CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis of the human relationships in Malgonkar’s fiction reveals that he is not a merely popular writer, but one who has a firm grasp of human psychology, and the changing conditions of life in India. As a novelist who has written on historical themes, he shows his keen awareness of the forces of history that shaped the lives of the Indians. He is at times accused of a lack of progressive social vision because he is a historical novelist. But as N.S. Pradhan said, his moral vision is to be comprehended by delinking it from the historical boundaries of the old and the new.1 His world witnesses a breakdown of the old order, and he describes what happens to his characters in that situation. He might seem to deal with a human situation at a particular time and place, but inside it is the eternal human situation which we are brought face to face with.

Malgonkar’s method of characterization is a pointer to the complex facts of human nature. The growth of his characters—Gian, Debi, Shafi, Kiran, and Henry—exhibiting good and bad qualities tells us that nobody is inherently good or bad. He is conscious of the existence of both in one and the same person. The good often turns into bad by the destructive acts of others. He seems to believe that there is violence primarily in every man.
It is the chastening experiences in life that make one a civilized being. This notion of maturing growth through encounter with experience, as James Y. Dayananda said, is treated in all his novels.

As an Indian writer rooted in tradition, Malgonkar evinces a sense of poetic justice. This can be seen from the ending of *Drum* and *Combat*. His preoccupation with the revenge motif tells us about his obsession with the idea of good and evil. Evil is punished with a ruthless sense of justice as in Henry’s and Shafi’s case. And the virtuous is joyfully rewarded as in Kiran’s case.

Malgonkar seems to be against conventional Hinduism. He seems to be unhappy at the Hindu religious ways of blind beliefs in gods and truth. These are not objective forces according to him, but they reside in man who, through his active and hopeful work like Gian’s, should prove their existence.

As in the case of religion he seems to have a deep-rooted objection to much that has occurred in Indian political life. The arrogance and remoteness of the Indian politician engage his attention. His conviction of politics is that it should be a moral activity. He denounces the opportunism
of politicians. He sees politics as an evil force that separates man from man.

Malgonkar’s world is one where we find negative qualities more than the positive ones. In this world he seems to aspire for a religion based on human love. He is after honest and sincere interreligious relationships, not only among men, but also between men and women. Though he is aware of the difficulties involved in such conjugal relationships, he does not shed his idealism. He takes delight in breaking down the barriers between individuals and communities. In his vision he sees a brave new India where people of all religions are one. It is the India of Prof. Godbole’s, the India of enlightened, inclusive, and international love, the India of traditional culture and ancient values where all mankind is one.

In this fast changing world, the author sees man as thirsting for happiness. In his view man should try to stick to the values even when they find themselves hedged in by changes. Such men alone are worthy of reward. He reminds men that the world is full of troubles and tribulations facing which they may flounder unless they are “anchored to a safe tradition.” This is a view that unites him with R.K. Narayan who is a novelist with a traditional social conscience.
Though he concedes the equality of sexes, he takes the Biblical view of woman as a companion to man. He does not seem to believe that women have a separate and totally free existence. Also, he does not seem to believe that chastity is purely physical. According to him, men are not all Ramas, or women Sitas. And he does not want them to be so either. He wants women also to enjoy life, and fulfil their self, but he does not seem to be very happy at "the New Woman and her feministic stance." He simply couples Sundari with Gian in the car, and leaves them in their search for fulfilment. He marries the Maharani to Abdulla Jan. That their future life is not looked into, perhaps, tells us about this attitude of the author. He acknowledges marriage as an institution absolutely necessary for the stability of society. He also acknowledges the force of love as capable of creating great changes in human life. In his vision of life he sees love as a reforming drug.

Being an Indian novelist of Indian life, Malgonkar's world view is coloured by a sense of destiny behind the lives of human beings. H.M. Williams rightly says: "The sense of destiny behind the lives of the protagonists is strong and perhaps contrived, but contributes to an atmosphere of tragic inevitability."
Malgonkar’s preoccupation is with young men’s growth. This is inevitable because in the society that is the raw-material of his fiction, women occupied only a subordinate position. Yet he has “sharply spotlighted the condition of women” in all his novels, and man-woman relationship seems to be his forte. In his novels men treat the marriage vows lightly, but women are seen living up to them for a considerable time. With his deep knowledge of modern psychology, he neither condemns nor glorifies illicit relationships. He seems to accept “the principle that the sex life of responsible adults is their own concern.” But he seems to believe that man and woman have a definite role to play towards each other, and that it is only in the acceptance of this role that the problem of love can be solved. Also, he seems to be of the opinion that no permanent conjugal relationships can be established on the basis of a sense of inferiority or superiority. When there are such disparities, there will be unusual tension in marital relations which would ultimately lead to annihilation. All these are illustrated in the marital life of the characters in Bend and Princes.

Malgonkar permits promiscuity in sexual relations as a need, purely physical, during the course of the growth of personality, and even after it when there is no chance for the couple to do it to each other. It is for him a
need of the body without which the mind cannot be kept clear and sane.

Thus, his view is that of the modern psychologist. But he does not take into account the dangers of promiscuous sexual relations. At the same time, like Narayan, he believes in the importance of the family.

Malgonkar's major women characters are not like the Western women whose desires are fuelled not only by "the individualist ethic in liberal political philosophy, but also by the radically individualist tone of modern psychology." His women might seem to be advocating liberal individualism, but they are not so in that they never leave the impulse to make sacred familial commitments. Honour and chastity are not ideological leftovers for them. It is true that they expect their marriage to fulfil their self. But they don't quit the moment they find their marriage going stale. Their needy and searching self does not gather to itself whoever will satisfy their physical thirst. Sundari waits for six long years before she is involved with Gian. The Maharani waits double that time before she gets entangled with Abdulla Jan. It is her desire to be a woman and wife, and to share the sorrows and responsibilities of family life that takes her to the man.

It can be seen that these women do not show a narcissistic
overattention to self and self-satisfaction. They are not for the extreme individualism and liberalism represented by Margot Medley in *Drum*. Once there are equality and mutual love in conjugal life, it is sure to succeed, and happiness will naturally flow, Malgonkar seems to suggest.

He treats the sex instinct as primary in men and women. Man-woman attraction does not pause at first to consider social restrictions or familial taboos. Man is attracted to woman if she is good-looking; he does not think of her social status. In this, Malgonkar shows the influence of ancient Indian psychology of sex. Vatsyayana accepted Gonikaputra's dictum that a woman desires every handsome man she sees, and so does a man every handsome woman, but that they don't, for various considerations, proceed further. He has said among other things, "that erotic satisfaction is as necessary for the existence and well-being of the body as food (i. 2. 46); to which statement the commentator (Yesodhara) sagely adds that mental health also requires it inasmuch as repression might lead to mental derangement." Thus it is easy to see Malgonkar's 'ancient Indianness'. And incidentally, one feels like asking whether these are not the principles that Freud took to explain sexual attraction, and made his disciple, Wilhelm Reich, throw off all inhibition to argue that free and
unconstrained sexuality is utterly essential to psychic health.

The scenes of sex in Malgonkar's novels might have brought him professional success. But it must be said that he does not bring them in deliberately. His aim is to portray the changing facets of man–woman relationship under Western influences also. Nor is the portrayal of sex merely a Western influence. What we find in him is the continuation and preservation of the tradition of classical Sanskrit literature wherein, we are told, there is an abundance of amorous acts and erotic episodes and emotions. Having studied Sanskrit literature, he is influenced by the tradition of Kalidasa, Jayadeva, and Vidyapati who, we are told, wrote about sex and sexual activities openly. The Indianness of his treatment of conjugal love can be seen in Tekchand raising doubts (and dismissing them soon) whether his wife too had her own lovers as he had enjoyed sex with other women. "Even in Vedic literature," says Sushil Kumar De, "the existence of free love and secret lover is evidenced by the curious ritual of Varunapraghāsa in which the wife of the sacrificer is questioned as to her lovers."11 Through this ideal couple of Malgonkar's, there is perhaps an implied indictment at the narrowness and selfishness of couples who believe that chastity is purely physical. As he presents it, it is more mental
and spiritual.

His sexual descriptions may sound obscene according to Indian legal standards. But literary works should be judged by aesthetic standards, and not by moral ones. Nayanatara Sahgal also means the same thing when she wants the aesthetics of the situation to be taken into account. Malgonkar too has the same view. There is no social ostracism or even a mild blaming of relationships outside marriage though this had been the case in Indian society. He does not take the point of view that society is hostile to sexual activity. His attitude to sex like that of Alfred Adler, the Viennese psychologist, contains "an element of reverence for this function by means of which homage is paid to each other and to the body and by means of which the miracle of life is perpetuated."\(^\text{12}\) Regarding his treatment of sex the most fitting conclusion seems to be Iqbal Lukmani's when he says that the motivating power of sex is acknowledged as the force that elevates as well as destroys, and there is never any attempt to use the subject to create exaggerated or shock effects.\(^\text{13}\)

Malgonkar has portrayed the personal, political, and cultural aspects of Indo-British relationship. The picture of this relationship at the personal level is one of the close friendship resulting in love and sacrifice for one
another. This can be seen in *Drum, Princes*, and *Devil’s*. The author is careful to show the smudges as well as the shining spots on the British character. He portrays the British with their *Mai-Baap* attitude which they professed to show towards the Indians, as we see in Dart and Henry who help the family of Kistulal when he is killed. Colonial relations are primarily economic, but the author bypasses the exploitative aspect of British imperialism. When he portrays the economic aspect in *Bend*, it is between the capitalist class represented by Tekchand and the ruling government. So the picture of Indo-British relationship in the novels does not become a fully panchromatic affair.

Apart from being a confrontation of two races at the personal and political level, the author shows it as a collision between Indian spiritualism and Western pragmatism as in *Devil’s* and *Princes*. There is a graphic representation of the confrontation resulting in the former being challenged and changed by the latter. But the Indians do not seem to throw away all their idealism in the face of Western materialism.

In Malgonkar’s novels, except in *Princes*, familial relationships do not form the focus of attention as they are in R.K.Narayan’s. In them no extended families or kinship relations are found because his concern is
always with the nuclear family. But he shows the defects of the nuclear and joint-family. His novels give a truthful account of parent-child relationship in India under the pressures of modern education and industrialization. The most striking of the familial relationships in the novels is the poignant picture of the surrogate mother in the elder sister in Bend. Wherever there are father-daughter relationships portrayed, the concern of the father for the welfare of the daughter is seen. But his traditional views and consequent actions regarding the marriage of the daughter are proved futile for her.

Malgonkar presents an India that could not transcend the parameters of violence to reach nonviolence. He portrays the inner tension in the Freedom Movement through the interpersonal relationship of Gian, Debi, and Shafi. He lays bare the inner hollowness of the Gandhians through Gian, and the selfless devotion of some of the freedom fighters through Debi. The failure of terrorism and the growth of communalism are traced in the correct channel. In almost all the novels he describes the road to freedom as red with blood. The reasons for Hindu-Muslim dissent, as he portrays, are more political and economic than religious. Ram Gopal says that it was not religion, but the political and economic differences between
the two communities that resulted in religious separatism. He explains that
the Hindus, being more educated, gained government jobs, and they
happened to be predominant in landed aristocracy and the world of
commerce. This can be seen in Bend where Tekchand, Debi's father, is an
industrial magnate, but Shafi belongs to a poor family, and is always short-
pressed for money.

As a novelist Malgonkar has portrayed the complexities and
contradictions in human lives. What he aspires to produce, among the
people of different communities, is the consciousness of a common
humanity. One of his chief concerns seems to be to probe into amity and
enmity, and to see how far they can take people in their relationships with
one another. He shows that enmity does not take people to anything
worthwhile or useful. That amity alone helps and enmity only hinders the
beauty of human life, is a maxim he stresses again and again. Thus, the
complex nature of human relationships—sexual, familial, racial, and other
social ones—seems to have fascinated this novelist of Indian life. He has
artistically portrayed this with fidelity to psychology and sociology.

As a writer of Indian life Malgonkar has his defects also. His
purview of human relationships in his novels does not include the whole
gamut of human experience. He does not portray such familial relations as between sisters, and between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. This is because the family in his novels is the ultra-modern nuclear one which goes splitting once the son or daughter is married. Nor has he portrayed the problems of the employed woman. There is only one such--Bina in Drum--and she has no problems except that of getting married. He does not portray women in all stages of life, especially the old. Some of his men have a family likeness. Hiroji and Tekchand have many similarities. Kiran looks forward to Abhay who is somewhat like Nana in whom we can see some aspects of Debi’s character. Gian is the only character different from all these. The location and names of characters may change but the action and relationship do not show much variety. The relation of Sundari and Gopal, with Malini and Gian in between, is not essentially different from that of Henry and Jean with Eddie and Ruby coming in their midst. Gian’s relationship with the British is a miniature form of Kiran’s with his masters.

Malgonkar’s preoccupation with the revenge motif undermines the appeal of some of his characters. Ruby’s is the best case in point. He could have excluded her from helping to burn Henry, and thereby shown the development of true love in her, in contrast to her initial attitude of seeing
him as a social ladder to climb on. It is perhaps his lack of imagination or his determination to be unkind to Anglo-Indian girls. Any way, it shows the lack of "incalculability or unpredictability of life of the 'round' characters." This can be accounted for in his fondness for a closed structure to his fictional writings. This, again, is part of his world-view which is that of the Epic and Puranic writers. That there is generally no suspense in his novels and that he hardly leaves anything to the readers' imagination are his weaknesses as a creative artist.

The merit, and sometimes the defect as well, of Malgonkar's treatment of human relationships is that he exposes the part played by coincidences and chance which are tragic in their implications. When Sundari establishes her amorous relationship with Gian, and is waiting for the opportunity to marry him, Debi who had returned to India already, comes to tell her of his cruelty to him. What Amur describes as a "crude device" used by the author in making Abhay see Minne's letter in Tony's wallet is also nothing else.

Malgonkar's portraits of Indian politicians are of excessive denigration. Consequently they fail to carry conviction to the readers. As a class-conscious writer, he does not go off his class very much. He does not
portray the rural society that sets a high premium on fertility and chastity. And he does not shed light on the economic aspect of Indian society independently in his novels. Except for the stray pictures here and there, he does not portray poverty though he sees the defects of democracy and bureaucracy. But it cannot be said that he has neglected the poor in India totally so that his fiction becomes a partial account of life in India. In *Bend* and *Princes* there are portraits of poverty. In his short stories also there are such portraits. The best example would be the story, 'Two Red Roosters' (*Rumble* 45-48). So Dayananda’s observation that there is a delicate skirting of the common life of India is not totally correct. But he is correct when he says that Malgonkar is more concerned with the vanities of a small upper class than with the cries in the streets of a larger lower class. 17

In the novels of Malgonkar humour is totally absent. The only case of a veiled one is when General Ballur tells Kiran about his meeting with Jamal—"I hear you have been drinking a lot of champagne lately" (*Drum* 253). But fun and humour are to be found abundantly in his short stories. It seems that he makes a drastic division between seriousness and light-heartedness in the portrayal of life. It seems as if the two are separate compartments as there are such compartments for sex and familial life for
some of the characters. This separation of mode and mood in his shorter and longer fiction can be taken as a defect.

Though there is no mood of comedy in his novels as there is in Narayan's, there is the sensitivity to atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors, and the portrayal of sociological trends as in Anand and Rao. And there is the exposition of the crisis in the individual soul and its resolution as in these three. He is to be ranked with them for his treatment of human relationships also. His major novels are based on a small number of ideas developed artistically. While this characteristic narrows down the scope of artistic representation of reality, the author is able to deal with the subtle nuances and ramifications of the section of life he deals with.

The destinies of his characters are shaped by two factors—the forces of history and the elements of their personality. Since some of his novels deal with historical events, the destiny of the characters in them is a foregone conclusion. But they are not without any novelty of attraction. What makes them worthy of attention is this novelty which the author gives them through the portrayal of their relationships inadequately documented elsewhere. Nana is said to be "an excessively uninteresting
person." But what we get in Devils is a very attractive picture of the man. This surely tells us of Malgonkar’s novelistic skill. History and politics are for him only pegs on which to hang his deep knowledge of human relationships. It is in Princes that he shines best with his portrayal of socio-political relationships and class conflict in terms of personal relationships and private conflict between individuals.

Malgonkar is a writer of no mean achievement. He has made Indian history and consciousness intelligible to us in a more vivid and striking manner. The image of India that he presents is colourfully memorable. As Iqbal Lukmani says, we are given a lasting imprint of the time, place, and the people which he intended to portray even if we forget the story. In him history is literature and literature history. His novels attract readers as fact and fiction, the fusion of which is so superb that they at once take fact for fiction. While he enlightens us with his critical approaches to Gandhian nonviolence and exposes the bloody history that was our Independence, he entertains us with his heady mixture of adventure and action and brings in a touch of optimism to make us enjoy life. His fictional world offers pleasurable excitement and scholarly fulfilment. The greatest aspect of his fiction is the supreme value of human relationships attained through love.
The message throughout his major works is that the division between races, classes, and individuals can be resolved only through love.

Though we do not find all aspects of individual and social life in the works of Malgonkar, he is an Indo-English novelist who ranks with writers like Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan. He does not treat philosophical or other sophisticated ideas in his fiction, but it is of great value as regards his treatment of human relationships. It shows his firm grasp of human nature. So this study is expected to be of interest to the students and readers of Indo-English fiction.
REFERENCES


3 N.S. Pradhan, 136.


9 Sushil Kumar De, *Ancient Indian Erotics and Erotic Literature*

10 Sushil Kumar De, 96.

11 Sushil Kumar De, 4.


15 James Y. Dayananda, 61.


17 James Y. Dayananda, 152.


19 Iqbal Lukmani, 101.