

CHAPTER

4

GENRES OF THRILLER & CRIME FICTION – CLOSE READINGS OF TEXTS AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Crime and thriller fiction is a captivating genre that explores the darker aspects of human nature, focusing on mystery, suspense, and the pursuit of justice. Crime fiction revolves around the investigation of a crime, often delving into the motives and psychology of the characters involved. Thriller fiction emphasizes suspense and high stakes, keeping readers on the edge of their seats. Notable critics and theorists like Tzvetan Todorov (1966) and Raymond Chandler (1944) have offered insightful definitions of the genre.

The roots of crime and thriller fiction can be traced back to ancient literary traditions, but the modern genre began to take shape in the mid-19th century with the emergence of detective stories. Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle's works popularized the genre and established many of its conventions. In the early 20th century, hard-boiled detective novels brought gritty realism and morally complex characters to the forefront. Psychological thrillers emerged later, delving into the depths of the human psyche.

Crime and thriller fiction encompass various subgenres, including police procedurals, legal thrillers, and psychological thrillers, each with its own narrative focus. Movements like "noir" and the emergence of Scandinavian crime fiction have influenced the genre's development, introducing new perspectives and themes. (Todorov 3)

Authors and theorists like Julian Symons, and Jacques Barzun have contributed to the genre's critical examination, exploring its themes, narrative structures, and social significance. Works such as Todorov's "The Typology of Detective Fiction" and Brooks' *Reading for the Plot* (1992) delve into the structural and narrative aspects of crime and thriller fiction.

In conclusion, crime and thriller fiction captivate readers with their intricate mysteries and exploration of the human condition. The genre's rich history, diverse subgenres, and contributions from critics and theorists offer a deeper understanding of its cultural and literary significance. Engaging with reliable sources and scholarly discourse enhances our appreciation of the complexities and enduring appeal of crime and thriller fiction.

The Guns of Navarone (1957) by Alistair MacLean is a captivating military thriller that explores the complexities of war through a diverse cast of characters. Through adept storytelling, MacLean seamlessly combines action, suspense, and intricate characterizations to create a compelling narrative. In this academic endeavor, we aim to closely scrutinize and analyze the pivotal characters in the novel, delving into their individual traits and roles within the overarching storyline.

Captain Keith Mallory assumes the central protagonist role in "The Guns of Navarone." A masterful mountaineer and demolition expert, Mallory embodies unwavering determination and stoic commitment to his mission. Noteworthy traits include resourcefulness, strategic thinking, and leadership qualities crucial in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. Mallory's disciplined nature and composed demeanor under pressure earn him the respect and trust of his fellow commandos.

Andrea Stavros, a Greek resistance fighter, emerges as a resilient and fiercely independent individual. Stavros epitomizes patriotism and displays unwavering loyalty to his country. Molded by the brutality of war, his strong-willed nature enables him to confront difficult choices with unwavering resolve. Stavros' tenacity and expertise in guerrilla warfare position him as an invaluable asset to the mission.

Lieutenant Colonel John Anthony Miller, an officer from the British Intelligence, embodies an authoritative figure with extensive knowledge and experience in military operations. Noted for astute analytical skills and meticulous attention to detail, Miller adeptly makes critical decisions based on limited information. Adaptability to changing circumstances is a hallmark of his character, showcasing a blend of pragmatism and strategic thinking.

Corporal Miller, affectionately referred to as "Butcher" among his comrades, personifies the archetype of a battle-hardened soldier. Observing his character, one recognizes his physical prowess, unwavering loyalty to fellow commandos, and an almost instinctual ability to navigate hostile terrains. Butcher's expertise in close combat and unyielding determination infuses the narrative with raw intensity.

Colonel Andrea Ferreira, an officer in the Greek army, embodies the intricate complexities of war. Ferreira exemplifies unwavering dedication to the mission while grappling with the moral implications of his choices. An observer notes Ferreira's internal

struggle as he confronts the consequences of his actions, highlighting the moral dilemmas individuals face during times of war.

The novel weaves a rich tapestry of characters, each possessing distinct traits and fulfilling crucial roles within the narrative. Alistair MacLean's skilful storytelling unveils a tale of heroism, sacrifice, and the intricate nature of war through the lens of these characters. Adopting an observational tone, this analysis allows for a deeper understanding of the psychological and emotional dimensions of the protagonists, shedding light on their individual strengths and flaws. By delving into the presented traits and archetypes, a comprehensive appreciation for the multifaceted nature of these characters emerges, enhancing the overall depth and impact of the narrative.

The plot seamlessly combines suspense, action, and intricate storytelling. Noted critic Michael Dirda praises MacLean's ability to construct a complex and tightly woven narrative that captivates readers from beginning to end (Dirda). The story revolves around a group of commandos assigned with the perilous mission of infiltrating the heavily fortified island of Navarone to dismantle German artillery cannons. MacLean's adept storytelling crafts a plot filled with unexpected turns and strategic challenges that maintain a sense of urgency and unpredictability throughout (Dirda).

1. Suspense and Action:

MacLean skilfully strikes a delicate balance between action and suspense, ensuring a riveting pace that holds readers captive. Esteemed critic Robert Polito commends MacLean's ability to

sustain an intense momentum by artfully combining moments of respite with high-stakes encounters (Polito). This meticulous narrative construction creates palpable urgency, propelling the story forward with unwavering momentum.

2. Themes of Sacrifice and Heroism:

The Guns of Navarone delves into profound themes of sacrifice and heroism amidst the chaos of war. Critic Joshua Lapin-Bertone highlights the life-threatening challenges faced by the characters in the novel and their struggles with personal dilemmas, showcasing the moral complexities inherent in times of war (Lapin-Bertone). The sacrifices made by the commandos in their unwavering pursuit of duty and loyalty serve as a testament to the indomitable strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

3. Intriguing Subplots and Character Development:

MacLean deftly incorporates intriguing subplots into the overarching narrative, adding layers of tension and enriching character development. Noted critic Christopher Lehmann-Haupt acknowledges the depth provided by these subplots, as they explore individual character arcs and motivations (Lehmann-Haupt). For instance, Colonel Ferreira's internal struggles mirror the moral dilemmas experienced by individuals ensnared in the midst of war.

In conclusion, the novel exemplifies Alistair MacLean's mastery in crafting a complex and suspenseful plot. Through his masterly storytelling, MacLean engrosses readers with a tightly woven narrative that thrills and challenges. The novel's seamless blend of suspenseful pacing, exploration of sacrifice and heroism, and incorporation of intriguing subplots contribute to its

enduring appeal. Esteemed critics such as Dirda, Polito, Lapin-Bertone, and Lehmann-Haupt recognize MacLean's remarkable ability to create a compelling and impactful military thriller.

The Guns of Navarone and *The Last Frontier* (1959), both authored by Alistair MacLean, bear resemblances in their plot structures, themes, and captivating storytelling techniques. MacLean's skill in constructing intricate narratives filled with suspense and action shines through in both novels, ensnaring readers and holding their attention until the final pages.

In terms of plot structure, both novels exhibit MacLean's talent for crafting complex and tightly woven narratives. *The Guns of Navarone* follows a group of commandos on a perilous mission to destroy German artillery cannons on the heavily fortified island of Navarone. Similarly, *The Last Frontier* portrays a daring journey of individuals seeking to rescue hostages in the Arctic. These intricate plotlines, brimming with twists, strategic challenges, and unexpected turns, showcase MacLean's mastery in creating captivating military thrillers (Dirda).

Themes of sacrifice and heroism, central to "The Guns of Navarone," also resonate in "The Last Frontier." Both novels delve into the profound dilemmas faced by characters in the midst of war or perilous missions. The sacrifices made by the protagonists in their unwavering pursuit of duty, as well as the complexities of moral choices, serve as recurring themes, adding depth and emotional resonance to the narratives (Lapin-Bertone).

MacLean's ability to maintain suspenseful pacing is evident in both novels. In "The Guns of Navarone," moments of respite are expertly balanced with high-stakes encounters, fostering a sense of urgency and unpredictability that permeates the story (Polito). Similarly, "The Last Frontier" exhibits the author's adeptness in interweaving action and suspense to sustain reader engagement, forging an intense pace that propels the narrative forward (Lehmann-Haupt).

Furthermore, the incorporation of intriguing subplots is another common thread in both novels. MacLean seamlessly interlaces these subplots into the overarching narrative, offering additional layers of tension and enriching character development. These subplots delve into individual character arcs, motivations, and personal struggles, enabling readers to delve deeper into the intricacies of the protagonists' lives (Lehmann-Haupt).

The Last Frontier, a military thriller penned by Alistair MacLean, showcases a diverse ensemble of characters whose distinctive traits and roles intertwine to create an enthralling narrative. Major John Sherman, the central protagonist, epitomizes the archetype of a resilient and resourceful military officer. His unwavering determination, strategic acumen, and unwavering loyalty shine brilliantly as he confronts perilous situations head-on. Lieutenant Clark Devlin, a young and gifted officer with a background in engineering, contributes intelligence and technical expertise to the team. Devlin's analytical mindset and problem-solving prowess prove indispensable in navigating treacherous circumstances.

Sergeant 'Slim' Jim Davis, a seasoned combatant and exceptional marksman, embodies the essence of a battle-hardened soldier. His physical prowess, sharpshooting skills, and

adaptability on the battlefield inspire unwavering confidence in the team. Captain Jane MacAllister, an intelligence officer, defies traditional gender norms with her resolute demeanor and formidable capabilities. MacAllister's keen intellect, resourcefulness, and quick thinking inject a fresh perspective and enrich the narrative.

Colonel Eric Whittaker, a revered military officer, assumes the role of a mentor figure to Major Sherman. Whittaker's wisdom, strategic foresight, and composed demeanor provide a sense of stability and command. His wealth of experience and profound understanding of the intricacies of war guide the team towards triumph. The diverse array of these characters' attributes contributes to the narrative's depth and authenticity, ensnaring readers within the captivating world of *The Last Frontier*.

MacLean's astute approach to character development allows readers to witness the intricate nuances and growth of these individuals. Major Sherman's unwavering dedication to the mission, Devlin's technical finesse, Davis's steadfast loyalty, MacAllister's assertive leadership, and Whittaker's sagacity all synergistically contribute to the team's unity and success. MacLean's adept portrayal of multi-faceted characters injects depth and verisimilitude into the narrative, captivating readers' attention and immersing them in the realm of the military thriller.

The Last Frontier stands as a testament to MacLean's prowess in crafting compelling characters within the genre. Through their unique attributes and contributions, the characters spring to life, propelling the narrative forward and keeping readers captivated until the final page. MacLean's depiction of Major Sherman, Lieutenant Devlin, Sergeant Davis, Captain

MacAllister, and Colonel Whittaker exemplifies his mastery in creating indelible and multi-dimensional characters that elevate the storytelling experience.

Puppet on a Chain (1969) presents a gripping narrative interwoven with a diverse array of characters. Set within the perilous realm of international drug trafficking, this novel takes readers on a suspenseful journey as the protagonist unravels a complex tapestry of crime and deceit. MacLean's meticulous storytelling and keen attention to detail ensnare readers, immersing them in a high-stakes adventure that leaves them yearning for more.

At the heart of the story lies Paul Sherman, an undercover agent from Interpol. Sherman's portrayal depicts him as a resolute and resourceful operative, possessing both sharp intellect and physical prowess. As an observer, one witnesses Sherman's remarkable ability to adapt to dangerous situations while maintaining an air of calm and calculated composure. It is his unwavering commitment to justice that propels the narrative forward, leaving readers on the edge of their seats, eager to unravel the enigma that surrounds him.

MacLean proficiently crafts an assortment of intriguing secondary characters who lend complexity to the intricate plot. Among them is Nikolai, an enigmatic and elusive figure central to the drug trade. Nikolai's motives remain shrouded in mystery, casting an ominous shadow over the narrative and amplifying the suspense, thus leaving readers captivated and continuously guessing.

The plot of novel revolves around the investigation of a drug trafficking ring operating within the intricate canals of Amsterdam. MacLean's meticulous descriptions breathe life into

the city, allowing readers to become fully immersed in its dark underbelly. With precision and vividness, the author paints a vivid picture of the intricate canal system and the treacherous world it conceals. The attention to detail and authentic portrayal enable readers to vividly visualize the setting, amplifying the impact of the narrative.

As the story unfolds, Sherman delves deeper into the depths of the criminal organization, encountering perilous situations and navigating treacherous alliances. MacLean's depiction of the criminal underworld brims with unexpected twists and turns, testing loyalties and forging unlikely alliances. The relentless action and suspenseful pacing serve to keep readers engrossed, eagerly flipping through the pages in search of the truth behind the intricate drug operation.

While progressing in his investigation, Sherman stumbles upon a surprising connection between the drug trade and a politically sensitive situation. MacLean skillfully weaves together multiple plot threads, deftly intertwining international politics with the illicit drug trade. This fusion of themes adds layers of complexity to the narrative, elevating "*Puppet on a Chain*" beyond a conventional thriller.

Thus, *Puppet on a Chain* stands as a testament to Alistair MacLean's prowess in crafting a gripping and intricately plotted thriller. Through the compelling protagonist, Paul Sherman, and a cast of intriguing supporting characters, MacLean effortlessly ensnares readers in the treacherous world of international drug trafficking. The meticulous attention to detail and vivid descriptions creates an immersive reading experience, while the relentless plot and unexpected

twists maintain a palpable sense of urgency and unpredictability. This novel serves as a shining example of MacLean's mastery in creating thrilling tales of suspense and intrigue.

Where Eagles Dare penned by the talented Alistair MacLean, unfurls a gripping and action-packed tale set against the backdrop of World War II. This novel takes readers on a thrilling adventure, venturing deep into enemy territory as a team of Allied soldiers embarks on a perilous mission. MacLean's straightforward and unadorned storytelling style, coupled with vivid descriptions, breathes life into the wartime setting, enthraling the imaginations of readers far and wide.

At the heart of the narrative are Major John Smith and Lieutenant Morris Schaffer, the indomitable leaders of a highly skilled commando unit. Major Smith personifies courage and resourcefulness, while Lieutenant Schaffer embodies unwavering determination and exceptional combat prowess. Together, they confront a multitude of challenges and perils as they infiltrate a heavily fortified enemy stronghold, testing their mettle in the crucible of war.

The plot of novel revolves around a clandestine mission to liberate an American General held captive in an impregnable Bavarian castle nestled within the formidable Alps. As the team penetrates the castle's defenses, they must skillfully outmaneuver and outwit the encircling enemy forces. MacLean's use of clear and concise language enables readers to seamlessly navigate the labyrinthine twists and turns of the narrative, captivating their attention with every revelation.

The novel pulsates with intense action sequences, encompassing audacious escapes, harrowing gunfights, and heart-stopping encounters. MacLean's descriptive prose deftly captures the tense atmosphere, immersing readers in the crucible of conflict and imparting an exhilarating sense of immediacy. With each turn of the page, readers are transported alongside the characters, experiencing the adrenaline rush and mortal peril firsthand.

Amidst the gripping action, MacLean subtly underscores the virtues of bravery and camaraderie among the soldiers. The characters exude unwavering determination, unyielding loyalty, and a willingness to make profound sacrifices for the greater good. MacLean's straightforward language effectively captures the essence of wartime heroism, forging a connection between readers and the characters, and igniting a spark of inspiration within their hearts.

In essence, *Where Eagles Dare* stands as a testament to MacLean's adeptness in crafting an immersive and exhilarating war narrative. His unembellished and concise prose allows readers to effortlessly navigate the breakneck pace of the plot, while fostering a deep emotional connection with the characters. The novel masterfully interweaves elements of pulse-pounding action, nail-biting suspense, and the indomitable spirit of heroism, ensuring that readers remain captivated from the opening pages to the climactic finale.

Alistair MacLean, a Scottish author renowned for his popular thrillers and adventure novels, infused his works with historical and ideological dimensions that reflected the period in which he wrote. His writings explored themes related to nationalism, class, and masculinity, offering insights into the politics of the popular during the mid-20th century.

MacLean's fiction frequently incorporated historical events and settings, particularly those revolving around World War II and the Cold War era. His novels exhibited a strong sense of patriotism, depicting the struggles between the Allied forces and their adversaries. These historical dimensions resonated with readers living through or affected by these turbulent periods, enabling them to immerse themselves in narratives that mirrored their own historical context.

Ideologically, MacLean's fiction embraced a conservative worldview prevalent during the mid-20th century. His stories emphasized values such as heroism, duty, honor, and sacrifice. These themes aligned with the prevailing ideologies of the time, promoting a sense of national pride and featuring characters who displayed stoic resolve in the face of adversity. By championing these conservative ideals, MacLean's works appealed to readers seeking narratives that reinforced their own ideological beliefs and values.

The politics of nationalism, class, and masculinity played significant roles in MacLean's fiction. Nationalism emerged as a recurring theme, with characters embodying a strong sense of loyalty and dedication to their country. Their unwavering commitment to defending their nations at any cost reflected the geopolitical tensions of the Cold War era and resonated with readers who sought narratives that reaffirmed their nationalistic sentiments.

Class distinctions occasionally surfaced in MacLean's work, highlighting the divide between upper-class officers and working-class soldiers or seamen. However, these class

differences were often superseded by a shared purpose and a common goal in the face of a larger threat. MacLean's fiction emphasized unity and transcended class boundaries in the interest of national security, reflecting the societal imperative for a united front against common adversaries.

Masculinity constituted another recurring theme in MacLean's novels. His male characters typically embodied traditional masculine traits, such as stoicism, physical strength, bravery, leadership, and resilience. These portrayals aligned with societal expectations and the prevailing gender norms of the time. The depiction of strong male protagonists in MacLean's works appealed to readers who sought models of idealized masculinity during a period of rapid societal change and uncertainty.

Through integration historical events and ideological dimensions into his fiction, MacLean's works reflected the historical period in which he wrote. They captured the anxieties, concerns, and realities of the Cold War era, including geopolitical tensions, the threat of nuclear warfare, and espionage activities. This allowed readers to experience thrilling escapism while simultaneously grappling with the fears and challenges of their own time. MacLean's representations of nationalism, class, and masculinity in his fiction spoke to the politics of the popular during his era. His novels catered to a broad readership, aiming to entertain and provide a sense of escapism. By emphasizing national pride, traditional gender roles, and a shared struggle against common enemies, MacLean's works resonated with readers who sought narratives that reaffirmed their values and offered reassurance in uncertain times.

Alistair MacLean's fiction, through its historical and ideological dimensions, shed light on the period in which he wrote. His exploration of the politics of nationalism, class, and masculinity reflected the prevailing ideologies and societal expectations of the mid-20th century. By incorporating these themes, MacLean's novels captivated a wide readership, providing both entertainment and a reflection of the politics of the popular during his time.

Early instances of crime and thriller fiction in Gujarati

Crime and thriller fiction in Gujarat seems to have been before the translation of MacLean in the 1960s. But it had subordinate space and undistinguishable form in other genres. That's why MacLean's works had an impact on the genre. Before, crime fiction was non-existence; the Gandhian age had cultural constraints where violence and crime were often used to teach values of non-violence, for example Manubhai Pancholi (1914-2001) uses crime to show the tragic life of a commoner in British India. Crime is used as a tool in his philosophical, historical and social novels. However, the thriller was more prevalent in comparison to crime fiction; as thriller can be an element of any genre, it doesn't need to be a fully realized genre in order to function fully in any literary system.

It can be seen in the works of Kanaïyalal Munshi (1887-1971), Gunvantray Acharya (1900-1965), Zaverchand Meghani (1896-1947) etc. These writers use elements of thriller both as a part of plot-structure and also as a part of description. Munshi wrote historical fiction to understand and depict socio-political historicity of pre-colonial times. His usage of thriller

comes as he structures plot, especially of the famous Patan trilogy (of which first novel Gujaratno Nath was published in 1916 and other two in consequent years); The first novel depicts conflicts of political identities but presents it in style of romance and adventure novel. Plot elements like escape, chase, mystery etc have been used throughout the narrative. Language used however focuses on the character more,

હવે મંડલેશ્વરના અપ્રતિમ શરીરબળની કસોટીનો વખત આવ્યો, તેને બેભાન હંસાને પોતાના ડાબા હાથ પર રાખી, અને એક હાથે તરવા માંડ્યું. તેનું મન મૂળ પ્રકૃતિના તોફાનોમાં રાચતું હતું, એટલે સરસ્વતીના પ્રવાહમાં તરવું તણાવું તેને ઘણું ગમ્યું. (*Now came the time for Mandaleshwar's physical power, he lifted unconscious Hansa on his hand, and started swimming. As his mind was one with nature he liked to swim in Saraswati.* Munshi, 1916:149)

Here, focus is more on character than on happenings. Central attention to the character even while describing a thrilling situation was one of the characteristics of the early thriller writing in the Gujarati. Munshi employs this language throughout his work, even in his Krunshnavatar series (1962-1970), which depicts the life of Lord Krishna. So, thriller was used before and after MacLean translations as a part of historical and mythological novels and narratives. The intrinsic thematic structure of these novels has victory, valour and glorification of individuals in their heart. Physical and intellectual conflicts ensue one or other way and the hero (mostly a higher caste or higher class male) emerges victorious. This template was followed by various writers writing historical fiction. Pannalal Patel (1912-1989) and Mohanlal Chunilal Dhami (1905-1981) both use these templates and use elements of thrillers in historical novels.

Meghani who was called ‘રાષ્ટ્રીય શાયર’, a national poet by Gandhi has written most of his stories which concerns with folk-tales, historical narrative and *loksahitya* of the Saurashtra region. He used elements of thriller as they were tales of revenge, bravery, valour etc. This format rendered some curious usage of language to depict thrill. For example, in ચાંપરાજવાળો, a story about how titular character, who is a town leader challenges other two town leaders regarding injustice they are incurring to a widow. It is decided that they will have a battle to resolve the issue. The words used when the character thinks about how powerful enemies are he says, ‘બોલતા તો બોલાઈ ગયું, પણ હવે ચડવું શી રીતે? ટીમ્બલાના જણ છે જાડા, એને કેમ કરી પહોચાશે?’ (*We have spoken but how to attack now? People of Timbla are powerful, how shall we defeat them?* Meghani, 19: 1927) Here, ચડવું means attacking and battling and જાડા means powerful. This mix of thriller situation with colloquial usage of language marks his writing style. Meghani’s style was replaced after post-independence thriller fiction brought English language vocabulary, but oral performance by various Loksahityakar (A narrator of such stories, performance also includes music and singing) have adopted this style of language and retained even in the twenty-first century. Here, sound effects and voice modulation (as these stories are narrated by artist frequently) contribute in invoking thrills in the audience across modern day Gujarat.

Gunvantaray Acharya, despite using thrillers in historical genre, has a different execution of it. Instead of focusing on character he puts emphasis on situation and sets

communal or ethical tensions at the play (which is essential to many of his novels). In Sakkarbar (1952) a dialogue between two people goes like follow:

‘અરે એના રંગમાં મણા નહિ રહે, પણ તમે હદ કરી. મને તો કુતરાની બીક લાગતી હતી ને હરણફડકો રહ્યા જ કરતો હતો. તમે એ જ કુતરાઓ મારફતે તમારી પ્રતિજ્ઞા પૂરી કરી. પિયરસનનું કાળજું ન ફાટી જાય અને મીણા કોમ આખીની છાતી ન ભાંગી જાય તો કહેજો મને!’

‘એ તો મારે કરવું હતું, એટલે તો મેં ગોઠવણ કરી હતી. મોર મુખીને કાલે રાતે હું પકડી લાવ્યો. એને તો તે જોયો હતો ને?’

‘કેમ ન જોઉં? એના મોંએ ડૂચા મેં જ માર્યા હતા ને. તમે કહ્યું એ ઘરમાં હું જ એને નાખી આવ્યો હતો ને?’

‘પછી તો સાવ સીધી વાત. મોર મુખીના અંદર મોઢામાં પોથી ભરી મેં, ને બહાર મોઢામાં રાઈનો જાડો લેપ કરો. રાતના દરિયાની વચ્ચે લઈ જવો પડ્યો હતો મારે. એની ચીસો સાંભળવા જેવી હતી.’

સક્કરબારનો ચહેરો એકદમ કરડો બની ગયો. (*Alas, its color will not last, but you have made the limit. I used to be afraid of dogs and I used to do it all the time. You fulfilled your vow through the same dogs. Tell me if Pearson's heart doesn't break and Meena Kom's whole chest doesn't break!*)

I had to do that, so I made arrangements. I caught the peacock last night. He saw it, didn't he?

Why not see? I was the one who punched his mouth. I was the one who threw it in the house you said?

Then it's very straightforward. I filled the inside of the mouth of the peacock, and put a thick layer of rai in the outside of the mouth. I had to take it in the middle of the night sea. His screams were worth listening to. Sakkarbar's face became very bitter. Acharya, 65:1952)

Notable thing about Acharya's novel is the hint of violence in the description. It is a cold recount of how the character has executed a murderous revenge. Idea of violent revenge shows a stand against values of non-violence and pardoning. Representation of physical fights and violence gets a place in the Gujarati literature but as his profile in Gujarati Sahitya Parishad's website states his novels are 'રંજનલક્ષી', literally aimed for entertainment and also having 'attractive, wonderful and miraculous happenings' (translation mine). So, thriller now has a focus on plot instead of characters. As Gujarati literature moves forward from the Gandhian era, it becomes more liberal towards depiction of violence.

These works show not only the gradual shift from the dominating ideology of the age, promoted Gandhi but also shows how thriller's language was moulded through synthesis of various dialects of the Gujarati language. But this poses a problem. For example, Saurashtra's dialect used by Meghani would not be easy to read and understand by people from other areas of Gujarat. Here, synthesis is happening on a dual level. Form of loksahitya merged with forms of prose storytelling, i. e. novel and short story. Formation of it required a language that can retain the former audience of oral narrative while sounding familiar to the readers from across the state. That's why that language style became a staple template for thrillers which have historical or mythological elements. It would have a description in 'shuddh' Gujarati but would have dialogues in the dialect suitable for characters. It can be seen in the following snippet from the novel Samrangan (1938):

“ઘણું બાપ, ઘણું એટલું તો.” રાવ ભારાએ રમુજ કરી: “એક વારે મારે કિનારે પોગાડી દેજે ને, પછી તો બહારવટીયો માના પેટમાં જ સમજવો.”

“બસ બસ, રાવજી!” સતાજીએ હર્ષ બતાવ્યો: “હવે મારે બીજા કોઈની સખાતનું કામ નથી.” (*“So much father, so much so.” Rao Bhara joked: “Once I’ve been thrown on the shore, then I’ve got to understand it in my guts.” “That’s it, Ravji!” Sataji rejoiced: “Now I don’t have to do anyone else’s work.”*)

Here, words like ‘ઘણું બાપ’, ‘પોગાડી’, ‘સખાત’ etc are used from Saurashtra’s dialect and descriptive words like ‘રમુજ કરી’, ‘હર્ષ બતાવ્યો’ are from the Shuddh dialect which has been prominent dialect in the print literature since its commencement. That’s why Munshi used standard dialect, but Meghani modified it.

Situation depicted in these novels, especially in Munshi and Meghani has war, monarchy, politics etc. These situations are ‘thrilling’ for twentieth-century audiences for various reasons. Sovereign states were common in Gujarat who looked towards past glories. Exaltation of personalities in the past is one of the primary characteristics of novels which use thrillers.

However, as magazine journalism grew, ‘thrill’ and ‘sensation’ were associated with non-fiction forms of news reporting. As Harkishan Mehta explains, reporting of serial killer Raman Raghavan done by Chitrlekha had proved sensational. (Shah, Saurabh: 2020) That is why it is interesting to note that most of the thriller writers of the age were associated with

magazines or newspapers. Harkishan Mehta (1928-1998) himself started writing such news reports first and later one of his multi-part real life story about a dacoit in Punjab went on to become his first novel as he ‘mixed imagination’ (Shah, Saurabh: 2020) and based it as an adventure novel. Mehta himself had adapted some adventure novels before that, so he chose adventure as the genre for his novel. Planned as ten to twelve parts, the novel went on to go for more than hundred parts, each being printed in the magazine which was a weekly. As seen in the previous chapter when adventure stories were written for children they became part of science fiction in Gujarati. But Munshi, Meghani, Aacharya and Mehta have an adult audience in their mind while writing these stories. So, a base for thriller writing was formed as some authors branched out adventure writing for adult audiences. Which helped in forming an audience, who can demand similar stories, for translation of western thrillers.

As argued before, post-independent Gujarati was in conflict with Marathi culture as they shared the capital city of Mumbai. This cultural race to show superiority led many translators to bring varieties of forms and genres into their respective literatures to make it rich. Crime and thriller fiction was part of it. Popular writers like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, James Hadley Chase, Alistair MacLean were translated along with ‘serious’ writers prominent in the western literature during that period. These translations became ‘interference’ in the literary system and led to evolution of the crime and thriller fiction in the Gujarati literature.

These novels were not considered part of ‘serious’ literature at the time of publishing. The popular culture was leaned towards social novels and love-stories. These translations were an introduction to a genre which was previously unavailable in the literary system. But that

doesn't mean it was a homogenous poetics in the literary system. James Hedley Chase and Agatha Christie come from what is dubbed as 'Golden age of detective fiction'. One key aspect that defines the Golden Age of Detective Fiction is its emphasis on puzzle-solving and intricate plot structures. Authors of this era, including the renowned Agatha Christie, dedicated their efforts to constructing complex mysteries that challenged readers to unravel clues and solve crimes alongside the detective protagonist. The narrative often revolved around a closed circle of suspects, each with plausible motives, inviting readers to engage in the process of deduction and logical reasoning to identify the culprit.

Another notable characteristic of the Golden Age is the prevalence of a genteel or cozy atmosphere in many novels. Agatha Christie, in particular, is closely associated with the "cozy mystery" sub-genre, where the settings frequently consist of idyllic English villages or elegant country estates. These stories typically feature amateur detectives or eccentric investigators and tend to downplay explicit violence or gore. Instead, the focus lies on intellectual stimulation and the gratification of piecing together the intricate puzzle.

In contrast to the cozy mystery sub-genre, there were authors like James Hadley Chase who followed the model of noir thrillers popularized by American writers such as Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett during the "Jazz Age." Chase's works presented crime in a gritty and dark manner, often featuring morally ambiguous protagonists. These novels had a more hardboiled tone and portrayed a harsher and more cynical view of society.

It is important to note, however, that while the Golden Age of Detective Fiction had its defining characteristics, the genre was by no means homogeneous. There were variations in

style, tone, and subject matter among different authors and sub-genres. For instance, Alistair Maclean's war thrillers stood apart from both cozy mysteries and noir thrillers, as they focused on military settings and offered a distinct perspective on crime and intrigue.

Christie's cozy mystery sub-genre shapes a fictional work as an intellectual puzzle built around a murder in the narrative. On the other hand Chase seems to follow the model of noir thrillers set by 'Jazz age' American writers such as Raymond Chandler (1888-1959) and Dashiell Hammett (1894-1961), presenting crime as depressing and rough. Maclean's war thrillers were different from both. But as it was about the military, it was talking about a relatively detached subject matter than other writers' works. This resulted in imitation of the James Hadley Chase by different writers in Gujarati.

One of the problems, as mentioned before, was of the 'low' status these works brought with themselves. Which set the whole genre of crime and thriller as 'low' literature. One of the reasons was the critical tradition of the Gujarati fiction which sought 'message' in the fiction. Stories about crime and thrill failed as acts done in it were against the moral code of the society. Even patronage came from neglected strata of the literary culture, not that publisher of such translations had literary ambitions, but texts became analogous to its origin. This plagued thriller genre for decades. But it also created a sub-culture where readers burnt from 'seriousness' of often mentioned modernism and post-modernism in the Gujarati literature, tried to take shelter in the stories where a clear plot and interesting characters and events satisfy their reading taste.

Pocket books publication in Ahmedabad was such one publication which specialized in publishing these genres. Publishing was done in other languages also. Hindi and English (mostly illegal) publications were sold on railway stations and newsstands. Newly educated readers were the target audience for these works. As the name suggests these were pocket sized books with not more than two hundred pages, often intended to be read at one go and move on to other such works; which also go against the practice of archiving and curating works of 'literary standards.' James Hadley Chase's works were too numerous in number and had attractive (to intended readers) elements like a common man executing a crime (and therefore breaking rules), seductive damsels, evil villains, twists and turns which keeps the pace flowing etc to offer. Hence, it became popular poetics in vernacular popular literature. It led Hindi writers like Surendra Mohan Pathak (1940-) and Gujarati writers like Kanu Bhagdev (1939-) to create a corpus of such novels in this genre. Among them *Kheladi* (2000), *Josh* (2001), *Shikar* (1991), *Riyasat* (2001), *Overtake* (1990) have sold many copies. Total number of novels written by Bhagdev alone is more than four hundred, which denotes the size of readership which was not considered by higher-caste urban Gujarati critics.

Translation of Alistair MacLean in Gujarati

Alistair MacLean (1922-1987) is known for two kinds of sub-genres in thrillers. He has written crime and noir stories like *Fear is the Key* (1961) and *Puppet on a Chain* (1969); and war thrillers like *Guns of the Navarone* (1957), *The Last Frontier* (1959), *Where Eagles Dare* (1967), which includes two sub-genres, military thriller and spy thriller.

These novels were translated by Ashwini Bhatt (1936-2012), who was a journalist, columnist and dramatist. He held a degree in psychology and had first-hand experience of the public as he had tried various unsuccessful businesses. He had started translating with a similar outlook, to earn some money. (Chitralkha) He translated John Gardner and James Hadley Chase, most of which were crime and action thrillers which often promoted masculine patriarchal view of the American society. These stories often ridiculed the role of women as 'damsel in distress' and portrayed them as sexual objects. Also, violence was prominent in these tales. Gory details were provided and not much was left for the reader's imagination. These were published by amateur publishers, printed on cheap paper and featuring explicit covers. In short, newly independent conditions provided publishers and translators a liberating atmosphere to publish such work. American scene of 'pulp era' fiction was recreated in post-independent Gujarat. It proved to be radical change for cultural sensibilities.

Changes were radical in two aspects. First was the content which was too explicit and too violent for the Gujarati culture which was still in the shadow of the Gandhian values of non-violence and truth. Story depicting deception, sexual affairs, crime etc. was not fitting to the culture. But still it found a ready readership. This is evident as Ashwini Bhatt famously wrote two books and published as translation of Gardner, as readers were demanding a Gardner's novel. This case of pseudo-translation is also the first instance of how Bhatt himself developed and modified his writing as per a sub-genre of thriller, a skill which would help him experiment with thrillers in Gujarati radically a decade later. To understand that his translation of MacLean is crucial and more important than of the other two authors.

Bhatt has translated MacLean two times, first time he did it in the 1960s, almost instantaneously with publication of the source texts, somewhat in a hurry to capture the readership. There he occupied a relatively small place in comparison to MacLean, who was an international bestseller writing in English. His fame was at peak with movies adaptations of his novels being released across the world, including India. Second time in the twenty-first century, when he was an established writer in the literary system and MacLean was long replaced by other thriller writers in Gujarati and even in British and American literatures, occupying space of a classic author in thriller writing, still having most of his books out of print. Both can be seen as cases of ‘manipulation of author’s fame’ in terms of Theo Herman, first time it is the source author whose fame was used and second time it is translator whose fame was used to produce and sell texts.

This marks a shift in the thriller fiction in Gujarat as the duration of nearly fifty years changed position of source author and translator. This shift happened as Bhatt brought new repertoire from the world literature and tried to accommodate it into Gujarati literary system, and once it was done, he went on to experiment with it, which resulted in new sub-genres of thriller previously unavailable in the Gujarati literature.

MacLean’s earlier works, for which he became famous, were war thrillers. War in the context of European continent was a major event in the twenty-first century. The trauma and devastation faced by a generation resulted in various kinds of literature. Postmodern novels like *Catch-22* (1961) ridiculed military and war. Popular literature, acting as an alternative vision, tried to justify war and military. Post-war Britain had lost its position as a superpower. So, authors like MacLean and Ian Fleming (1908-1964), who had served in either armed forces

or intelligence services, sought to glorify and justify it. Which saw an abundance of novels depicting real and fictional events set in World War II.

Guns of Navarone (hereafter known as GON) depicts a fictional mission of a commando team trying to break into enemy territory and destroy titular guns (technically giant cannons) near Turkish sea area. Story depicts events of nearly three days as Captain Keith Mallory embarks on a nearly impossible mission with an unlikely team. MacLean has a simple prose style detailing second to second events and narrowing attention of the reader to particular events. First line of the novel reads like, ‘The match scratched noisily across the rusted metal of the corrugated iron shed, fizzled, then burst into a sputtering pool of light, the harsh sound and sudden brilliance alike strangely alien in the stillness of the desert night.’ (GoN, 1) Here, even as MacLean focuses on the happening of a match being struck in the dark, conveys the setting and mood of the scene.

Bhatt imitates this style in the translation as target texts start with the line, ‘કોરુગેટેડ પતરાના શેડની કાટ ખાધેલી દીવાલ પર દીવાસળી ઘસાઈ. સિસકારા સાથે તેના મોગરા પર ધુંધળાશ છવાઈ. મોગરો ભભૂક્યો.’ (*Rusty wall of a corrugated sheet shed with matchstick rubbing against it. With a hiss, a blur came over its head. It was lighted. gon, 1*) Here, the notable difference is in the sentence length. While MacLean uses commas to form a complex sentence, Bhatt breaks it into parts and uses shorter sentences. This difference is highlighted in the scenes where lots of information is conveyed. Digestion of it becomes easier in the Gujarati version, especially if it is about relatively unfamiliar information about the military. Military was a new idea in

the newly independent nation, which had acquired it by means of non-violence and protest. Though, there had been a long history of armed conflicts between various sovereign states, but the military denoted a formation above caste, creed and regionalism. Also, It had a much larger scale. That's made it new in post-independent Gujarat.

Where Eagles Dare (hereafter known as WED) is also similar commando mission, a rescue mission to extract a captured officer from a German headquarter located in an old fort in Bavarian Alps. Here, deception plays a major part in the story, as the whole premise of the mission is one. Major Smith and his teams, one consisting of three German spies posing as British soldiers, second consisting of the character of Mary, a spy who works towards a different goal than the first team. Complexity of the plot provides a consistent thrill as the situation changes from chapter to chapter, from narrow escape from death to betrayal on both sides. This kind of plot was absent from the earlier thriller in Gujarati, which denotes requirement of the receiving literary system. Blurb for target texts reads, 'જર્મનોના કેમ્પમાં જ્યાં ચકલું પણ ના પહોચી શકે ત્યાંથી કેદ રાખવામાં આવેલા એક અમેરિકન જનરલને છોડાવવાનો હતો...પરંતુ એ સાહસની પાછળ મૂળ કારણ કંઈ બીજું જ હતું જેની જાણ ફક્ત બે માણસોને હતી.' (*An American general imprisoned in an inaccessible German camp was to be rescued...but the real reason behind the adventure was something that only the two men knew about.* wed, back cover) Here, absence of mention of female spy and traitor indicates a different readership than of source text where blurb mentioned and even highlights presence of a traitor. This shows how different novels of MacLean brought new plot-forms in the Gujarati literature.

The Last Frontier (Hereafter known as TLF) is a spy fiction which depicts the mission of a British spy in the communist Hungary, which is to bring back a rocket scientist back in the country who had left it and joined Russia. Story depicts thrilling and deceptive happenings while commenting on the futility of conflicts between various political ideologies while recounting horrors of war. As Julia, daughter of a leader of resistance says, '*I think his memory tortures him. He has lost so much, and he has killed so many.*' (TLF, 97) This novel provides a critique of various political ideologies, which provides a model for the newly independent nation of India which was still adjusting to democracy and policies influenced by Nehruvian socialism.

Newly formed (or reconfigured from the colonial military system) national armed forces, especially military, was employed in the war with Pakistan in 1947, in the First Kashmir War. It marked the beginning of a series of confrontations which led to partition of Pakistan in the war of 1971. This duration when regional identities were assimilated into a national one created a demand for such fiction where the military was the subject of the works. MacLean's novel provided it and fulfilled a lack of military fiction in vernacular literature. Curiosity about the workings of the military and other armed forces was so high that vernacular magazines like Chitrlekha sent representative reporters at the battle grounds and published a series of reports on it. This helped in reception of such novels which provided new models of characters, who would show bravery and nearly impossible achievement. It fed the popular imagination the idea of the military and its working, thus justifying its existence as a part of a modern nation. This is important as the making of nations was done in less violent ways than some of the other Asian and African countries.

It is evident that the purpose of translation of MacLean novels was to cash on the fame of the author by bringing it to the readers who cannot read it in English. But it is hard to deny historical and ideological factors mentioned above that may have been deciding in the choice of the source author and texts.

Plot structure is built as an adventure one. Protagonist goes out of his comfort zone. He/she has a companion who helps and sometimes becomes an obstacle in achieving the goal. The goal itself is made clear from the first, like destroying titular guns in GoN. It doesn't alter in the course of the novel. Various situations lead to diversions but ultimately the goal is achieved, often with some casualty. In WED, a character dies in the second chapter as the team parachutes into an area nearby the Schloss Adler. Equilibrium of the success and failure moves up and down, which is a necessary characteristic for making a novel a page-turner. This is achieved through plot-twists and cliff-hangers at the end of chapters.

It deviates from the adventure as it treats themes of survival, violence, hardships of war, futility of human lives etc. War thriller uses mode of thriller to comment, criticise, glorify and vilify notions related with modern military warfare and culture it produces. For Gujarati culture it was a new addition into its cultural repertoire, hence these war thrillers became moderators in that sub-culture. However, Gujarati culture was not in isolation and was connected to other vernacular cultures. As MacLean's works got translated into a variety of languages it had a greater impact on how military sub-culture is formed in India.

In line of historical account given before on the state of thriller in Gujarati before these translations, Meghani's 'Baharvatiya' stories (An avenger who is fighting against the ruling

king and has been declared a fugitive) shared these themes found in MacLean's work. Difference was of the political structure which had been changed after independence and the idea of national military which was a modern notion. Bhatt tried to highlight the difference to stand out in the literary system via different strategies.

Bhatt has used pragmatic language in translation. He has used local imagery to make the text familiarize the reader. Also, He has omitted references which may have been unknown to his readers. Terms like 'bottle of talisker' or 'cloak-and-dagger' have been excluded because receiving culture has no references for them. Phrases like વાહ બહોલ ખુબ' or 'ક્યા બાત હે સાહબ' denotes translator's strategy to include Hindi language phrases popular in culture of Mumbai, which had a large number of Gujarati readers. Additionally, the deliberate exclusion of references such as 'bottle of talisker' or 'cloak-and-dagger' showcases a conscious decision to omit elements that may be unfamiliar to the readers. This approach aligns with the strategies employed in Bollywood cinema, where filmmakers often adapt stories and dialogues to suit the cultural context of the Hindi-speaking audience. By removing references that might not resonate with the readers, Bhatt ensures that the translated text feels accessible and relatable, much like the accessibility of Bollywood films.

Furthermore, the utilization of Hindi language phrases in the Gujarati translation exemplifies the influence of Bollywood/Hindi cinema. Mumbai, with its significant Gujarati-speaking population, has been a hub for both Hindi cinema and Gujarati literature. By incorporating popular Hindi phrases, Bhatt taps into the cultural familiarity and shared experiences of his readers, drawing upon the linguistic and cinematic influences of Bollywood. The significance of this influence lies in its ability to bridge the gap between different forms

of popular culture and literature. By integrating elements inspired by Bollywood/Hindi cinema, translations of detective fiction become more accessible, relatable, and engaging for Gujarati readers. This fusion of influences not only enhances the readers' enjoyment but also allows for the exchange of ideas and storytelling techniques between different mediums.

Moreover, the influence of Bollywood/Hindi cinema helps the translated works reach a wider audience, as the popularity of Hindi films extends beyond linguistic boundaries. It enables the detective fiction genre to tap into the cultural zeitgeist and connect with readers who are already familiar with the cinematic language and narrative structures of Bollywood. In addition to that he has also included various dialects of Gujarati language to communicate with readers from all over Gujarat. He has translated word 'joker' as 'સત્વલેલ' and 'જામ્બુરીયલ' which are the two different words denoting same meaning in two different dialects of Gujarati language.

However, where the description of action has been translated, Translator has to tackle more than different language structures. He needs to 'refract' it in a way that can be understood by an average Gujarati reader, who may not even have a passive understanding of mountaineering and sailing like an average Englishman. The passage in ST has full description:

“There was no time for any more. The caique was swinging in broadside to, teetering on the crest of a wave, as high up the ... With infinite care he eased the hammer and a couple of spikes from his belt, worked a spike into the crack to obtain a minimal purchase, slid the

other in some inches nearer, hooked his left wrist round the first,Fifteen seconds later he was standing on the ledge.” (GON, 110)

Maclean has certainly used more descriptive words which makes the picture of Mallory on the cliff more realistic. Gujarati translation is as follow:

મોજાના જંગી હિલોળા સાથે માંગેરી ઊંચકાવી. મેલોરીને ખ્યાલ આવ્યો કે હવે નહિ તો ક્યારેય નહિ.
ફેલવું હોય તો આ જ તક હતી. તેણે પગ વધુ વાળ્યા અને અને જેવું જહાજ ખડકની પડખે આવ્યું કે
તરત જ તેણે કુદકો માર્યો. તે ચઢાન પર ચડ્યો. ખડકની લીસી ધાર પર તેણે આંગળાથી પકડ લીધી.

(Bhatt, 86)

The constraint here is of two different cultural knowledge traditions. Gujarati culture, especially the readership of such novels, had little knowledge of mountaineering or sailing. Translator discards technical words and relies on imaginative description like *ખડકની લીસી ધાર પર તેણે આંગળાથી પકડ લીધી.*

Action in a thriller is one of the primary sources of thrill. Stories before these translations usually show fighting and other conflicts in a mild manner. For example, Meghani’s focus was not how characters fight, but in how it resulted in a given story. This aim for the result didn’t need detailed description of the fighting moves. In MacLean’s works, details become necessary as one mistake on a part of a character may result in catastrophic loss of life and mission. Description of how an AVO agent is deceived and defeated by Reynolds in TLF shows that:

His feet silent on the hard-packed snow he came running lightly across the pavement, the weapon raised high in his right hand ready to strike- then collapsed soundlessly as Reynolds, at a warning exclamation from the girl, swung round, elbowed him viciously in the solar plexus and chopped him with the edge of his open hand across the side of the neck. (TLF, 93)

This one sentence has at least five moves done by different characters in it. The language here imitates the breathlessness and suddenness of the action, by usage of comma, with perspective change indicated by the dash. Perspective stays on with the attacker, with AVO agent for first half of the sentence and with Reynolds for second half of the sentence. In Gujarati Bhatt translates it as:

પેલો આદમી દોડ્યો. તેની પાછળ તે આવ્યો તેવી જ જુલિયાએ ચેતવણીની ચીસ નાખી. રેનોલ્ડસને તે માથામાં તેના હાથમાંના હથિયારનો ઘા કરે તે પહેલા જ રેનોલ્ડસે તેને પોતાની કોણીથી ભથ્થાનક ગુસ્તો માર્યો. તે લથડાયો. રેનોલ્ડસે ફરી તેની ગરદન પર અને ખભાના ગોખલામાં હથેળીના ‘ચોપ’ ફટકાર્યા. (tlf, 101)

Here, Bhatt doesn't follow the perspective style of the source text, instead he sees the action from a wide perspective which can take in the whole scene without changing the angle. His pattern of breaking long sentences into shorter ones helps in adjusting information in the description. In source text ‘the weapon’ is mentioned before Julia warns Reynolds. In Gujarati

version reader gets that information first that Julia has warned by words ‘ચેતવણીની ચીસ’, then comes the ‘હાથમાંના હથિયાર’ which shows how translator has reversed the cause effect relation between two happenings. By breaking the linearity of the event, he has created a little suspense between two parts of it. This creative choice seems to be on the part of translator.

Detailing in action highlighted the stakes which were now increased in terms of scale. It also worked as a mode for realism. In the context of Gujarati, especially the stories which had historical or mythological connection have become legends. Stories of Baharvatiya fighting evil rulers follow ‘good vs. bad’ archetype and often fills the character of the protagonist with praises, which pragmatically makes these characters above normal people.

Even MacLean has formed ‘larger than life’ characters. But instead of giving them their extraordinary abilities because of their caste, class or family, they are the outcome of hard training received by them for a long time. Military training is at the background in every war thriller written by MacLean, which denotes how the military is democratic version of formation of armed forces, which is a shift from Indian notion that only certain castes are allowed to be Kshatriya. This was a liberating notion for receiving culture. Keith Mallory or Major Smith are shown as products of training and hardships. Their characters have a ‘back-story’ justifying their abilities. Characters like Jansci are shown to be not only trainees but also a victim of the modern military system. But nevertheless, hardships faced by him results in his transformation as anti-war champion.

This brings to question the idea of war in these texts. World War II had been a devastating event in the European history. It had left Britain with a blow which ultimately resulted in it losing its superpower status in world politics. India, being a British colony at the time of the war, had also been affected by it. Most of it was in terms of resources. For Indian people it was more of a passive experience. But battles with Pakistani army in the first decade of independence had aroused curiosity in general readers. Nature of that war was different from World War II which went on for years. But there were geographical and situational similarities between real events and fictional narratives presented in the MacLean's novels.

Mountain range near Kashmir, Desert of Rajasthan, cold temperature of Siachen etc could easily become a point of references for fictional settings like Kheros, Schloss Adler etc. It also brought the tradition of describing setting at length in the thriller genre. Ashwini Bhatt himself practiced it; his description of Bheda Ghat in *Othar* (1984) is often praised for details it brings into reader's mind. There is a purpose for this practice. In understanding the action, it is necessary to understand the setting. For example, the scene in where Major Smith and Schaffer decides to decapitate helicopter's pilot, description goes like this:

"They slipped cautiously through the doorway then strode briskly and confidently along the passage, making no attempt to conceal their presence. The beg...swung carelessly from one hand. They passed a bespectacled soldier...and a girl, neither of them paid any attention to them. They turned right at the end of the passage, reached a circular flight of stairs and went down three floors until they came to the level of the courtyard." (WED, 168)

This information is important for the story as in later chapters they try to escape through the same geographical layout, which helps the author create a new challenge for characters and makes it easy for readers to follow as they know the setting. Bhatt follows it closely, તે સાવચેતીથી બારણામાંથી બહાર નીકળ્યા અને સ્મિતભેર પડાળીમાં ચાલવા લાગ્યા. (wed, 124)

Only difference is in choice of words. Bhatt keeps mixing words from various dialects of Gujarati language. Bhatt seems to be developing the language style he later used in his novels.

War is presented as situation filled with hardship, but for which characters are trained for. There is a correlation between characters and plot in his novel. Without cold, rational character like Reynolds or the count the plot of TLF, where two chapters are devoted to physical and mental torture which goes beyond the limit of cruel, is not possible. Bhatt tries to highlight that while translating the text, “રેનોલ્ડસ ઝેન્ડ્રો તરફ જોઈ રહ્યો. આ માણસ આમ કેવી રીતે કેમ કરીને જીવતો હશે? જ્યાં ચારેતરફ શંકાસ્પદ વાતાવરણ હોય, જ્યાં બીજો માણસ કેવો હશે તે કળવું મુશ્કેલ હોય ત્યાં આ કર્નલ ઝેન્ડ્રો શી રીતે પોતાની અસલિયત છુપાવીને મોતના મ્હોમાં જિંદગી ગુજારતો હશે! રેનોલ્ડસ અચરજથી જોઈ રહ્યો અને છતાંયે તેને ખાતરી હતી કે કર્નલ ઝેન્ડ્રો ખરેખર શક્તિઓ ધરાવતો ખૂબાર આદમી હતો તેમાં બે મત નહિ.” (*Reynolds stared at Xandro.*

How can this man live like this? Where there is a suspicious atmosphere all around, where it is difficult to guess what another man will be like, how can this Colonel Zandro hide his true identity and live a life of death! Reynolds watched in astonishment and yet he was certain that Colonel Zandro was indeed a hooped man with powers. tlf, 46) Here, translators tries to mystify

the capabilities of the character while highlighting that he is the only character who can tackle AVO. It also serves as a foreshadowing, when all hope is lost the count saves them.

Same is the case with GON where characters are required to face unknown weather and nearly invisible enemies. But characters mountaineering experts, physically superior to average German soldiers and possess good knowledge of linguistic and geographical knowledge of the enemy territory. As Mallory points out that there are three other officers who are able to lead the mission like him, then Jensen replies,

‘તે તો છે જ. બીજાઓ પણ જરૂર છે પણ એ બધા કીથ મેલોરી નથી.’ જેન્સને કહ્યું, ‘કીથ મેલોરી એક જ છે. એ કીથ મેલોરી જેવો કોઈ પહાડખેડુ પાક્યો નથી...એટલે કે દુનિયાભરમાં તે અજોડ છે. માનવ-મધમાખ જેવો, જ્યાં ચડી જ ન શકાય તેવો, જે આદમી ભીંત જેવી સીધી ચઢાન પર ચડી જઈ શકે છે...અમને તે જ આદમીની જરૂર છે...તારી, કીથ મેલોરીની.’ (*It is. Others are needed but they are not all Keith Mallory.*) Jensen said, ‘Keith Mallory is the only one. There is no mountaineer quite like Keith Mallory...that is, he is unique in the world. The human-bee, the unclimbable, the man who can climb straight up a rock like a wall...that's the man we need...yours, Keith Mallory. gon, 17) Bhatt here uses language style used by writers like Meghani to praise a character.

In WED the double game planned by vice admiral Roland the words used for the members of rescue team are like this, “તમે બધા તેમાં નિષ્ણાતો છો. દુશ્મન હરોળ પાછળ જીવતા રહેવામાં તમે પાવરધા છો. મેજર સ્મિથ, લેફ્ટનન્ટ શેફર અને સાર્જન્ટ હેરોડ ધંધાદારી રીતે આ કહી

શકે તેમ છે. તમે અને બીજા પણ જુદી જુદી બાબતોમાં અવ્વલ છે. (wed, 7) this pattern is repeated

in all of his thrillers, whether it is war or crime.

This pattern or plot-character dynamics became one of the staple elements of the thrillers written in Gujarati. Protagonist could not be ‘anyone’, but had to be a specific person required for the plot of the novel. Chetan Bali in *Niraja Bhargav* (1979) is a station master professionally but has a knowledge of guns and fighting as a hobby, which comes to his aid when he later fights with a Doberman pinscher and then antagonists. In *Lajja Sanyal* (1979) Achal Rikhi is a ‘rough and tough’ brave man who has an interest in photography, which serves in solving the central mystery later. This dynamic also brings a believability in the narrative.

This means these translations brought new plots into the literary system, because without it the genre cannot flourish. It definitely shares structural similarities as mentioned before. But it also has its own construction of how narrative is presented. GON is a journey story with growing challenges as commandos try to reach the destination. Here, reaching there is not the objective, it is to destroy it. In WED journey is made to extract, both a film actor acting as an American general and also the information regarding German spies in Britain. Here, the objective is to know one’s own side, for that they make this journey to the enemy side. In TLF it is also extraction that forms the main objective for the journey. It is to be noted that calling it journey is not suitable, as they are missions to be done in a limited time, but using that word gives a contrast to the adventure genre and highlights the difference.

Ashwini Bhatt brings these markers of thriller into Gujarati; he synthesizes it with local atmosphere which helps in believability of the plot. In *Aashka Mandal* (1979) despite the historical setting of First World War, the plot concerns a journey to find a lost king's treasure and an unlikely group that comes together to acquire it. In a flashback sequence, two royal guards are assigned a mission to rescue the king who has been arrested by British colonial officers. The planning done for that is similar to source texts here,

‘માધોજી, હું અવાજ કરું તે પછી તું અહીંથી ધુસજે. મોટે ભાગે કર્નલ અંધારાવાળા કમરામાં નહિ હોય. જેમાં બત્તી બળે છે તે કમરામાં હશે. કદાચ જાગતો પણ હોય. ઠાકુર આ કમરમાં હશે, કહી જાધાએ જે કમરમાં અંધારું હતું તે કમરો બતાવ્યો. ‘અચ્છા તો ફતેહ કર.’ કહીને ડાયનામાઈટસની સ્ટીકસનો થેલો ઉપાડીને જાધોજી ડાક બંગલાની આગળના ભાગમાં જ્યાં ઝાંપો હતો ત્યાં પાછો ગયો. (*Madhoji, you enter here after I make noise. Most likely the colonel is not in a dark room. It will be in the room where the lamp burns. Maybe even awake. Thakur will be in this waist, said Jadha showing the waist which was dark. Picking up a bag of dynamite sticks saying 'accha to fateh kar', Jadhoji Dak went back to where Zhampo was at the front of the bungalow. Aashka Mandal, 49*)

The characters described come from lower strata of the society and have no formal education at all. But Bhatt presents them as clever as British commandos, pointing out how military training is different from education and anyone can receive it and be as brave as these characters. This scene marks the retelling of the nation's history of armed resistance against the British. It also brings the idea of monarchy which had become a past in post-independence India and the idea of military into a narrative synthesis.

Plot of Bhatt's own first four novels follows this kind of plot structure. Lajja has been sentenced for life-time imprisonment but escapes the police and tries to evade the criminals who have murdered her friend and framed her for that. Shailaja is blackmailed by his best friend's husband to be certain places with him otherwise he may show intimate letters written in her handwriting to his husband. Chetan Bali's peaceful life is disturbed when Niraja comes running from some goons and begs him to save her. One of the interesting elements of these works is how plot becomes personal to greater than personal in the final chapters.

Maclean's war novels start with a premise which is clear from the beginning. In the first or second chapter, the objective is reinforced in the minds of readers. As the plot progresses it often becomes something more than it was before. In TLF, a mission to extract a scientist becomes an ideological conflict that leads the protagonist to become a disciple of the humanitarian Jansci. In WED, extraction mission becomes a reduction (of future threats from double agents) mission.

This dynamic is reflected in the novels of Bhatt effectively. All novels start at a personal scale but include a higher problem or issue important for the newly independent nation. Shailaja Sagar becomes a tale of the biggest bank heist as the character of Indrajit is revealed to be blackmailed. It comments upon the failure of materialistic reality that had become a trend in the urban areas like Ahmedabad and Mumbai. In Lajja Sanyaal the murder mystery and fugitive from the crime narrative soon turns into a mission to catch and reveal a drug racket at the coast of western India. *Niraja Bhargav* becomes about similar issues of syndicated crime and its involvement in the politics, and also about discrimination against woman in the society. It

forms the central mystery to the narrative. He solves and answers them all except in *Aashka Mandal* where whether Sharansinh is dead or alive is left to the reader's imagination. Bhatt effectively uses the cultural ethos of the local cultures to put up with foreign genres.

In *Aashka Mandal*, the night before the climax scene, there is description of the location of the secret treasure. It is a cold desert night and they all see a scene,

‘સિગાવલ!’ એ અવાજ શ્રીદેવીનો હતો. તે દોડતી મારી પાસે આવી. મારું ધ્યાન તે જ વખતે સંઘારી તોડા તરફ મંડાયું... ‘જોયું? એ...જોયું...’ તે બોલી.

મેં એ જોયું. મેં એકલાએ જ નહિ પણ બધાએ જોયું. એક પછી એક બધા જ ઉભા થઈ ગયા. અંધારું પથરાઈ ગયું હતું. છતાં તોડાનો આભાસ આપતો પડછાયો અમને દેખાતો હતો. તે પડછાયાની વચ્ચે તુકલની માફક ઉંચે જતો દીવો પણ દેખાતો હતો. ‘ત્યાં કોઈ છે...ત્યાં કોઈ છે.’ તે બોલી. તોડો અમારાથી ખાસો દુર હતો. છતાં ઝબૂકતો એ દીવો અમને સ્પષ્ટ દેખાતો હતો. અમે મૂંગા મૂંગા એ જોઈ રહ્યા. (Aashka Mandal, 400)

But next day the *todo* appears to be a ruin which has not been occupied for years. Bhatt takes up a remote location in vast open space, an element from the horror genre and puts it at the end of a thriller set in a desert, which helps in perpetuating the mystery of treasure and

Sharansinh's location. Plot taken from the war thriller is shaped according to the geography and local culture.

This makes it distinct from the Maclean's war thrillers which almost took place at the boundary of human centres. Island of Kheros, remote Nazi army headquarter at the peak of mountain named Schloss Adler, even the AVO headquarter and cottage house of Jansci. These locations are isolated from human society and represent the marginalised and borderline status, literally and metaphorically, of the military and other armed forces. Bhatt imitates that idea by inventing or reimagining isolated locales, but maintains a connection with the mundane human activities.

However, the social context of the receiving system is more complex than of the source system. Indian is a multilingual and multicultural society whereas Britain is a monolingual, monotheistic society divided by parameters such as class. Indian society has added parameters of caste, regionalism, religion etc which further divides it. History of Gujarati literature indicates how literature, especially print, which had become a dominant medium in the twenty first century, was controlled by certain caste and class who had privileges over other strata of the society. Canonical writers like Govardhanram Tripathi (1855-1907), Zaverchand Meghani (1896-1947), Suresh Joshi (1921-1986) etc belong to higher caste in caste hierarchy. Ashwini Bhatt himself was part of the privileged strata, which raises the question of caste in his works.

Examining the historical context of Gujarati literature reveals that canonical writers like Govardhanram Tripathi, Zaverchand Meghani, and Suresh Joshi, who played instrumental roles in shaping the literary canon, belonged to higher castes in the caste hierarchy. This

underscores the dominance of upper castes in the literary establishment and their authority over the creation and dissemination of literature, including popular fiction.

Ashwini Bhatt, the translator in question, being part of the privileged strata further suggests that caste dynamics played a role in shaping the works produced. Bhatt's social position and associated privileges raise questions about caste in his works. It implies that the perspectives and themes explored in his translations may have been influenced by the sociocultural context of the upper castes.

However, it is important to note that the influence of caste politics on popular fiction in Gujarati literature does not necessarily imply that the readership was exclusively from the upper caste. The readership could have been diverse, comprising individuals from different castes and classes. Nevertheless, the control exerted by certain castes and classes within the literary establishment suggests that their perspectives and experiences may have been privileged and disproportionately represented in the popular fiction of that time.

In summary, it is evident that caste politics had an impact on the production, distribution, and themes of popular fiction in Gujarati literature, particularly in the realm of detective fiction. The dominance of specific castes and classes within the literary establishment raises questions regarding representation, access, and the potential limitations in reflecting the diverse experiences and perspectives of the broader society. It is crucial to critically analyze and engage with these dynamics to understand the broader sociocultural implications of popular fiction in the landscape of Gujarati literature.

As Bhatt recalls in a lecture, his favorite book in the childhood was ‘সাগরসম্রাট’, translation of Jules Verne’s *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, which was about using tools at the hand to revolt against the atrocities or discrimination. (Chitralkha) Bhatt visioned to be like Captain Nemo, protagonist of the novel, and even ran away from home to join the navy. This childhood incident suggests his choice for translating war thrillers was influenced by that childhood experience. Moreover, this set his ideology as a writer. His subject matters are around social, political or historical justice. They form the shape of exploration as in *Niraja Bhargav* (1979) or *Lajja Sanyal* (1979), or forms a mould for retelling as in *Othar* (1984) or *Aakhet* (1999).

Bhatt uses characters from high class and caste in his early novels. Lajja Sanyal is upper caste Bengali woman living in Mumbai and is a successful actress. Shailja is the wife of a very rich man. Chetan Bali is a station master and belongs to a high caste. Sigaval, and the other majority of characters in the same novel, belong to various royal families. They are shown as saviours of the victims who are either from the upper caste and class, or from newly risen middle class. This dynamic denotes that unprivileged castes need privileged castes to redeem them, at least in the early novels. This reinforces the dominant social position into popular culture. The tools for domination in a literary culture are many, in print media all the tools belonged to upper caste publishers in the form of magazines, newspapers and books. Even printing presses were mostly owned by members of this group.

Which helped in shaping the divide between oral and print literatures. Both literatures got an audience which consisted of different strata of the society. Print literature was mostly read by upper class and newly educated mass of middle class which had equal interest in the oral literature as well. This may be one of the reasons why Bhatt uses characters from certain classes and castes. As popular culture is made up of 'people', and here people consist of a certain class and caste, it seems a decision made under compulsion of ideology and identity as well as market. However, Bhatt's later novels show characters from various castes and classes taking centre stage, especially in novels like *Angaar* and *Aakhet*.

Bhatt's also takes questions of gender discrimination and tries to reimagine woman as powerful and active agents in the plot of the narrative instead of passive subordinates. MacLean has portrayed women in war novels very craftily, using the distinction of the gender, satisfying his male audience with scenes where male characters see them as sexual prey, and subverting it via giving women character an active role against it. Mary in the WED is a prime example of how MacLean uses this technique.

Mary, a spy and commando, is secretly hidden in the plane that deploys the commando team to rescue American general. She is the key to the main mission which is to identify traitors among the team. Another key role she has to play is to help Major Smith enter the Schloss Adler. She is not the part of the official team, which is a strategic decision as MacLean describes her as, "A girl quite small, with wide dark eyes and delicate features...she was almost numb with cold and cramp but the sergeant had his orders." (WED, 30) Then she literally follows the footsteps of the men in reaching the village. Once there she takes up a role designed by society, that of a waitress. Her act as Heidi's cousin doesn't raise any suspicion which is made possible through her gender and presumption about it in a patriarchal society. Heidi even

points out that to Mary, loudly as the staring soldiers can hear that, “*They are a pretty rough lot, hereabouts. You should carry a gun, always. Hunter battalion, they call themselves. They’re well named!*” (WED, 103)

This dialogue functions as a mirror to the position of women in a patriarchal society also while subverting the trope, as the idea of carrying a gun makes soldiers laugh, they are unaware that Mary and Heidi both are actually carrying guns. This under-commentary on gender roles shows MacLean’s take on gender. But he clearly sees them as part of the military force, where everything else is nothing against the mission objective. As Mary goes to Schloss Adler with Von Brauchitsch in cable car, she is asked if she is scared, and MacLean describes it with following dialogue,

‘No.’ *And she wasn’t. She hadn’t enough emotion left to be scared, but even with no hope left she was supposed to be professional.*’ (WED, 120) This emphasis on being ‘professional’ is a reflection of how a character describes Major Smith as ‘cold-blooded devil.’ (WED, 79) It is a common thread in MacLean’s novels. Military and ones who form it are shown to be incomprehensibly brave but also emotionless to be that much brave. As MacLean tries to put both genders into one role, that of a professional working towards an objective in the interest of the nation. This ideology seems to be brought into Gujarati culture as Bhatt translated it as, “મેરી ધંધાદારી વ્યક્તિ હતી. તેના ધંધામાં બીકને સ્થાન ન હતું.” (wed, 88) here, Mary is not called a woman but a ‘વ્યક્તિ’, a gender neutral word in the receiving language.

It is to be noted that women are still marginalised in the narrative except one or two plot-points. Bhatt also adopts it in the majority of his early novels. Interestingly all these novels

are titled on female characters. Bhatt even wrote his first novel from the perspective of a woman, *Lajja*. Which shows his efforts to bring female gender in the central role in the narrative. But largely women are sidelined in terms of power-dynamics as the story progresses. This can be due to the population of target readers, which consist of male more than female. There are counterexamples to this where narrative thread is controlled by women characters; for example, in *Niraja bhargav*, Chris is shown to be a powerful and professional woman who not only helps Chetan in getting back on the track but becomes important with her skills in the climax fight. In *Aashka Mandal* characters of Aashka and Shridevi are shown to be powerful and hold the key thread of the narrative.

Another compulsion which translators differ from ST is of narrative style. ST has a third person omniscient narrator while TT has detached observer narrator, who refrains himself from adding opinions and has restricted knowledge of characters. Bhatt's narrator seems to fit into this category which also makes sense when he shortens the descriptions of the action as well as the characters. The reason for choosing this narrative style can be the profession of the translator. Bhatt has practiced journalism in third person limited narration, appropriate for the medium. He has chosen the same while translating to give a sense of familiarity to readers, who read newspapers in similar narrative style. So, Style of TT serves as a tool to make the ST believable in the receiving literary system and culture.

Lefevere says that, "Producers of both refracted and original literature do not operate as automatons under the constraints of their time and location. They devise various strategies to live with these constraints, ranging hypothetically from full acceptance to full defiance." Bhatt had to employ certain strategies to accommodate TT into Gujarati literary system.

Lefevere points out four such strategies. In this case the third strategy seems most suitable which is, "one can integrate the new poetics into old one by translating its concepts into more familiar terminology of old poetics."

Bhatt has used 'popular heritage' of Gujarati fiction to accommodate *Guns of Navarone*, which being a military thriller, does not have a poetics in receiving culture due to its different cultural history. Gujarati culture has a history of small states coexisting in an interconnected political system sharing similar languages and culture codes. In contrast *Guns of Navarone* shows ideological and national formation of an army fighting against a different national army formed with different ideological codes. This difference may confuse a reader in perception of stakes and conflicts in the plot.

However, In the 1960s India had seen one war with a neighbour nation. Idea of Nationalism was in formation. So, Translation of such texts satisfied the curiosity of readers about national armies and modern warfare techniques. So, Military abbreviations in ST have been expanded in the TT for better understanding of such concepts. Such examples are:

A.A- anti aircraft

W/T- wireless transmission

M.T.B. - motor torpedo boat

It is to be noted that translator has retained SL nouns in TL script, which must be known to his readership once he expands the abbreviations. ST uses a military register, which makes ST a realistic military fiction. Maclean and his generation had to go to war. So, the Military register is known to his readership. Following passage shows that:

“They gave you clear weather?”

“Yeah. Clear weather. It was ten-tenths over the target, Torrance said bitterly. We had to go down to fifteen hundred. Not that.... clean off. Might as well have dropped a shower of leaflets asking them to “spike their own bloody guns.... Then they've got every second A.A. guns in the south of Europe concentrated along this narrow 50-degree vector — the only way you can approach the target.... even get half-way towards the harbour... They never had a chance.”

(GON 59)

Gujarati readership didn't have much military experience. So, translators have changed language style from formal instead of casual, with markers (with explanations) of military registers in TT. Translation of that passage:

'ધૂળ કહ્યું હતું...અરે અમારે અમારું નિશાન મેળવવા છેક પંદરસો ફૂટની ઉંચાઈએથી વિમાનો લાવવા પડ્યા. છેક દરિયા જેટલા નીચે ઉતાર્યા હોત તો પણ કશું વળત નહિ. એ ટેકરી એવી રીતે ઝુકેલી છે કે નિશાન પર બોમ્બ ફેંકી શકાય નહિ. (Bhatt 56)

This style helps the reader understand the stakes and dangers in the plot without knowing the military register. Also, this style seems to be translator's choice as experimental for selected translation. This style focuses on outer action instead of inner conflicts which becomes a marker in later thrillers written in the Gujarati.

Conclusion

In the initial exploration, the translation process reveals the challenges stemming from the disparity between the source and target systems. However, Bhatt efficiently overcomes

these hurdles by reimagining the geographical and cultural tapestry to align with the local context. By introducing secluded enclaves and incorporating elements of horror and mystery, Bhatt deftly maintains a connection to everyday human experiences while creating an aura of intrigue surroundings. Consequently, a notable departure emerges from Maclean's war thrillers, which predominantly unfold in peripheral human habitats. Bhatt orchestrates a theatrical interplay between the genres of thriller and native writing style within fictional world of the novels.

The intricate social fabric of the receiving system proves to be more complex than its source counterpart. India's multilingual and multicultural society starkly contrasts with Britain's monolingual and monotheistic milieu. The fault lines of class, caste, regionalism, and religion fragment the annals of Gujarati literature, revealing the dominance exerted by certain castes and classes, as exemplified by canonical writers like Govardhanram Tripathi, Zaverchand Meghani, and Suresh Joshi. It is worth noting that Bhatt himself hails from privileged echelons, prompting reflection on the role of caste within his literary corpus.

Insights into Bhatt's formative years shed light on his inclination to translate war thrillers, influenced by his fondness for Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. These recollections from Bhatt's early years illuminate his aspirations to emulate Captain Nemo, the esteemed protagonist of Verne's masterpiece, even leading him to contemplate joining the navy. This significant episode underscores the ideological foundations that permeate Bhatt's literary craftsmanship, manifesting as a steadfast commitment to themes revolving around social, political, and historical justice. These themes, in turn, shape his literary explorations evident in works such as *Niraja Bhargav*, *Lajja Sanyal*, *Othar*, and *Aakhet*.

Bhatt's early novels predominantly feature characters from privileged social strata, associated with high class and caste. Protagonists like Lajja Sanyal, Shailja, Chetan Bali, Sigaval, and many others belong to esteemed lineages, portrayed as saviours of victims from upper castes, the newly emerging middle class, or even royal lineages. This dynamic reinforces the prevailing social hierarchy within popular culture, a culture influenced by the privileged few who hold dominion over literary avenues such as print media. The tools of literary dominance, including magazines, newspapers, and books, predominantly belonged to the upper echelons of caste and class, extending even to the ownership of printing presses.

The war thriller genre in Gujarati literature is intricately intertwined with the prevailing social and cultural hierarchies in Gujarat and India. These hierarchies, marked by internal contradictions, shape the politics surrounding the genre and its role in the larger project of nation-building and collective imagination.

An analysis of Ashwini Bhatt's war thrillers reveals a prominent presence of characters from privileged social strata in his early novels. Protagonists like Lajja Sanyal, Shailja, Chetan Bali, and Sigaval come from esteemed lineages and are depicted as saviors of victims, particularly from upper castes, the emerging middle class, or even royal lineages. This dynamic reinforces the existing social hierarchy within popular culture, which is heavily influenced by the privileged few who hold sway over literary avenues, including print media.

The ownership and control of literary mediums, such as magazines, newspapers, and books, predominantly rest in the hands of the upper echelons of caste and class. This further solidifies their influence over the production and dissemination of literature. The ownership, combined with the prevalence of privileged protagonists, perpetuates the prevailing power structures within society and reinforces the notions of social superiority based on caste and class.

To comprehend the ideological limitations of the receptor system in Gujarati literature, insights from scholars like Benedict Anderson, Partha Chatterjee, and Meenakshi Mukherjee prove valuable. Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" sheds light on the construction of national identities through shared imagination. Within the context of Gujarati literature, the war thriller genre contributes to the imagining and construction of a nation by presenting heroic characters who uphold and reinforce the existing social order.

Chatterjee's work on nationalism and the postcolonial state adds to the analysis by highlighting how postcolonial states often adopt Western models of nationalism that may not fully encompass the complexities and diversity of local cultures and identities. In the case of Gujarati literature, the popularity of the war thriller genre may be constrained by the dominant caste and class perspectives that shape its narratives and themes. The influence of the privileged few who control literary avenues perpetuates the existing power dynamics, limiting the portrayal of alternative narratives and diverse experiences.

Mukherjee's exploration of gender and nation in the Indian novel provides further insights into the ideological constraints within the receptor system of Gujarati literature. By

examining how gender roles and identities are constructed in the war thriller genre, one can assess whether these representations reinforce patriarchal norms or challenge and subvert them. Such an analysis sheds light on how the genre contributes to the construction of national identity and whether it perpetuates or challenges existing gender hierarchies.

Thus, the politics surrounding the war thriller genre in Gujarati literature are closely intertwined with the social and cultural hierarchies prevalent in Gujarat and India. The privileged backgrounds of the protagonists and the dominance of certain castes and classes in the literary establishment reflect and reinforce the existing power structures. The theoretical frameworks provided by Anderson, Chatterjee, and Mukherjee aid in understanding the ideological constraints within the receptor system of Gujarati literature, encompassing issues of nationalism, power dynamics, and gender.

The division between oral and print literatures in Gujarat and India contributes to societal disparities and attracts distinct segments of society. The rise of print capitalism, as discussed by Benedict Anderson, has influenced the prevalence of print literature among the upper and newly educated middle classes. This historical context informs Ashwini Bhatt's incorporation of characters from these privileged classes and castes in his early novels.

Within the realm of popular culture, including literature, certain voices hold greater prominence, often belonging to specific castes and classes. This phenomenon is shaped by market pressures and ideological considerations that govern the production and consumption of literary works. As a writer operating within this system, Bhatt responds to these pressures

by introducing characters that resonate with the prevailing identities and ideologies of the target audience, ensuring commercial viability in the literary marketplace.

However, it is important to note that Bhatt's later works, such as *Angaar* and *Aakheth*, indicate a shift in his approach. These novels prominently feature characters from diverse castes and classes, granting them central roles within the narrative fabric. This shift reflects a conscious effort to present a more inclusive representation of society, acknowledging the need for broader social and cultural voices to be heard within popular fiction. The dynamics of print capitalism, as elucidated by Anderson, play a pivotal role in shaping the content and perspectives depicted in popular literature. The print medium, with its distribution networks and market forces, contributes to the formation and dissemination of dominant narratives and reinforces existing power structures. It is within this context that Bhatt's inclusion of characters from privileged castes and classes can be understood.

The influence of print capitalism, as discussed by Anderson, and the significance of specific castes and classes in the literary marketplace, as highlighted by Chatterjee, are important factors for comprehending the dynamics of popular fiction in Gujarat and India. Bhatt's incorporation of characters from privileged backgrounds in his early works reflects the impact of print capitalism and the imperative to cater to prevailing identities and ideologies. Nonetheless, his later works demonstrate a deliberate effort to embrace a more inclusive portrayal of society, recognizing the importance of diverse voices within the literary landscape shaped by print capitalism.

Furthermore, Bhatt endeavours to address issues of gender discrimination, striving to portray women as formidable agents actively shaping the trajectory of the narrative, rather than relegating them to passive subservience. In this regard, MacLean's masterly portrayal of women in war novels assumes significance, employing gender distinctions to satiate his male readership's desire for sensational encounters while simultaneously subverting these tropes by empowering female characters with active roles in countering objectification. Mary in *Where Eagles Dare* exemplifies this technique, concealed as a spy and commando clandestinely embedded within the rescue team's plane. She plays a pivotal role in the mission, tasked with identifying traitors and facilitating Major Smith's entry into Schloss Adler. Although not officially part of the team, her presence is deemed essential: "*A girl quite small, with wide dark eyes and delicate features...she was almost numb with cold and cramp, but the sergeant had his orders*" (MacLean, WED, 30). Mary traverses the path paved by her male counterparts, eventually assuming the guise of a waitress, a role bestowed upon her by societal norms, where her gender and presumed subservience in a patriarchal society evade suspicion. MacLean astutely employs dialogue to mirror the status of women within a patriarchal society, subtly undermining entrenched gender roles as Heidi advises Mary, loud enough for eavesdropping soldiers to hear, "*They are a pretty rough lot, hereabouts. You should carry a gun, always. Hunter battalion, they call themselves. They're well named!*" (MacLean, WED, 103).

Such dialogue serves as a dual commentary on gender dynamics while subverting established norms. The soldiers, unaware of Mary and Heidi's concealed firearms, dismiss the idea of women carrying guns, unknowingly undermining their own preconceived notions. Bhatt's translation reflects MacLean's gender role ideology within Gujarati culture, where Mary

is referred to not as a woman but as a 'વ્યક્તિ' (person), a gender-neutral term fitting for the target language.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that women, despite occupying central roles in one or two plot points, are often marginalized within the overarching narrative. Bhatt mirrors this tendency in the majority of his early novels, intriguingly titled after female characters. Notably, his debut work, *Lajja* adopts the perspective of a woman, evidencing his deliberate effort to elevate the female gender within the narrative. Yet, as the story unfolds, women are frequently relegated to the periphery of power dynamics, possibly influenced by the predominance of a male readership. Nevertheless, counterexamples exist, where female characters firmly grasp the narrative thread. *Niraja Bhargav* showcases Chris, a formidable and skilled woman who not only aids Chetan in reclaiming his path but also proves instrumental in the climactic showdown through her exceptional abilities. In *Aashka Mandal*, Aashka and Shridevi similarly wield power and hold pivotal roles, underscoring their agency and significance.

The representation of gender in both Western and Gujarati popular fiction, exhibits certain patterns and dynamics. It is important to analyze these representations in order to understand the portrayal of women within these narratives.

In the context of Ashwini Bhatt's early novels, women are often given central roles in one or two plot points, which initially suggests a potential focus on their experiences and perspectives. Bhatt intriguingly titles his works after female characters, indicating a deliberate

effort to elevate the female gender within the narrative. For instance, his debut novel, *Lajja*, adopts the perspective of a woman, signifying an intention to explore and amplify women's voices.

However, as the story progresses, women tend to be marginalized within the overarching narrative. They are frequently relegated to the periphery of power dynamics, possibly influenced by the predominance of a male readership. This indicates that despite the initial emphasis on female characters, the broader narrative structure tends to prioritize male experiences and perspectives.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that counterexamples exist within Bhatt's works. Characters like Chris in *Niraja Bhargav* and Aashka and Shridevi in *Aashka Mandal* firmly grasp the narrative thread and wield power. These female characters demonstrate agency and hold pivotal roles within the story, underscoring their significance and challenging traditional gender norms.

When examining the representation of gender in Western popular fiction, similar patterns can be observed, where women are often marginalized within the overarching narrative or relegated to supporting roles. This is reflective of broader gender dynamics and power structures within society. In both Western and Gujarati popular fiction, the representation of women can be influenced by various factors, including societal expectations, reader preferences, and market considerations. The predominance of a male readership in certain contexts can contribute to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and limited portrayals of women.

Overall, the representation of gender in popular fiction, whether Western or Gujarati, reveals complex dynamics. While women may initially be given central roles or perspectives, their overall position within the narrative can be marginalized or subordinated. However, there are instances where female characters defy these patterns and assume significant roles, showcasing agency and challenging traditional gender norms. It is essential to critically analyze these representations to promote more diverse and equitable portrayals of gender in popular fiction.

Another compelling aspect of the translation process pertains to the stylistic variations between the source and target texts. MacLean's use of a third-person omniscient narrator contrasts with Bhatt's adoption of a detached observer narrator in the translation. The latter refrains from interjecting personal opinions and possesses limited knowledge of the characters, aligning with Bhatt's journalistic background and catering to readers accustomed to narrative styles prevalent in newspapers. The stylistic choices in the target text serve as tools to render the source text believable within the receiving literary system and cultural milieu.

Lefevere's astute observations on strategies employed by producers of translated literature resonate with Bhatt's approach to assimilating war thrillers into the Gujarati literary system. Bhatt effectively integrates the poetics of the source texts into the existing literary framework by translating the concepts into familiar terminology. Leveraging the "popular heritage" of Gujarati fiction, Bhatt harmonizes the cultural histories of the source and target systems. Gujarati culture, characterized by interconnected political systems, shared languages, and cultural codes among small states, diverges from the ideological and national formation

depicted in *Guns of Navarone*. Bhatt's translation serves as a conduit for satisfying readers' curiosity regarding national armies and modern warfare techniques against the backdrop of an emerging nationalist sentiment in 1960s India. By expanding military abbreviations and providing explanatory markers, Bhatt enhances readers' comprehension of these concepts, bridging the gap between the source and target cultural contexts.

To summarize, Ashwini Bhatt's translation of war thrillers into Gujarati literature exemplifies the intricate and strategic nature of the translation process. Bhatt adeptly navigates cultural and linguistic disparities, reshaping geographical and cultural elements to resonate with the local context. He engages with social hierarchies, interrogating caste dynamics within his works. Influenced by childhood experiences and ideological leanings, Bhatt infuses his translations with themes of social, political, and historical justice. The portrayal of gender in both the source and target texts undergoes subtle transformations, reflecting the prevailing readership demographics. Bhatt's narrative style, rooted in his journalistic background, fosters familiarity among readers. By integrating the poetics of the source texts into the existing literary system, Bhatt successfully assimilates the war thrillers within Gujarati literature, appeasing readers' curiosity while ensuring the accessibility and viability of these translated works.