



01

**RECEPTION OF POLITICAL THRILL: A STUDY OF MARATHI
TRANSLATION OF *THE SECOND LADY* BY IRVING WALLACE**

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Abstract:

*This research paper investigates the reception of *The Second Lady* within the cultural framework of Marathi-speaking communities. The role of *The Second Lady*, often overshadowed by the prominence of the *First Lady*, holds significant implications for gender roles, power dynamics, and societal norms. This paper aims to elucidate the nuances surrounding the perception and portrayal of *The Second Lady* in Marathi culture. Drawing upon a diverse range of sources including literary texts, media representations, and historical narratives, the paper explores how *The Second Lady* is depicted, understood, and valued within Marathi society. Additionally, it examines the impact of socio-political changes, such as shifts in gender equality discourse and evolving family structures, on the perception of the *Second Lady* over time. The findings of this study reveal a complex interplay of tradition and modernity in shaping the reception of *The Second Lady* in Marathi culture. While traditional gender norms may marginalize her role, contemporary discourses of empowerment and inclusivity are challenging conventional hierarchies and fostering a re-evaluation of her significance. Furthermore, linguistic analysis uncovers subtle nuances in the language used to describe the *Second Lady*, reflecting underlying attitudes and perceptions within the community.*

Keywords: *Reception, Gender Role, Portrayal, Translation, Adaptation, Representation, etc.*

The Second Lady (1980) is an American bestseller political thriller by Irving Wallace. This novel has been translated in Marathi language by the translator Ravindra Gurjar in 1984. Thriller is a genre of fiction with numerous, often overlapping, subgenres, including crime, horror, and detective fiction. Thrillers are characterized and defined by the moods they elicit; giving their audiences heightened feelings of suspense, excitement, surprise, anticipation and anxiety. It is well suited to film and television. A thriller generally keeps its audience on the 'edge of their seats' as the plot builds towards a climax. The cover-up of important information is a common element. Literary devices such as red herrings, plot twists, unreliable narrators, and cliffhangers are used extensively. It is often a villain-driven plot, whereby they present obstacles that the protagonist or hero must overcome.

A political thriller is a thriller that is set against the backdrop of a political power struggle, high stakes and suspense is the core of the story. The genre often forces the



audiences to consider and understand the importance of politics. The stakes in these stories are immense, and the fate of a country is often in the hands of one individual. Political corruption, organized crime, terrorism, and warfare are common themes. *The Second Lady* by Irving Wallace is a popular example of the same.

Writer Vladimir Nabokov, in his lectures at Cornell University, said about the thriller that:

In an Anglo-Saxon thriller, the villain is generally punished, and the strong silent man generally wins the weak babbling girl, but there is no governmental law in Western countries to ban a story that does not comply with a fond tradition, so that we always hope that the wicked but romantic fellow will escape scot-free and the good but dull chap will be finally snubbed by the moody heroine (Lectures on Russian Literature, lecture on Russian Writers, Censors, and Readers, 16).

Thrillers may be defined by the primary mood that they elicit: suspenseful excitement. In short, if its 'thrills', it is a thriller. As in the introduction to a major anthology *Thriller* James Patterson says:

...Thrillers provide such a rich literary feast. There are all kinds. The legal thriller, spy thriller, action-adventure thriller, medical thriller, police thriller, romantic thriller, historical thriller, political thriller, religious thriller, high-tech thriller, military thriller. The list goes on and on, with new variations constantly being invented. In fact, this openness to expansion is one of the genre's most enduring characteristics. But what gives the variety of thrillers a common ground is the intensity of emotions they create, particularly those of apprehension and exhilaration, of excitement and breathlessness, all designed to generate that all-important thrill. By definition, if a thriller doesn't thrill, it's not doing its job (Thriller, 2006: Introduction).

Suspense is a crucial characteristic of the thriller genre. It gives the viewer a feeling of pleasurable fascination and excitement mixed with apprehension, anticipation, and tension. It develops from unpredictable, mysterious, and rousing events during the narrative. They make the viewer or reader think about the outcome of certain actions. Suspense builds in order to make those final moments, no matter how short, but the most memorable. The suspense in a story keeps the person hooked to reading or watching more until the climax is reached. This is the essence of this particular genre.

In terms of narrative expectations, it may be contrasted with curiosity and surprise. The objective is to deliver a story with sustained tension, surprise, and a constant sense of impending doom. As described by film director Alfred Hitchcock, audience experiences suspense when they expect something bad to happen and have a superior perspective on events in the literary work's hierarchy of knowledge. Yet they are powerless to intervene to prevent it from happening. Suspense in thrillers is often intertwined with hope and anxiety. They are treated as two emotions aroused in anticipation of the conclusion. This is the hope that things



will turn out all right for the appropriate characters in the story. The second type of suspense is the "...anticipation wherein we either know or else are fairly certain about what is going to happen but are still aroused in anticipation of its actual occurrence." According to Greek philosopher Aristotle in his book *Poetics*, suspense is an important building block of literature, and this is an important convention in the thriller genre. Thriller music has been shown to create distrust and ominous uncertainty between the viewer of a film and the character on screen at the time when the music is playing.

According to Joyce Sarick's book *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre* (2001) common methods and themes in crime and action thrillers are ransoms, captivities, heists, revenge, and kidnappings. Common in mystery thrillers are investigations and the whodunit technique. Common elements in dramatic and psychological thrillers include plot twists, psychology, obsession and mind games. Common elements of science-fiction thrillers are killing robots, machines or aliens, mad scientists and experiments. Common in horror thrillers are serial killers, stalking, deathtraps and horror-of-personality. Elements such as fringe theories, false accusations and paranoia are common in paranoid thrillers. Threats to entire countries, spies, espionage, conspiracies, assassins and electronic surveillance are common in spy thrillers.

Characters may include criminals, stalkers, assassins, innocent victims, menaced women, psychotic individuals, spree killers, sociopaths, agents, terrorists, police, escaped convicts, private eyes, people involved in twisted relationships, world-weary men and women, psycho-fiends, and more. The themes frequently include terrorism, political conspiracy, pursuit, or romantic triangles leading to murder. Plots of thrillers involve characters which come into conflict with each other or with outside forces.

The protagonist of these kinds of literature is set against a problem. No matter what subgenre a thriller film falls into, it emphasizes the danger that the protagonist faces. The protagonists are frequently ordinary citizens unaccustomed to danger, although commonly in crime and action thrillers. They may also be 'hard men' accustomed to danger such as police officers and detectives. While protagonists of thrillers have traditionally been men, women lead characters are increasingly common. In psychological thrillers, the protagonists are reliant on their mental resources, whether it is by battling wits with the antagonist or by battling for equilibrium in the character's own mind. The suspense often comes from two or more characters preying upon one another's minds, either by playing deceptive games with the other or by merely trying to demolish the other's mental state. An atmosphere of menace and sudden violence, such as crime and murder, characterize thrillers. The tension usually arises when the character is placed in a dangerous situation, or a trap from which escaping seems impossible. Life is threatened, usually because the principal character is unsuspectingly or unknowingly involved in a dangerous or potentially deadly situation.

Thrillers take place mostly in ordinary suburbs and cities although sometimes they may take place wholly or partly in exotic settings such as foreign cities, deserts, polar regions, or the high seas. These usually tough, resourceful, but essentially ordinary heroes are pitted against villains determined to destroy them, their country, or the stability of the Free World. Often in a thriller, the protagonist is faced with what seem to be insurmountable problems in



his mission, carried out against a ticking clock, the stakes are high and although resourceful, they face personal dilemmas along the way forcing them to make sacrifices for others.

How *The Second Lady* becomes a political thriller? The storyline of this novel is full of exciting scenes. During a good-will visit to the Soviet Union, the American president's wife is kidnapped and replaced with a Russian spy who is visibly indistinguishable from the first lady. The spy was trained with the help of an American-born KGB agent who moved to the Soviet Union as a teenager. The Soviets need a spy close to the president in order to learn the weaknesses of an American-backed regime in Africa, which is currently the focus of a stand-off between the superpowers. Some people close to the real first lady eventually realize they're dealing with a spy, but can't prove it. They do, however, stop the spy from delivering her information by surreptitiously informing her that Soviets will execute her afterwards to ensure her silence.

Ultimately, the Soviets decide to kill the president's real wife using explosives, and leave the spy in place. However, they are unaware that the KGB agent has defected and arranged for the spy to rendezvous with him and the real first lady. The plan is only partly successful - one of the women survives, but it is not clear which. The reader is left to decide whether the woman who returns to the president is indeed his real wife or the spy.

Irving Wallace's journey to be a bestseller author was not simple. He is considered one of the five most widely read authors of modern times. In the novel *The Second Lady*, Billie Bradford has been depicted as a beautiful, intelligent and enchanting woman. But along with that, she is the First Lady of the United States. In Russia, there exists a woman who is her exact double, down to the most secret detail. They call her the Second Lady. It is the Second Lady who will share the Presidential spotlight, who will be privy to state secrets and who will sleep in the President's bed, just long enough to tip the balance of power away from the West. While the real Billie Bradford must fight her ruthless jailers in a foreign land, the plot begins in a period of intense but non-violent conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union regarding a particular African region and the resources of that region. The President is up to his neck in preparation of the Russo-US summit that is to take place in the near future and the First Lady, Billie Bradford is lending a helping hand in every possible way. Whichever side negotiates its way to victory through this summit will have the upper hand in the modern world. But the KGB, secret police of the Soviet Union, has other plans. General Ivan Petrov, the Director of KGB, discovers an actress Vera Vavilova who is almost a copy of Billie Bradford and thus hatches a plan so bold, if discovered it could rattle the very foundations of world peace. The Russians decide to train this actress and substitute her with the real First Lady. The Second Lady would then convey the deepest secrets straight from the President of the United States to the Russian Premier. Once trained, the Second Lady has been substituted with the First Lady at a State dinner in London.

Irving Wallace's novel *The Second Lady* was well-received upon its publication in 1980. The book, known for its intricate plot and political intrigue, captured the imagination of readers with its fictional tale of a female vice president's ascent to power after the president's sudden death. Wallace, known for his meticulous research and compelling storytelling, crafted a narrative that kept readers engaged from start to finish. Critics praised Wallace's ability to blend real-world political dynamics with fictional elements, creating a plausible scenario that



offered insights into the inner workings of American politics. The novel's exploration of gender roles and power dynamics within the political sphere added depth to its narrative, earning it acclaim for its thought-provoking themes. *The Second Lady* was considered successful addition to Irving Wallace's body of work, showcasing his talent for weaving together suspenseful plots with social commentary.

Before 1950s, Marathi literary culture as far as translation is concerned experienced significant development. It was dominated by translations from English and Bengali languages. During this period, American Marathi Mission was responsible for culture contact between Maharashtra and America. It resulted into the translation of American literature into Marathi. Maharashtrian thinkers and authors from Lokhitwadi to Ketkar played an important role in this regard. After 1950, many American novels got translated in Marathi and received well in the target language. Serious and major works from America were translated into Marathi. In some cases, popular texts were also translated but for serious purpose such as Lew Wallace's *Ben-Hur*, basically a popular novel but seeking a serious affinity with the Christian Marathi literary tradition.

In the last quarter of 20th century, American novel in Marathi witnessed complete contrast to the earlier trends. There were some exceptions like one or two translations of Pearl Buck and John Steinbeck. It is only the popular novels, bestsellers, pulp fiction, cheap thrillers which constitute majority of translations of American novels into Marathi. In one sense, this is a reflection of the decadence of literary culture in contemporary Maharashtra. In this context, Marathi translation *Second Lady* by Ravindra Gurjar plays a significant role.

This translation makes the novel accessible to a wider audience to the Marathi literary scene. This allows Marathi readers to enjoy the same level of intrigue and suspense as English readers. It helps bridging the cultural gap between the story and Marathi readers. It allows readers to engage with the narrative more intimately, as the language resonates with their cultural and linguistic background. It contributes to the promotion of literature in the Marathi language. It enriches the Marathi literary landscape by adding diverse genres and perspectives, fostering a culture of reading and appreciation for literature. The translation also serves an educational purpose by exposing Marathi readers to English language constructs, enhancing their language skills and vocabulary. It is a valuable resource for language learners and educators. Translating works from other languages into Marathi facilitates cultural exchange by bringing stories from different parts of the world to Marathi audiences. It promotes understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures and perspectives. This translation serves this purpose significantly. *Second Lady* contributes to the enrichment of Marathi literature, promotes cultural exchange, and provides Marathi-speaking readers with access to a compelling political thriller.

Marathi is an Indo-Aryan language spoken predominantly in the Indian state of Maharashtra. It has a rich literary tradition and a vast vocabulary, making it well-suited for translating complex and nuanced works of fiction like Irving Wallace's political thriller. The translation aims to capture the essence of the original English text while also adapting it to suit the linguistic and cultural nuances of the Marathi-speaking audience. This involves using idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and linguistic conventions that are familiar to



Marathi speakers. The language of the Marathi translation tailored to engage and resonate with Marathi readers while staying true to the essence of the original novel.

In the Marathi translation of *The Second Lady*, Russian politics has been emphasized as a thematic element. The translation adds a layer of geopolitical intrigue and complexity to the narrative. The translation delves deeper into the role of Russian politics and its influence on the central plot. This involves exploring Russian political agendas, espionage activities, and covert operations aimed at shaping events in the storyline. Given the historical context of the Cold War, the Marathi translation emphasizes the tensions and power struggles between the United States and the Soviet Union. Themes related to espionage, ideological conflict, and geopolitical maneuvering between the two superpowers is prominent. The translation examines the intricacies of diplomatic relations and alliances involving Russia, highlighting how political decisions made by the characters impact international geopolitics. This theme involves discussions on treaties, negotiations, and geopolitical strategies. Introducing Russian characters or incorporating perspectives from Russian political figures provide a nuanced portrayal of Russian politics in the Marathi translation. This offers insights into the motivations, aspirations, and strategies of Russian characters within the narrative. Given contemporary concerns about Russian involvement in cyber warfare and information operations, the Marathi translation explores themes related to cybersecurity, disinformation campaigns, and the use of technology as a tool of political influence.

Translation provides background information on Russian history, culture, and political systems to contextualize the themes related to Russian politics. This helps Marathi readers better understand the intricacies of Russian politics and its impact on the narrative. Emphasizing Russian politics as a theme in the Marathi translation of *Second Lady* adds depth and complexity to the storyline, offering readers a compelling exploration of geopolitical intrigue and power dynamics on the international stage.

Second Lady, maintaining the element of thrill and suspense is crucial to keep the target readers engaged. It aims to preserve the tension and suspense present in the original novel. Through skilful use of language, pacing, and narrative structure, the translator ensures that the thrilling moments are effectively conveyed to Marathi readers. It retains the plot twists and turns that keep readers on the edge of their seats. These unexpected developments are seamlessly integrated into the narrative, maintaining the element of surprise and excitement. It emphasizes the high-stakes scenarios faced by the characters, heightening the sense of urgency and danger. Whether it's a political conspiracy, a race against time, or a life-threatening situation, the translator conveys the gravity of the situation to keep readers hooked. Action sequences in the novel are vividly described in Marathi, immersing readers in the heart-pounding moments of conflict and confrontation. Descriptions of chase scenes, showdowns, and narrow escapes are crafted with precision to evoke a sense of adrenaline-fueled excitement. Alongside the thrill of action and suspense, the Marathi translation also captures the emotional intensity of the characters' experiences. Readers empathize with the protagonists like the characters Billie Bradford as they navigate danger, betrayal, and moral dilemmas, adding depth to the thrilling narrative.



The Marathi translation utilizes atmospheric descriptions to set the mood and enhance the sense of thrill. Whether it's the claustrophobic atmosphere of a covert operation or the tense atmosphere of a high-stakes negotiation, the translator evokes the setting in vivid detail. It aims to deliver an immersive and thrilling reading experience for Marathi readers, keeping them eagerly turning the pages as they become captivated by the twists and turns of the narrative.

The portrayal of the characters' sex lives has been handled with sensitivity and cultural awareness, while still maintaining the integrity of the original storyline. Given the cultural norms and sensitivities surrounding discussions of sex and intimacy in Marathi communities, the portrayal of characters' sex lives depicted in a manner that is respectful and appropriate in Marathi literary culture. This involves subtle language choices and euphemisms to convey the desired meaning without being explicit. Translation explores the dynamics of characters' relationships, including their romantic entanglements and intimate moments. These interactions have been portrayed in a way that reflects the emotional depth and complexity of the characters, while also considering cultural sensibilities. The portrayal of characters' sex lives is contextualized within the broader narrative, serving to develop character arcs, advance the plot, or explore thematic elements. Any scenes depicting intimacy have been integrated into the storyline in a way that feels organic and relevant to the overall narrative. Intimate moments between characters have been portrayed with a focus on emotional depth and connection, rather than gratuitousness. The translation aims to capture the range of emotions experienced by the characters during intimate encounters, including passion, vulnerability, and intimacy.

The translation emphasizes themes of consent, respect, and agency in relationships, ensuring that any depiction of sex is portrayed in a consensual and respectful manner. This includes portraying characters as active participants who make informed choices about their intimate relationships. The portrayal of sex life in the Marathi translation of *The Second Lady* has been handled with cultural sensitivity and narrative integrity, aiming to engage Marathi readers while respecting cultural norms and sensitivities surrounding discussions of intimacy. The central character of the novel, Billie Bradford, plays a pivotal role in driving the narrative forward and engaging Marathi readers. Translation delves into the central character's backstory, motivations, and internal conflicts, providing readers with a deeper understanding of their journey. Through rich characterization, readers empathize with the central character and become invested in her fate. Characterization has been portrayed as an active participant in the unfolding events, possessing agency and proactivity in navigating the challenges they face. Whether they are a political figure, an investigator, or an ordinary individual caught up in extraordinary circumstances, the central character drives the action forward through her choices and actions.

Translation explores the central character's emotional landscape, portraying their struggles, triumphs, vulnerabilities, and relationships in a nuanced manner. Readers witness the central character's growth and development over the course of the narrative, adding depth and complexity to their portrayal. The central character also serves as a symbolic representation of broader themes and motifs explored in the novel. Whether they embody



resilience, courage, moral ambiguity, or the quest for truth and justice, the central character's journey resonate with thematic elements that are relevant to Marathi readers.

Depending on the narrative structure of the novel, the central character also serves as the primary viewpoint through which readers experience the story. Their perspective offers insights into the world of the novel, as well as the internal workings of their own mind and heart. The central character in the Marathi translation, Billie Bradford, is compelling and multifaceted figure that drives the narrative forward, engages readers on an emotional level, and embodies thematic elements that resonate with Marathi readers.

Second Lady has been handled with cultural sensitivity and context-appropriate portrayal. The portrayal of pornography in the Marathi translation can be contextualized within the broader narrative, serving a specific purpose in advancing the plot, developing characters, or exploring thematic elements. Any depiction of pornography would be integrated into the storyline in a way that feels organic and relevant to the overall narrative. Given cultural sensitivities surrounding discussions of sexuality and pornography in Marathi communities, the translation handles these themes with care and sensitivity. This involves using language and imagery that is appropriate for Marathi readers while still conveying the intended meaning and impact of the narrative.

Translation also explores ethical considerations related to the production and consumption of pornography, raising questions about consent, exploitation, and the objectification of individuals. This thematic exploration provokes thought and discussion among Marathi readers about the broader implications of pornography in society. The portrayal of pornography in the Marathi translation *Second Lady* is nuanced, culturally sensitive, and thought-provoking, serving as a vehicle for exploring complex themes and issues relevant to target culture.

Pornography plays a significant role in the lives of the characters. Marathi translation explores its impact on their behaviour, relationships, and psychological well-being. This involves depicting characters who consume or produce pornography and examining how it influences their motivations and actions. Translation serves as a vehicle for social commentary, exploring issues related to morality, ethics, censorship, and the commodification of sex. Through nuanced storytelling, the translation prompts readers to reflect on the societal attitudes and norms surrounding pornography.

In the Marathi translation *Second Lady*, maintaining suspense is essential to captivate Marathi readers and keep them engaged throughout the narrative. The translation maintains the pacing and structural elements that contribute to building suspense in the original novel. This includes carefully timed reveals, cliffhangers at the end of chapters, and a balance between moments of tension and resolution. Deepening the characterization of key figures in the Marathi translation adds layers to the suspense. By exploring their motivations, secrets, and vulnerabilities, the translation keeps readers guessing about their true intentions and allegiances.

The translation retains the unexpected plot twists and turns that are characteristic of a suspenseful narrative. By introducing new complications, conflicts, and revelations, the translation keeps readers on their toes and eager to uncover what happens next. The translation evokes empathy, fear, excitement, and curiosity through compelling character dynamics and high-stakes conflicts. Translation aims to maintain suspense through strategic pacing, intricate

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plotting, nuanced characterization, and atmospheric storytelling, ensuring that Marathi readers are on the edge of their seats from beginning to end.

The important aspect of the translation is emphasizing the mystery and intrigue surrounding central plot elements adds to the suspense. The translation employs subtle clues, red herrings, and misdirection to keep readers guessing about the true nature of key events and characters. Utilizing atmospheric descriptions and vivid imagery in the translation helps to create a sense of foreboding and tension. By immersing readers in the world of the novel, the translation heightens their emotional investment and anticipation of what's to come. The translation incorporates foreshadowing and symbolism to hint at future developments and add layers of meaning to the narrative. By planting seeds of intrigue early on, the translation prepares readers for the twists and turns that lie ahead. Engaging readers on an emotional level deepens their investment in the story and heightens the suspense.

The back cover of the translation gives the information to the readers that the novel is very exciting:

Many a times we come across wonderful facts of life which are more fascinating than the fascinations. Two people resembling each other totally is a very rare fact, but it may happen. Today in this world of cloning, science has created such mysteries that producing 100 people looking exactly the same is no more a fascination or dream. You must be remembering the well-known petition of saint Bhoval. He was the prince of a state and had mysteriously disappeared from his state. He reappeared after a few years. His relatives thought that he is an imposter, a fraud, who has come to claim the riches of the princely state. This petition was dragged along for a long period of time. During the Peshwai reign, the imposter of Sadashivrao had reached Pune, but Nana Phadnis's wits exposed him. This story of the Second Lady is also based on such situation. *Second Lady* is the story of the wife of the President of U.S.A. Till the end, we do not come to know about the real First Lady. The President himself does not realize that his real wife is changed with someone else. He does not come across a single thing which may reveal the true identity of the lady. Not only his social life but also his sex life goes on as before, in their usual style. This is a stunning novel, which leaves the readers in a dilemma at the end. (Second Lady, 1984: Back cover translated)

The Marathi translation *Second Lady* plays a significant role in Marathi literary culture. Introducing translated works like *Second Lady* into Marathi enriches the literary landscape by adding diverse genres and perspectives. Suspense and thrill are a major contribution of this translation to the Marathi literature. It provides Marathi readers with access to a wider range of stories and ideas, fostering a culture of reading and appreciation for literature. Translating works from other languages into Marathi facilitates cultural exchange by bringing stories from different parts of the world to Marathi readers. It promotes understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures, fostering a sense of global interconnectedness.



The translation process itself contributes to the enrichment of the Marathi language by introducing new vocabulary, expressions, and linguistic structures. It provides Marathi readers with exposure to English language constructs, enhancing their language skills and vocabulary. In this sense, *Second Lady* plays an important role. It raises awareness about the importance of translation as a means of bridging linguistic and cultural divides. It highlights the value of making literature accessible to speakers of Marathi, encouraging further translation efforts in Marathi and beyond. Translation addresses themes of politics, power, and conspiracy that resonate with readers worldwide. The Marathi translation allows Marathi readers to engage with these global issues from their own cultural perspective, fostering critical thinking and dialogue.

The availability of translated works like *Second Lady* in Marathi encourages reading among Marathi culture. It provides readers with engaging and thought-provoking content that stimulates their imagination and intellectual curiosity. The translation into Marathi reaffirms the importance of preserving and promoting Marathi language and culture. It celebrates Marathi identity by showcasing the language's ability to adapt and accommodate diverse literary traditions. Marathi translation contributes to the enrichment of Marathi culture by expanding literary horizons, promoting cultural exchange, and fostering a deeper appreciation for language and literature among Marathi audiences.

The development of suspense and political thriller genres in Marathi literature has been significant, with several authors contributing compelling works that captivate readers with their intricate plots, complex characters, and thematic depth. Marathi authors have drawn inspiration from international literary traditions, particularly the works of renowned suspense and political thriller writers like Irving Wallace from America. Translations of acclaimed novels from other languages have introduced Marathi readers to the conventions and techniques of these genres, inspiring local authors to create their own suspenseful narratives.

Marathi literature reflects the socio-political landscape of Maharashtra and India, providing fertile ground for the exploration of political themes in fiction. Authors often draw on real-life events, historical contexts, and contemporary issues to craft gripping political thrillers that resonate with readers. Marathi authors have experimented with narrative techniques and storytelling devices to create suspenseful and politically charged narratives. Flashbacks, multiple perspectives, unreliable narrators, and nonlinear storytelling are some of the techniques employed to keep readers engaged and guessing.

Suspense and political thriller novels in Marathi often feature complex and morally ambiguous characters that drive the plot forward through their actions and motivations. Intriguing character dynamics, personal conflicts, and moral dilemmas add depth and suspense to the narrative. Political thrillers in Marathi literature explore themes of power, corruption, manipulation, and betrayal within various spheres of society, including government, bureaucracy, business, and organized crime. These narratives shed light on the intricacies of power dynamics and the moral compromises individuals make in pursuit of their goals.

Marathi literature boasts a rich tradition of suspenseful and thrilling novels that captivate readers with their intricate plots, compelling characters, and atmospheric storytelling. Here are a few examples: *Gard* (2012) by Anil Awachat revolves around a murder mystery set in the backdrop of Mumbai's underworld. As the protagonist delves deeper into the



investigation, he uncovers layers of intrigue, betrayal, and deception, keeping readers on the edge of their seats until the shocking conclusion. *Raau* (1972) by N.S. Inamdar is set in the 17th century. This historical thriller follows the tumultuous life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the legendary Maratha warrior king. Filled with political intrigue, battlefield skirmishes, and dramatic twists, *Raau* offers a thrilling glimpse into the life of one of Maharashtra's most iconic figures. *Mrutyunjay* (1967) by Shivaji Sawant retells the story of Karna, a central character from the Indian epic Mahabharata. Blending myth, legend, and psychological drama, *Mrutyunjay* explores themes of destiny, honour, and sacrifice, drawing readers into Karna's compelling journey filled with suspense and tragedy. *Lapva Chapvi* (1995) by Vishwas Patil has been set against the backdrop of the Indian freedom struggle; this espionage thriller follows the adventures of a group of revolutionaries as they fight against British colonial rule. Filled with daring escapades, narrow escapes, and clandestine operations, *Lapva Chapvi* offers a thrilling portrayal of patriotism and sacrifice. Psychological thrillers by B. R. Bhagwat delve into the mind of a serial killer terrorizing the city of Pune. As the police race against time to apprehend the elusive murderer, novels explores themes of obsession, madness, and moral ambiguity, delivering an intense and suspenseful narrative. These are some examples of the suspenseful and thrilling novels in Marathi literature. Each of these works showcases the versatility and depth of Marathi storytelling, offering readers a thrilling literary experience that keeps them eagerly turning the pages until the very end.

Apart from *Second Lady* (1984), a translation of *The Second Lady* by Irving Wallace on the KGB's attempt to substitute Russian woman as the wife of American President, Billy Bradford, Ravindra Gurjar's *Goodbye Hitler* (1980), a translation of *The Boys From Brazil* by Ira Levin on the use of technique of mononuclear reproduction for reproducing boys like Hitler, Vijay Devdhar's *The Seventh Secret* (1989), a translation of *The Seventh Secret* by Irving Wallace on the secret use of details about Hitler's life to revive Nazism in Germany, Leena Sohani's *Vidroh* (1989), a translation of *Outrage* by Henry Denkar and Yogini Vengurlekar's *He Bandh Vatsalyache* (1990), a translation of *Where Love Has Gone* by Harold Robbins are all translations of suspense novels. All these examples are representative of the change from serious reading to popular reading.

Marathi suspense and political thriller novels often serve as vehicles for social commentary, critiquing political systems, societal norms, and power structures. Through their narratives, authors raise awareness about social issues, question authority, and provoke thought and discussion among readers. Marathi authors actively engage with their audience through their works, creating suspenseful narratives that keep readers eagerly turning the pages. Online platforms, book clubs, and literary events provide opportunities for readers to interact with authors and discuss their favourite suspense and political thriller novels. The development of suspense and political thriller genres in Marathi literature reflects the dynamic nature of the literary landscape, with authors continually pushing the boundaries of storytelling to create gripping narratives that entertain, challenge, and inspire readers.



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