendship changing to enmity, Kanakchand—Charudutt relationship is one of initial enmity turning into friendship. While at school it was Charudutt who
pushed the other into a pond after throwing all his books into it. In return for the bad words, cow-eater, stinking cow-skinner, etc. used by him, the other called him a bastard and thus snubbed him. Thus started the enmity between the two. Out of his hatred for the untouchable, he even warned Abhay against inviting him to the annual party at the palace. When Abhay insisted, he declared: "I will die before I eat in the same room as a cow-eater" (Princes 51). The same boy is found talking friendly with the other and laughing a lot later on.

The reasons for this change in him are not far to find. As he grows up, he understands that he cannot have royal aspirations because he is only an 'upraja'. His bitterness increases when he is forbidden from entering the palace after his mother is suspected of intrigue. So he becomes friendly with Kanakchand. In his misery he joins hands with his erstwhile enemy and works against the prince. It is a case of two oppressed, joining hands against the oppressor. It is here that the novel becomes "a realistic and dispassionate interpretation of a human situation." Malgonkar catches the reader's attention by his true depiction of the political situation and the portrayal of the human relationships that developed in this situation.
This again is to be found in *A Bend in the Ganges* where he deals, not with friendship, but with the interpersonal relationship among acquaintances. Apart from other relationships, the novel is concerned with that of four characters—Gian Talwar, Debidayal, Shafi Usman, and Basu—chosen from different layers of society. Gian, a poor scholarship student from an orthodox Hindu background, meets Debi, the son of a rich industrial magnate. In their interaction we get an account of the rich and the poor. While the rich sporting set played tennis, and spoke of sophisticated life, poor students like Gian could only gaze at its glittering from the outside. But they were all polite like Debi, and careful not to appear condescending, says Malgonkar. Debi takes Gian to his house, and introduces him to his sister, Sundari.

While Gian's poverty comes out in his relationship with Debi, his difficulty to adjust himself to modernity comes out at the picnic. Being laughed at by the girls he throws away his 'janwa' (sacred thread), and ventures into the swollen current of the main river when all others are afraid, even to go near it.* For him the picnic is a sort of initiation into the

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* Thus Malgonkar is careful to point out Gian as the hero, but Sood says Debi is the hero. (S.C. Sood, p. 209).
world of the forward generation enlightened by westernization. Since he
has nothing in common with them, he wonders why he has been invited.
Through his thoughts and feelings about the picnic, Malgonkar portrays the
difficulties of poor students trying to fit themselves into sophisticated
company. The picnic is a forked weapon wielded by the novelist. It brings
in the clash of two ideologies. It helps him to show Gian as a heroic figure,
and also to point out the change that comes over him. In the picture of the
picnic, with the western costumes, edibles and drinks, he shows the Indian
youth aping the Westerners in their anxiety to be modern.

Gian has been invited to the picnic to convert him to terrorism. Consequently, a discussion about violence and non-violence comes up
between him and Shafi (Singh). He asks Gian to point out a single instance
of a country having won freedom from foreign yoke through non-violence.
Not having a convincing answer, the ‘Gandhian’ Gian feels an unreasoning
sense of revulsion in the presence of Shafi who speaks against Gandhism.
His Gandhism is aptly summed up by Shafi who says: “College boys fall
more easily for Gandhi’s type of movement, it is much more face-saving”
(Bend 19). Shafi’s face and voice of evil proclaim prophetically that a
million shall die, and it turns out to be true. But Gian’s promise that he
shall never indulge in violence is not kept. Through this part of Gian’s story Malgonkar exposes the hollow sham of the Indians who simply professed to be non-violent. “What Malgonkar condemns is not the ideals and idealism but people’s superficial adherence to them.”

Idealistic association based on dissatisfaction with the existing situation is what we see in Debi-Shafi-Basu relationship initially. These Freedom Fighters formed the Hanuman Club, ostensibly for physical culture, but really for terrorism. They are people dissatisfied with the Non-cooperation Movement of Gandhiji, and unhappy with its outcome. They are representatives of those who advocated radical solutions for the ills from which India was suffering. Hence their disgruntlement against Gandhian non-violence and vegetarianism. They aim at a new religion of brotherhood, smashing down the barriers of religion that held Indians divided. They firmly believe that religious differences among the Indians were the root-cause of India’s slavery.

The terrorist relation of Debi and Shafi is not out of very strong political convictions; Debi’s the less so. But once they plunge into it, they are sincere in their attempts; Debi the more so. What holds them together is their youthful lust for spectacular actions. Shafi, as the leader of the group,
prevents them from making thoughtless sacrifices. But Debi is fed up with his 'too much caution and little action'. When his suggestion of sabotage is applauded by others, Shafi experiences a feeling of resentment. He fears that his leadership might slip to Debi who is their deputy leader. But the man of policy that he is, he is ready to play along with his followers and respect their mood. It is because of jealousy that he selects Debi as his accomplice in the plane-sabotage. Thus the inner apprehension, selfishness, and jealousy of those who profess to be totally disinterested and committed are brought out by Malgonkar.

Debi-Shafi relationship helps Malgonkar “to trace the psychological ripening of religious fanaticism” which came as a curse on the national life of India during the freedom struggle. Shafi is at first conscious of the sweeping wave of religious hatred. He tells his men that Gandhi and Jinnah have both played into British hands, and destroyed secularism, the saving grace of nationalism. He, who advised his men to avenge the British insult of making the Indians crawl on all four, is seen playing into the hands of Hafiz Khan, a terrorist-turned-fanatic. He does not pause to save the Hindu members of his club. Consequently Debi, Basu, and other Hindus are arrested and imprisoned. Debi swears revenge upon Shafi
because "what he had done was a betrayal of everything that he stood for, had prepared the others for—with all his anti-religious talk" (Bend 156). Thus the betrayal of ardent human relationships results in separation due to selfishness, thereby contributing to the epic stature of the novel suggested by its title.

It is after his release from the Andamans and subsequent living in 'hiding' that Debi comes back to his former colleagues—Shafi and Basu—in Calcutta. With the change of mind that has come over him in the light of experiences, he does not want to pick a fight with Shafi. But Basu has not forgotten his betrayal. So he has checked up his whereabouts and tells Debi that he has not been able to take revenge upon him because of his family commitments. Thus the Hanuman Club becomes a microcosm of the macrocosm that was Indian society, with the Hindus and Muslims united at first to fight against the British, and, at last when they were about to leave, fighting against each other, with Basu representing the Hindus, and Shafi, the Muslims, and Debi an embarrassed observer in between, like Gandhiji. When Basu comments that what has been aimed against the British has turned against itself, he is connected with Debj who also makes a similar comment.
It is through their conversation that Malgonkar comments on non-violence in view of the mounting violence in the country. Basu tells Debi that non-violence is only a pious dream of the philosophers, that the human race will be non-violent is only a delusion since it endows it with virtues it did not possess. He asserts that, since it is a quality required on both sides, those who are not ready to meet violence with violence will perish or become slaves. The future of a country nurtured on non-violence will be doomed in a world of mounting violence, he continues. Amur and Sharma find fault with the novel for illustrating the utter irrelevance of non-violence. But Malgonkar has not shown it in novelistic terms. As N.S.Pradhan said, the author himself is responsible for this shallow valuation of the novel since he makes attempts to connect this political theme with the individual lives of characters. The novel, if anything, shows "man's hidden capacity for violence often brought out by the destructive acts of others" as is the case with Basu who thinks of retaliating for the mutilation done to the face of his wife by Muslim fanatics.

Debi's disillusionment makes him lament upon the strange pass they have come to, fighting amongst themselves when they should concentrate on the British. It is an apt comment upon the social reality that existed in
India at the time. But he too does nothing in this direction; his action of going to meet Shafi rather aggravates the situation. Once again the former leader betrays him and Basu. When he takes away Mumtaz, the prostitute, Shafi’s anger hardens to an open fight.

In the meeting of Shafi and Debi at Anarkali, P.P. Mehta “naturally expects a quick fight but nothing happens.” This has to be understood in the light of the change (towards non-violence) that has come over Debi after all his experiences. Also, he finds fault with Debi’s method of revenge as improbable and unrealistic, as Amur has done. Even N.S. Pradhan, a perceptive critic, finds it “an uncharacteristic act on Debi’s part,” and “an obvious concession on the author’s part to the popular taste.” These critics do not take into account either the apotheosis, or the nature of it, that comes over Debi. Malgonkar’s conception of Debi as a Christ-like character (after his terrorist activities) is evident from his truthfulness, determination, and compassion. The picture of Debi whipped on the gallows reminds us of Christ on the cross. His sympathy for the prostitute is also nothing else. Far from making a concession to the popular taste, the author’s intention is also to show that all people were not communalists. It is also part of his intention to experiment in human relationships, like Meadows Taylor.
Bendi, the most-discussed novel of Malgonkar's, offers multiple human relationships, some of them controversial. Among them Debi-Gian relationship is a notable one as it offers the device of the double hero. In the first part of the novel we see them as college-mates, and later, as prisonmates in the Andamans. Gian is shocked to see him in a convict's garb. He does not find him broken and ingratiating like himself, but proud and haughty. Through these two Malgonkar gives us two portraits of Indians at the time of the freedom struggle. Gian, the traditional type, adores the British with his ingrained servility while Debi hates them more for psychological reasons than for political. He is not ready to cringe before the British. He wants to go back to India to resume his interrupted work. He has only contempt for Gian who spaniels the British.

Unlike Debi, Gian does not think of returning; instead he wants to settle there. While Debi's thoughts are full of idealism, Gian's are always of survival. He agrees to keep watch on Debi when asked by Mulligan. It is his ingrained servility to authority that makes him blow the whistle against Debi. But he regrets it later. In order to atone for his crime of betraying Debi, he offers him a chance to escape. He tells Debi: "you must come with us. I beg of you. Give me a chance to do something for you... make me
feel that I have been able to repair, in some measure, the injury I have done you’’ (Bend 197). Debi’s idealism prevents him from joining Gian, but Gian’s thoughts are always directed by his desire to live. He is ready to forget the past as he feels there is no use feeling sick over it. It is this that takes him back to India earlier than Debi. Once he gets a job, he is content to lead a peaceful, secure, and free life, under obligations to none. If Chaman Nahal’s Azadi is an honest man’s struggle for an honourable life, Bend is an ordinary man’s struggle for an honourable life.

The novel, as Amur said, is a highly satisfying account of an individual’s attempt at survival and search for moral identity. In this connection it must be said that Ayyappa Paniker’s comment, that there are as many Gians as there are episodes, is not a slight exaggeration but a serious perforation since the character of Gian is an elaborate study in moral deterioration under repeated shocks of temptation to live. Once he is able to cast away his past, and obtain an honourable identity, he asserts his individual freedom though Sundari comes in as a slight obstacle. And, as events turned out, both are able to assert their freedom. For both of them the movement is towards freedom—freedom from all bondage. Thus the

* He admits it is a slight exaggeration.
journey to personal freedom is artistically presented in the backdrop of India’s journey towards political freedom. This is what makes the novel great.

Debi’s case is far below Gian’s. Like the latter he too is broken, but he refuses to compromise with circumstances, or if at all, he does it very late when he comes to realize the value of love. The same realization with its traditional desire for parental affirmation leads to his destruction. He does not try to attain the freedom from bondage that Gian does. R.S. Singh and H.M. Williams find it ironical that the depraved Gian should prosper, and the good Debi perish. Through his death Debi is attuned to the stature of Christ who has no chance of life in this degraded world. Whatever may be said of them, one thing is certain: they realize the value of love.

Love alone does not make women what they are; they contain selfishness and jealousy also. In Sundari’s attitude to Malini, a case of interpersonal relationship between women, Malgonkar portrays the working of the feminine heart truthfully. Even before Malini comes to Sundari, she feels an air of resentment at the former’s familiarity with her husband. That she calls him ‘darling’ is suspected to be a case of possession. But even after knowing of their illicit relationship, she does not
do anything for six years. Though she is conscious of her own guilt in her sexual intimacy with Gian, she resents the growing intimacy between Malini and her husband. Her selfishness and jealousy can be seen in her undisguised condescension and shockingly rude behaviour to Malini. Of this she tells her husband: "I'm afraid I called her a whore and a tart—that's what she is!" (Bend 323). But she is defeated when she understands that it is pointless to match crudities with her. At Malini's triumph she had simply to back out from the club as well as Gopal's house.

Malgonkar portrays this eternal feminine jealousy in The Devil's Wind with a few slaps of Champa on the face of Azijan, seeing that Nana Saheb has an eye on the latter with her better physical features even after child birth. Also, in his short story 'Mr. Cheng's Ducks' (Toast 78-82) he has, in his inimitable manner, exposed it when Meera sends Asha four red ducks given to her earlier by the man who is going to marry the latter. And when Asha goes out of the room, crying and unable to bear the news that her bridegroom had fallen in love with her friend also, the picture is complete. But Malgonkar does not give the monopoly of jealousy and selfishness to women. Men are there to share it with their counterparts as will be seen soon.
Apart from “the interplay of suspense and surprise,” the military world of Malgonkar’s shorter fiction shows that official seniority is no bar to personal amity. In his famous story, ‘Bachcha Lieutenant’ (Bombay 57-66) Lt. Wilson has a very cordial and friendly relationship with Tukaram Shindey and Hawaldar Ranga who all try to save one another’s life, loudly proclaiming the solid nature of the relationship between man and man, no matter white or black. In ‘Maggie’ (Bombay 47-56), Lt. Col. Howard and his Major General, who were both after Maggie, come to understand that she has eluded them to marry an American. Mansingh, the narrator, finds them both engaged in a free and easy conversation “as though they were two old friends having a jaw about old times and not a Major-General talking to one of his staff officers” (55). Mansingh, the soldier, is taken into confidence, and the General talks enthusiastically to him about the would-be-wedding. Even Brigadier Collins, in ‘Pack Drill’ (Bombay 122-29), who had acquired a fearsome reputation for being the worst of Inspecting Officers, is found changed so as to allow his men to enjoy a burra khana though they are not able to appreciate his sense of humour. Major Maxwell, Brigadier Murray, and the Adjutant in ‘A Little Sugar a Little Tea’ (Bombay
7-14), also exemplify the friendly nature of the superior-subordinate relationship in the army.

This is true not only of the relation among the British and between the British and the Indians, but also of that between the Indians themselves, as is illustrated in 'Blame the Army' (Bombay 105-11) where Shamnath who comes to mining after resigning his Commission in the army is helped by Jamadar Chandan Singh in establishing him as a successful manager. It was certainly nice of Chandan to come to help Shamnath as they had worked together at the Jat Regiment. Shamnath's friendship with Chandan stands him in good stead, and the latter is only pleased to do anything for his former master.

A notable aspect of official relationships in Drum is that official seniority produces personal amity as well as enmity, as regards the relationship among the Indians. There are "a few fictitious squabbles between officers," and it is these that make Kai Nicholson grant a fictional stature to the novel since he believes that "the greater part of it is a plain documentation of contemporary army-life." Kiran's relationship with three senior officers is found unpleasant, and so he is disgusted while 'warming the chair' at Delhi. As can be expected, it is Mansingh who warns
him of these 'pushing type' men among whom are Namdar and Col. Ramdeva.

Namdar is a man of 'pull-push,' who, with his hold in Delhi, tried to keep an important post vacant for him to be appointed to, though he did not know anything about it. When the General, refusing the post to him, appoints Kiran, he feels jealous of the latter. More about Nandar and his office procedure, Kiran gets to know from his experience in the office. He finds that there is no meaning in being true and sincere in the 'bullock-cart speed' of Secretariat procedure governed by baboo logic which wanted, not to avoid mistakes, but to avoid taking decisions. He notices to his utter dismay and disgust:

> Among the clerks and officials this tendency manifested itself in a sort of perpetual competition to find out reasons why something should not be done instead of why it should, and the more obscure and unfamiliar the ruling you dug out from the complex rules of procedure, the more reason you had to feel satisfied with yourself. ([Drum](#) 123-24)

This is, Kiran understands, the distinguishing characteristic of Namdar, the Co-ord man, who had an air of being superior and right at all times.
That the above observation is painfully true is illustrated by the proceedings at the DWP's weekly staff conference. Brigadier Shindey, the DWP, had asked Kiran to prepare an appreciation of the communication requirements of Border Region Three to be submitted to the General. He gives him overtime and also the assurance to stop any 'comeback' on it. As the matter was urgent, Kiran gets the required maps from the concerned section, and prepares the appreciation. But he is taken to task by Namdar for this overlooking of procedure, and the DWP does not do anything to save his skin. The same man who tasked him with it joins with the other fellow in taking him to task. Even the Brigadier is afraid of procedure, urgent work or not. The man who swore to stop any 'comeback' on it, is shaken at the mention of 'Chief', and he pleads with his subordinate (Namdar) to regularize it. Kiran understands that people like Namdar will always have the last word in a country ruled by the native sahibs.

Namdar is very happy to hear that Kiran is transferred from Army HQ. He informs Mansingh immediately of Kiran's transfer to 77 Div. surely with a wild glee knowing that Shantilal, the CO of 77 Dvn. does not like Kiran, and that the latter would break the former. This gives him a sense of vicarious revenge, and also a sense of satisfaction at the thought of
getting posted in Kiran’s place. Thus, we see under our eyes, as P. P. Mehta said, the canvas of the Indian Army unfurl itself, and we see the way the officers live, love, like and dislike each other.24

Kiran’s hatred of the ‘Accounts men’ makes him rub one of them the wrong way. Throughout his life he hated them, for “they used to pounce upon the most obscure and insignificant irregularity in the battalion accounts and give it the appearance of a deliberately perpetrated fraud” (Drum 110). He fumes at the way the baboos, sitting in office chairs, dictate what troops should carry with them in the field. (Incidentally it must be pointed out that Malgonkar unveils this in the story ‘Camouflage Tactics’.)*

Even when the Brigadier gets angry at the note Kiran wrote on the file, he stands firm for the soldiers. Though he could convince the Brigadier of the necessity of soldiers’ carrying rum and sugar, they had to go on the experimental patrol without these because the ‘Accounts men’ did not forgive easily. He is very much annoyed at the baboos who know nothing about the army and its activities, and yet control it.

Among the army officers there were a few who were full of exaggerated notions of their own importance, and were ready to ‘chew up’

* In Bombay Beware 96-100.
their juniors. Colonel Ramdeva, senior to Kiran only by one year, was one such. Kiran falls into 'quite a tiff' with him in the matter of the experimental patrol in which he had rubbed the 'Accounts men.' He learns that military matters are to be carried out, depending on the right mood of people like Ramdeva, who are jealous of the competence of others. He is a little confused at this, but, to his intense satisfaction, he soon gets a chance to turn his back on the man who tried to impress others by claiming equality with their superiors. Not ready to give in to his false sense of superiority, Kiran ticks off the man who never picked on him again. Shyam M. Asnani is right in saying that the novel is "a down-to-earth real story entirely engrossing and absorbing," since it contains petty jealousies and pretty passions.

The enmities and the consequent difficulties Kiran experiences in Delhi are totally unwarranted. Shantilal's enmity towards him is another case in point. He did not exactly pick a row with the man. In fact they did not have anything to do with each other. The cause of the unpleasantness was a matter of circumstances beyond the control of both. Although Shantilal had every right to feel badly treated, it should not have embittered him against Kiran as it was only the circumstances that was to be blamed.
But as things stand, one can only console oneself saying that in the army everyone does not play by the rules as General Ballur explained it away. It is, perhaps, Malgonkar's enormous insight into human nature, which he has exhibited on occasions like this, that prompted Meenakshi Mukherjee to say that it is "an honest and remarkable novel."26

*The Devil's Wind* also is remarkable in that we get in it not only the decadent life of the Indian rulers, but also the devotion in official relationships during the Middle Ages. The richer and nobler aspects of medieval life continue in the relationship between Nana, Tantya, and Azim. Azim and Tantya, both historical figures, are given a life-like stature as Nana's followers, often supporting his remarks, and at times refuting them, but always giving him the necessary information and even caution. Azim and Tantya, with their contrary attitudes to the British, approximate Kiran and Kamalakant respectively.

The difference in the attitude of the three is seen in their reaction to the proselytization practised by the British missionaries who offered food to the poor in times of famine. The orthodox Azim and Tantya do not like this, while Nana sees it as a help to the famine-stricken. These two are representatives of medieval religious fundamentalism contrasted with
Nana’s excessive humanitarianism. This attitude of Nana makes him out of touch with, and contradictory to, medieval religious orthodoxy. If anything, the other two are better representatives of the period in question. Tantya sometimes acts as Nana’s guardian angel as when he grasps the foolishness of the latter’s promise of advance warning to Wheeler about the outbreak of the Revolt, and cautions Hillersdon as to the impossibility of such a warning. During the Revolt, when Nana attributes his defeat to “slaves assisting their masters to conquer their own motherland and thus perpetuate their slavery” (Devil’s 235), Azim tells him that it is the Enfield Rifle that gives the British their superior war-power. Thus these two officers under Nana bring situations in their proper perspective for his comprehension. And he appears “truly a gentleman at heart who is numbed into being a merely puzzled spectator by the intricate and violent conditions of his life.”

Official relationships portrayed by Malgonkar are not limited to the Indian side. In Combat of Shadows, and in Devil’s to a lesser degree, we are given pictures of this relationship among the British. While in the latter, it is only a minor issue, in the former it is a major one. General Wheeler has much in common with Captain Cockburn in Combat. Both suffer officially
because of their love, affection, and understanding of India. The treatment meted out to them by their compatriots is the same as is their end in India.

Henry's degeneration started first because of his circumstances, and thereafter of his own wilful choice. These circumstances, strangely enough, are created by his own compatriots, Cockburn and Sir Jeffrey Dart. What we find in their relationship is the British superciliousness to which Henry falls a victim. If Gauri sends a ray of passion into the cyst-like world of Henry, Cockburn breaks it totally. He advises him to take some Indian woman as his mistress because that is necessary to keep a man sane. He underlines the need for the release of sexual energy in a man when he tells Henry: "'Wonder, how long you'll last. I have always noticed that none of these virtuous, psalm-singing bastards really last. It is not just healthy'" (Combat 14). To tempt Henry, he has the instance of Dart who was a 'hell-hound' in his younger days. So colourful is his description of women that the 'Christian mission' that Henry was, gets temptation. When he praises Ruby, Henry feels jealousy for her partner. He initiates him into the dark sides of the planters' life in Assam. With his characteristic generosity and experience in life, he goes on advising him as to how to become a successful planter.
It is not only the scene of action that is reminiscent of Mulk Raj Anand’s novel, *Two Leaves and a Bud*, but some of the characters in both novels have similarities. Cockburn reminds us of Dr. Havre in his love of India. But unlike the good doctor, he does not have the objectivity completely devoid of the swagger of the ruling race. Perhaps it is because of the old man’s concern for the young Henry. He is sometimes like a father to him as when he enquires about the arrangements and precautions for the shooting expedition. But their relationship is also closely akin to the friendship of Kiran and Jamal as when he saves Henry from ‘the shooting accident’. He wants him not to openly show cowardice in which case the ruler will become the laughing stock of the ruled. He affirms indirectly Orwell’s words that “every white man’s life in the East was one long struggle not to be laughed at” (qtd. in James Y. Dayananda). His part in developing the action of the novel also is immense. It is he who advises Henry to take Ruby as his mistress. His action of asking him to alter the story of the shooting accident, to save his career, gives added confirmation to the latter’s decision to ease up his values. Again, it is he who advises him to kick Eddie ‘upstairs’. To recommend him for special promotion to get rid of him from Silent Hill. Thus he acts as a catalyst to the progress of the action.
Henry learns many things from him, but does not follow them all. He is unable to like the man, compared to Dart, but he feels sorry that he is going to be called back. He hates him for his love of India and Indians, but loves him since he finds a friendly soul in him. The difference in their attitude is indicative of the working of their minds. Henry is jealous, supercilious, and underestimating while Cockburn is generous, sympathetic, and understanding. It is only because of the exigencies of estate life that the contraries are cased together.

Cockburn—Dart relationship also is almost like this. They are not on very good terms in their heart of hearts. Speaking to Henry about the past, Cockburn accounts for it. Though he was a great success as a planter, he was not made Resident Director because he had turned 'half native'. But their mutual hatred does not hamper the official relationship between them. In fact, Henry finds Cockburn talking exactly like Dart regarding the political situation in India because of the presence of the White man. He tells Henry to live by Dart's values, for "After all said and done, there's no denying Sudden [Dart] knows what makes the Empire tick than any of us. He may be a pompous fool, but in many ways he represents the British Empire even more than the Viceroy himself" (Combat 91). In spite of their
dislike for each other, there is similarity between the two as regards the progress of the action. Henry is tempted to take on Ruby by Cockburn as he is compelled to take on Eddie by Dart, both actions precipitating crises in his life. But the strike consequent upon the second action has its effect upon the first since Henry-Ruby relationship is broken after it. Thus Dart becomes the cause of the failure of what Cockburn had assiduously built up. Once again Malgonkar stresses the gap between the two seniors, and Combat becomes “a well constructed novel.”

With Dart, Henry behaves like a boy-scout before his headmaster. Even when he finds that his chief is impervious to reason, he appears to him like a god looking down from a pedestal. While there is only a slight resemblance between Cockburn and Dr. Hevre, there is much similarity between Dart and Croft-Cooke. As the former is found advising and admonishing Henry, so does Croft-Cooke to Reggie Hunt. But while Reggie sees his superior as a nuisance, harping on preserving the prestige of the Whites, Henry attaches himself closely to his Chief at first. And the Chief plays an important role in furthering the action. It is he who is responsible, partly though, for the failure of Henry-Ruby relationship with his threatening advice not to cross “the thin line that separates fun from
serious involvement” (Combat 124). What is reflected in his warning is the British “disapproval of mixed marriages and their castigation of the Eurasian community.”

Just as a crisis brings out the best and the worst in man, war engenders relaxations and reversals in human relations. The admirable relation between Dart and Henry turns topsy-turvy with the latter’s application for enlistment in the Army. When the former does not forward the application, the latter gets angry, and is blamed for being uncooperative. More than the appearance of the rogue-elephant, what makes Henry disgusted is the thought that his detention is engineered by Dart in collaboration with Kishore. No more does he carry on his cordial relation with the Chief. He makes a dent in Dart’s overbearing conceit and tries to escape. He thinks of living a life of his own, undeterred by social or superior control. But, just when he tries to atone for his cruelty to Ruby, he is caught and killed for his cruelty to Eddie.

Love-hate relationship found in the Anglo-Indian world is found in the British world also. Henry loves and hates Cockburn and Dart. Dart’s attitude to Henry is also the same. With his polish and pompousness he does not pretend to have understood Henry’s evil machinations. In his
agon of the father who lost his only child, though illegitimate, he takes revenge on Henry by contriving to burn him in the game-cottage. While Henry is a man of passion, like Mark Antony, Dart is a man of policy, like Octavius Caesar, and Cockburn, a man of poise, like Lepidus in Antony and Cleopatra. Henry’s undoing is partly the result of his having had to obey a man like Dart as Antony’s tragedy was the result, partly, of his having had to oppose Octavius.

As R.S. Singh said, Henry had developed a moral consciousness as an English public school product, which he found difficult to maintain if he wanted to live successfully. This public school attitude is represented by Dart who advises him to conform to the British code of social conduct. What Cockburn does is to ‘corrupt’ him so that he becomes a person fit to live in the Indian social context. Henry finds himself swinging between these two, and finally jumps down to a different, but independent, position of his own. There, again, he is caught by his own public school code represented by Dart, and killed for violation of it which appears “a picturesque finale” to M.K. Naik.

* That Cockburn is ‘mephistophelean’ is only Amur’s humour or his error. (G.S. Amur, Manohar Malgonkar, p. 70.)
In this world of high class men and their interaction—interpersonal, official and friendly—Malgonkar gives a due place to menials also. Though not described in detail, Nana’s relationship with his personal servant, Waghu, brings tears to our eyes as when his death affects Nana to such an extent that he becomes unmindful of the warnings to save his life. Tukaram, “the trusted family servant, simple, unlettered, devoted, domineering and quite indispensable” (*Bend* 24), has been in the Little House since his youth, and had been looking after Gian since his childhood. He addresses Gian as Chote-baba, the little boy, even when he is grown-up, which shows the deep attachment the menial has for the master. But “Gian quickly expends his rage,”33 and his cruel behaviour after the latter’s ‘breach of loyalty’, breaks the man thoroughly.

Some of his short stories also deal with this social relationship. ‘Top Cat’ (*Bombay* 112-21) presents a complex human situation involving not only the master and the servant but also the former’s wife and some cats and a dog. The story brings out the devotion of the servant for the master, the latter’s love for him, and the hatred of the former for the mem-sahib who comes to demolish that devotion and love. Like ‘Top Cat’, ‘This is to Recommend’ (*Bombay* 41-46) also centres round this relationship and both
have revenge in them. But while the former has its turning point in the revenge of the servant on his old mistress, the latter deals with the revenge of the master on the servant. In the first one the author brings out the satisfying relationship between the master and the servant; in the second it is the unpleasant aspects of the relationship that is brought to the foreground. As in these two stories the master-servant relationship forms the core of ‘Green Devils’ (Bombay 86-91) where the incident of the bottle is only a pretext to present the pattern of this relationship. The disgruntlement of the servant and the dissatisfaction of the master come out through the bottle incident. This is clear from the way the master reacts to the consumption of the bottles by the servant, calling him a villain.

The social relationships discussed above show Malgonkar as a writer who has made a deep study of life. He has confidently portrayed the changes in interpersonal relationships in different forms and under different circumstances. The stresses and strains in these relationships are brought out admirably well. His deep knowledge of human nature can be seen in his portrayal of friendship and enmity changing under the pressure of circumstances. Friendship, intraracial and interracial, seems to be what Malgonkar strives for in his fictional world.
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