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## **Evolution of Spy Thriller Genre and the Works of Manohar Malgonkar and Robert Ludlum with Spy Genre**

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### **Abstract:**

In many ways, the spy genre is an attempt to disguise itself, much like the reality it portrays. More so than either of its forerunners, the espionage thriller was related to global political and social tensions when it first appeared in the early twentieth century (in its fully evolved form). In fact, unlike any other style, the espionage thriller met the demand to depict clandestine actions taken by government agencies. The study aims to demonstrate this by comparing and contrasting Manohar Malgonkar, an established and well-regarded Indian author, and Robert Ludlum, an American author of suspense novels. Manohar Malgonkar's literature has had a mixed response, which reveals a pervasive bias against spy fiction, a well-liked literary genre. It would be easy to demonstrate how popular espionage stories in movies have been, both with the general public and recently among scholars. Robert Ludlum provides his readers with an interpretation of their worldview through a gripping scenario in his thrillers. The story elements in Ludlum's novels make them relevant to the reader's daily life since they are clear and constant in their meanings.

**Keywords:** Thrillers, Conspiracy, Detective novel, Theatrical, Films, Mini-series, Fictional arm.

### **Review of Literature:**

G Macdonald (1997): The author of the research paper "Robert Ludlum: A Critical Companion," G. Macdonald, claims that there is more to the espionage thriller master's fiction than first appears. The serious themes that permeate the novels are revealed by Macdonald in *The Apocalypse Watch* (1995), including the importance of the individual in upholding democracy, the value of opposing viewpoints, the complete collapse of academic institutions to uphold ideals, the temptations of influence, the value of steadfast loyalty in the face of faceless institutions, and the nature of evil. She demonstrates how reading Ludlum's books can be helpful in understanding contemporary paranoia, including our dread of intrigues, terrorism, barbarity, and bigotry. An in-depth interview with Ludlum for this book sheds light on the impact on his writing, particularly his extensive theatre background, which has an impact on his sense of suspense, humor, and rhythm.

Tjandra, David Febrian (2012): In "Analysis of Suspense, Surprise and Plausibility in Robert Ludlum's 'The Bourne Identity'" David Febrian states that several talented filmmakers came together for the first Bourne film, which was helmed by Doug Liman, who had previously made hip, modestly sized character-driven films. Character actors Brian Cox and Chris Cooper pursue Matt Damon, who is flanked by art-house beauty Franka Potente (from *Lola Rennt*). All of it contributed to the film's potent "cachet." The plan was successful because both the crowd and critics gave the movie very positive reviews.

Ram Sewak Singh (1970): Ram Sewak Singh notes that Manohar Malgonkar's debut novel, *Distant Drum* (1960), was praised by Srinivas Iyengar as a book of extraordinary quality, and that the release of *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) by Manohar Malgonkar is a significant event in the history of Indo-Anglian writing. More positive critical attention has been given to subsequent novels than to early ones.

A. Padmanabhan (2002): Manohar Malgonkar (1913) is a writer, who could not enjoy much critical appreciation and not even been celebrated as a notable Indo-English novelist, according to A. Padmanabhan's study paper titled "The Fictional World of Manohar Malgonkar". Together, his main books and short stories show that he was a writer who was very interested in Indian social life. This book makes an effort to investigate how human interactions are handled

in Malgonkar's novels and to identify the psychological and sociological underpinnings of these relationships. Such a study is pertinent given the historical and societal focus of Indo-English fiction. It takes a quick look at the universe of his shorter work as well, and it is believed that this will be interesting to readers in general, researchers, and students of Indo-English fiction. Because some of the movements and beliefs that are illustrated in the novel are examined in the study, it may also be interesting to students of history, sociology, and even psychology.

Mayur Chhikara (2010): Mayur Chhikara examines the impact of history on the works of Manohar Malgonkar in particular, as well as those of his contemporaries and forebears, in "Novel as Contemporary Indian History - A Glimpse of Works by Manohar Malgonkar, His Contemporaries, and Precursors." The theoretical contents of literature are predominantly influenced by modern politics, religion, philosophy, and sociology. Current history has been a significant theme in Indian literature as well, either openly or implicitly, in the works of nearly all Indian writers. It has played a crucial role in their works' plots. The majority of Indian books have also been impacted by recent history.

### **Research Methodology**

The current proposed work employs analytical methods. It involves reading each writer's chosen works in great detail. Studying, interpreting, and evaluating the works they have chosen. Comparing the various themes and main characters of the two authors in relation to how they relate to the chosen areas. Knowing how these two writers use narrative in their work. Documentary sources are employed as the proposed technique of data collection in this study, which collects secondary data from a variety of sources. The usage of the thriller genre in the writings of two authors, Manohar Malgonkar and Robert Ludlum, is the foundation of the entire analysis of the current research project, which will focus on the authors' individual thrilling works. In this regard, analytical research is required. *Spy in Amber* and *Distant Drum*, two exciting novels by Malgonkar, should be analysed in the context of the suspense and thrill found in Robert Ludlum's writing. For this study, indexing journals, magazines, newspaper articles, online research, trips to digital and physical libraries, and conversations with peers and teachers are all undertaken. Analytical approach was used as the method for this research, together with advice from a guide for critical evaluation and comprehension of the situation.

## **Introduction**

The actual evolution of the spy genre started after the merger of the imperial adventure tales and detective & thriller novels. Both forms, which were responses to social pressure, first appeared in their proper forms in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. The espionage thriller, which debuted in the early 20th century (in its whole form), was more so than any of its forerunners connected to global political and social problems. In fact, more than any other genre, the espionage thriller filled a demand to depict clandestine actions taken by government agencies.

Although the plots and characters in modern American spy novels became more complex, the enemy largely remained the same. The glamorous settings of Europe and the wealthy Far East were replaced by Third World locales in Asia and Africa in these spy tales. In America, this genre of literature was moving toward a similar trend in realism—not only were the authors making their characters more human and the plotlines more plausible, they were also trying to portray the world of conspiracy with greater seriousness. In Britain, the James Bond stories started to be satirized, and writers like John le Carre implanted a cold dose of skepticism into their spy novels. I The examination of topical themes like "Terrorism" and the incorporation of historical figures and real-world events contributed to the sophistication of the modern espionage thriller.

The fact that an intriguing number of CIA veterans had created spy fiction was another element that helped to the formation of the modern spy novel. We might be able to anticipate more authenticity in the portrayal of the intelligence community as there seem to be more of these authors. It is vital to revisit the 1960s cold war espionage novels in order to comprehend how the current spy fiction emerged. E. Howard Hunt was one novelist penning espionage thrillers at the time who also had experience in intelligence. He created a number of novels that portrayed the cold war at the time.

Because espionage novels are frequently hybrids, we can claim that they give literary purists apoplexy. While dealing with international intrigue still sets spy novels apart from other popular genres, they frequently cross over into the realm of the detective story, or the love story, or the gangster book, or the treasure hunt tale. It is also asserted that reading 'thrillers' from the

teens and twenties is not necessary in order to comprehend contemporary detective fiction. Additionally, it has been found that espionage novels may keep you entertained for hours and occasionally contain hilarious or insightful commentary on human nature.

The organisation known as society gave birth to the espionage genre. Even when the mission is successful, the modern pattern in popular spy genre stories pits the lone agent against some powerful organisation, and the outcome is nearly always a compromised win for the spy or person. The secret agent has evolved into a neurotic, humanised, and reluctantly multi-dimensional hero. Even the most well-known spy, James Bond, comes to an end at this point. The spy is the system's steadfast pillar of conformity, occasionally showing signs of reluctance. The traditional espionage novel has always radiated this air of uncertainty and mystery. ' Not only have humans been replaced, but the previous values have also vanished, including the understanding of right and wrong. It might be challenging for the protagonist and the reader to distinguish between right and wrong in a good espionage story. The story of espionage is a suitable representation of the varied and kaleidoscopic sets of values present in modern society, where the boundaries between good and evil have mostly disappeared. In addition to being a guy with a pistol, the spy genre also promotes the worship of "holy violence." The best espionage novels are British in origin, but the American reading public made the genre extremely popular. The spy genre fulfilled a need for a purifying violence during the Cold War, an era of suppressed hostility. During the Cold War, a time of suppressed hatred, the spy genre supplied a demand for cleansing violence. It is undeniable that the Cold War gave birth to the spy fiction. Between the "hot conflicts" in Korea and Vietnam, between the years of 1905 and 1965, the espionage fiction flourished. The espionage fiction gradually entered what has been a steady era of decline with the escalation of genuine violence in Vietnam. Periods of overt antagonism and the bias of the American reading public appear to be directly correlated.

A successful style of contemporary art and popular culture uses the spy genre to tell stories of existential agony or thrillers with sex, violence, and revived mythology. The story of espionage shows a modern world full of betrayal in its infant microcosm. And it needs to be explained why a generation of readers choose a literary representation of their modern environment that reflects the ups and downs of interest in the espionage genre as displayed by the general reading public.

The detective/spy story – This form of detective/spy story is actually a variation on the detective story. It is a story of detection in which the adversaries or the main protagonists just so happen to be secret agents. The main issue with the spy/detective fiction is that it just uses espionage to further the plot and doesn't do enough to advance the spy genre. It belongs more appropriately to the detective story subgenus.

One of the most widely read types of fiction is the thriller. It has emerged as a well-liked literary genre since the beginning of time. Since the beginning of written writing, thousands of years ago, thrillers have been a favorite among readers. It has created its unique character in the realm of literature by adhering to a specific type of pattern. Traditionally, a thriller features heroic characters whose exploits have been turned into popular sagas. Thriller writing conventions have changed numerous times throughout history. However, from ancient to modern times, its fundamental idea has not changed. In a moral thriller, the heroes battle the villains and vanquish them in order to bring back prosperity and harmony to society. The modern thriller has often followed the same format. The plot, character development, concept, and technique have all seen significant alterations. These adjustments have been made in response to public demand in an effort to gain popularity. As a result, thrillers in the current day are increasingly fast-paced, unpredictable, suspenseful, and thrilling. Compared to the classic idea of a thriller as an action-packed hero morality tale, how we view thrillers has altered.

Traditionally, a thriller was thought of as an adventure story. The contemporary definition of genre, however, sees adventure and thrillers as two separate subgenres of fictional works. In a similar vein, even while suspense and enigma are crucial components of a suspense, they are also distinct subgenres of fictional works with their own conventions.

Robert Ludlum's writings are primarily in the suspense and thrill categories, and both historical and contemporary conspiracy theories commonly serve as inspiration. Between 300 million and 500 million copies of his books have been sold worldwide in around 40 different countries and 33 different languages. . Even though some people found his theories to be implausible and his writing style uninspiring, his fast-paced mix of global espionage, conspiracy, and mayhem was tremendously successful. Author of mysteries Robert Ludlum functioned as the fictitious representative of the globalization of American culture. His storytelling abilities were astounding. Robert Ludlum, a master storyteller, has a vibrant and

captivating imagination. Ludlum was heavily affected by conspiracies, both old and new, in many of his books. Transnational corporations, enigmatic armed forces, and governmental institutions all played a role in maintaining the status quo—if it was wicked—or undermining it—if it was law-abiding—in the world he depicted in his novels. Because he chose the espionage thriller genre, Ludlum was able to analyse both domestic and foreign political movements and play off competing political ideas.

Thriller has many subgenres, including Bio-Thriller, Crime-Thriller, Legal-Thriller, Spy-Thriller, Techno-Thriller, Medical-Thriller, Financial-Thriller, and more. These genres are all highly well-liked by modern readers.

### **Robert Ludlum**

James Matlock and John Tanner, two commoners from Robert Ludlum, are enlisted to help government officials. Jason Bourne is a licensed agent, but he no longer wants to be one. Although Bourne enjoys his calm existence as a family man and college professor, the issues of the world push him to act in order to defend his family. A Ludlum reader is quite unlikely to come across such vast plots as the Ludlum protagonists do. Through his familiarity with institutions, uncaring bureaucrats, betrayals, and worries of drugs and crime, the character can be related to by the reader on a different level. Life's difficulties cannot be avoided, and MacInnes, Gilman, and Ludlum urge their readers to contribute to the solution. Violence is required to solve the mystery for certain espionage thriller heroes, but for MacInnes, Gilman, and Ludlum, it is not always the best course of action. The writers mentioned above in the introduction noted that Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer is the best example of the older method. In a 1961 interview, Mickey Spillane once acknowledged that he had indulged in past slaughter and brutality. Violence-filled pages were one of his main objectives. When Mike Hammer learned that his lover was a murderess, he served as jury, judge, and executioner. Hammer does not think that society responds to a strict moral code, leaving the work to Hammer and his, claim one pair of detractors.

Yes, Jason Bourne in Ludlum's books kills a lot of bad guys. The bodies of antagonists are dumped on the streets of different European towns, Asian woods, and Caribbean beaches in a variety of different ways. Even Jason Bourne from Ludlum must be cruel if he wants to protect

his family and himself. He does not represent the higher law as a defender. In self-defense, James Matlock and John Tanner, both characters from Ludlum, kill an attacker. John Tanner and Jason Bourne's adversaries use surveillance technology as a weapon in Robert Ludlum's stories, but it is a persistent and determined spirit, not a complex device, that keeps them alive.

This essay aims to investigate Ludlum's talent and how, by exaggerating everything, he transformed the historically political spy thriller into pure escapism, which became the key to his success.

1. Thrillers go quickly because the protagonist is always in peril or at risk of danger. Some are written in a dense manner, and the combat may be more intellectual than physical, but their increasing intensity makes them gripping reads.
2. Each occupation's intricate nuances and lingo are essential, and they are included into the narrative without slowing down the pace. They provide the reader with an intimate look at that industry.
3. The plotline and the action produced by the carefully detailed narrative are the focal points of these cinematic stories. Hot news stories are regularly examined, and there is frequently a political structure with implications on the national or worldwide level. Here, conspiracies flourish. As a result of the protagonists' terrifying bodily and emotional dangers, violence or the fear of violence drives the plot forward.
4. Whether they are heroes or antiheroes, protagonists are typically compelling, sympathetic individuals. Less well formed and sometimes even caricatures are secondary characters. Because they are never sure who to trust in their realms of treachery and deception, protagonists frequently work alone.
5. Thrillers frequently have a grimy tone, and gritty details add to this atmosphere. Spoofs could have a softer but still ominous tone.
6. The jargon used by each trade is reflected in the language of thrillers. The writing can be serious and literary or more casual and conversational.

## **Manohar Malgonkar**

When thinking of critical works like Pater Wolfe's Graham Greene's *the Entertainer*, one can see how Malgonkar ties himself with narrative tailors and entertainers. Some of Greene's books were referred to as entertainments. For instance, *Brighten Rock* was once classified as entertainment when it was originally released. This kind of literature is known as a thriller in America. Malgonkar might have meant it when he said that he enjoys surprising twists because, aside from melodrama, the only stock device we see in his stories is "peripetia." Malgonkar's peripetia frequently manifests as an unexpected plot twist. Malgonkar excels as an entertainer because of his talent at developing the storyline of his book. The fortunes of one particular character are frequently the focus of the incidents. In *Bandicoot Run* and *The Garland Keepers*, where he uses the thriller mode, we see that all the incidents centre on a single character. Aside from a tight storyline and deft utilisation of peripetia well within plot, Malgonkar's thematic complexes in his novels are articulated in a way that is both racy and extremely restrained. Sometimes pictures seem to startle the reader in an effort to progressively draw him into the narrative. Malgonkar appears to be successful in obtaining objectivity, which enables him to evaluate his subject in a fair and objective manner. Malgonkar perfectly captures the mood and setting of every one of his stories, fusing it with character and action. Malgonkar's strength as a writer "lies in the understanding of his constraints and the integrity he carefully preserves in the use of his material," as G.s. Anur correctly notes.

In light of the aforementioned views, Malgonkar attempted to introduce a new genre to Indian-Fiction in English with *Combat of Shadows*. We discover that Malgonkar makes liberal use of this narrative genre, and *Bandicoot Run* and *The Garland Keeper* may be described as "Thrillers," which is what Greene refers to as amusement but is known as a "thriller" in America. One could argue that Malgonkar is the only current Indian novelist to have written Entertainment/Thriller with such a high level of finesse. As we've been saying throughout, Malgonkar's narrative immediately displays the genre's structural features and verbal effects. The distinctive elements of this subgenre first appeared in his work with the release of *Combat of Shadows*. These games include *Combat of Shadows*, *Bandicoot Run*, and *The Garland Keepers*. Malgonkar's success appears to refute Eliot's warning that "the modern thriller is in risk of becoming stereotypical."

Malgonkar adhered to the rules of the genre, which developed in the last part of the 19th century as a result of rife xenophobia. Compared to any other genre, this one is linked to social unrest and global politics. (Bloom 1990:1). He seemed to be familiar with the rules of the genre. For a large number of espionage novels that were produced in Europe, the Second World War and the Cold War had offered enough of subject matter and context.

By placing his book against the backdrop of the tense Indo-Pak relations, Malgonkar indigenizes it. The contents of a file that has disappeared are kept secret for at least three reasons, the first of which has to do with the demands made by the plot. The novel proper starts with a section of Indian military personnel feverishly searching for the file. In order for the plot of a spy thriller to be credible, the realistic mode must be used. The best writers in the genre have scrupulously adhered to this rule, as seen in Len Deighton's *The Ipcress File* (1962), where even the protagonist's name is kept a secret, and John le Carre's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1963), as well as *Tinker Tailor, Soldier, and the Spy Who Came in from the Cold*. The army personnel working covertly are compelled to enlist the aid of a former soldier, or "outsider," in this case "Kite" Nadkar, a guy who had grudgingly enlisted in the army.

Malgonkar must have been thinking about le Carre because, in *The Espionage Who Came in from the Cold*, le Carre reflected the misgivings and divisions of the cold war era by introducing moral ambiguity into the purely patriotic spy fiction (1963). Malgonkar deliberately protects himself against the likelihood that the book will degenerate into the kind of inane jingoism that such works are prone to by making Nadkar the protagonist. Additionally, this design gives the book a complexity that goes above and beyond what is typically found in subpar espionage thrillers.

Because it is an espionage thriller, the work must adhere to the convention of the genre, which is to generate excitement, which entails the suppression of information. This is the third reason. The genre uses a variety of techniques to generate tension, one of which is withholding some crucial information. An acknowledgment like this, however, leaves the argument in the article open to the charge that spy thrillers are formulaic.

The article emphasises that all fiction genres have faced this criticism (Nash 1990:3). This critique of the espionage thriller is representative of the criticisms of popular literature levelled by the canonical modernists who placed the highest value on originality. However, monotony has never been a drawback in a spy thriller, and this cynical viewpoint that emphasises

predictability eliminates the prospect of excitement. This is a commonly misinterpreted characteristic of a thriller that highlights a lack of knowledge among the critics who have failed to distinguish between a detective novel and a thriller, however, it must be noted that a detective novel may be considered to be "thrilling." While a thriller depends on the fulfilment of expected occurrences or lack thereof because both have the potential to produce the "thrill," a detective novel is restricted by the norms set by its genre and must therefore rely upon unpredictability.

The reader is sucked into a whirlwind of violent action as Malgonkar deftly develops the scenario, and the narrative takes on the typical raciness of a thriller. As the tale develops, the reader is made aware of a conspiracy that an Army General by the name of Behl, who is "working like a beaver to get rid of those who (stand) in his way of becoming the Chief," has instigated (Malgonkar 1982: 64). Behl is portrayed as a clever double-dealer who is more akin to a scheming politician than an army general. In a military takeover akin to those in Pakistan and Burma, the "insanely ambitious" man is "bent to take over the country's leadership" (Malgonkar 1982:16, 64). As is typical of thriller narrative conventions, the reader is only made aware of the information in the file that serves as the book's "objective correlative" at the book's conclusion. The "lost file" really contained some crucial data that could have created legal obstacles in the way of Behl's objectives (Malgonkar 1982: 190). Malgonkar introduces an organisation wrapped in secrecy to the realm of common knowledge—the kind of information that is not reported in the media—by employing a form associated with popular culture (Malgonkar 1982: 177). Regrettably, an industry with such much potential has yet to gain any recognition in Indian academics. Maybe the cause of this firmly held contempt is instructive. In other words, the syllabus for literature at most Indian institutions is made up of a corpus of books called the canon and a teaching strategy called progressive aesthetic response refining. The approach makes sense given the texts, and the selection of texts makes sense given the method, therefore the two components support one another. It is encouraging to see that two young authors, Mukul Deva (Lashkar [2008], Salim Must Die [2009], Tanzeem [2011]) and Shashi Warriar (Sniper [2000]), have started to weave the new ground in Indian fiction in English forged by Malgonkar, despite the fact that critical engagements with this literary genre are essentially nonexistent. One entrance point to place the Emergency within its larger geopolitical and historical settings of colonial authority, Partition, the Cold War, and India-Pakistan relations is Manohar Malgonkar's little-known, fast-paced, and extremely fascinating political spy thriller *The Garland Keepers*

(1980). An examination of the connection connecting genre and politics is made possible by paying attention to narrative structure and the multiple genealogies of the espionage thriller in India.

## **Conclusion**

Generally speaking, spy novels provide lessons in fact analysis, provide wonderful examples of crisp, succinct style, and represent societal concerns. It is clear why Malgonkar picked the spy genre in the end. The army operates as an institution in a totally secretive environment. The common argument that it is a "sensitive" sector and cannot be made accessible to the general public because it could endanger the security of the country validates the secrecy. As Malgonkar demonstrates, this veil of secrecy enables the personnel to become immune from any public responsibility, giving them free reign to plot and pursue self-serving goals while subordinating the interests of the country. Although the horrors that these authors represent as dangers to civilization may evolve with the times, their message and effects merit careful consideration. The protagonist being a regular person is the main device employed by Malgonkar and Ludlum. The reader can relate to the character's situation and put himself in the character's shoes. This is a better approach to understand the author's main point—that everyone has a role to play in finding solutions to the world's issues.

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