CHAPTER II

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Khushwant Singh was born at Hadali in West Punjab (now in Pakistan) on 2 February 1915. His father Sir Sobha Singh and mother Veeran Bai were associated with the building plan of the city of New Delhi. He received his education from the Modern School and St. Stephen's College, New Delhi and Government College, Lahore. He obtained his LL.B. degree from the King's College, London, and later was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple. He also worked as a Professor of Hindu Law and Jurisprudence for some time in Lahore, and practised as a lawyer in the Punjab High Court, Lahore, for eight years, from 1939 to 1947.

Khushwant Singh was a Visiting Professor at Swathmore College and at Princeton University in U.S.A. He also visited Rochester, Princeton, Hawaii, Oxford and Cambridge Universities. He joined Indian Ministry of External Affairs in 1947, and in 1948 was appointed as an Information Officer of the Government of India at Tronoto and Canada. It was in Canada that his literary efforts first appeared in the Canadian Forum in 1947. He became the Public Relations Officer for the High Commission of India in
the United Kingdom and the Indian Embassy in Ireland. He was the member of the Indian Delegation to the UNESCO's Sixth General Conference, held in Paris in 1954-56.


A versatile writer, Khushwant Singh has authored many novels, stories, articles and histories. He has written weekly columns entitled *With Malice Towards One And All, Gossip Sweet and Sour* and *This Above All* for dailies, Sunday magazines and journals. His achievements as a journalist, in fact, seem to have overshadowed his enviable reputation as a literary artist. He has been a member of Parliament for six years (1980-86).
Khushwant Singh has written three novels - *Train to Pakistan* (1956), *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (1959), and *Delhi* (1989), which have brought him name and fame. His first collection of short stories, *The Mark of Vishnu and Other Stories* (1950), largely based on his experiences in Lahore and Ottawa, was published by the Saturn Press in 1950. Since then he has not looked back and has authored several literary and non-literary works. He translated into English Rajendra Singh Bedi's Urdu novel "Ek Chadar Maili Si" as *I Take This Woman*. The minor fictional works of Khushwant Singh include: *A Bride for the Sahib and Other Stories* (1967), *The Portrait of Lady* (1950), *Posthumous* (1950), *Karma* (1950), and *The Riot* (1950), which were published together in *The Collected Short Stories* of Khushwant Singh in 1989. Some others were recently included in *Not a Nice Man to Know: The Best of Khushwant Singh* (1993).

Khushwant Singh has received a number of awards for his literary achievements. He was awarded the Padma Bhusan in 1975, and the same year the Punjab Government honoured him for his distinguished contribution to literature and journalism. His novel *Train to Pakistan* was awarded the Grove Press Award for being the best work of fiction. Singh received only last month the Mondello Prize, Italy's highest award for translation into Italian.

In order to understand Khushwant Singh as a writer properly a brief account of his life and literary career is
essential. His life and career can be divided into three periods. The first, from 1915 to 1947, comprises the childhood and student life in India and abroad and his departure to England in connection with his diplomatic assignment. The second period, which extends from 1948 to 1970, was spent intermittently in India and abroad. The third period, from 1971 to the present day, is the period of his more recent works and achievements.

Singh's parents migrated to Delhi along with his elder brother, and Khushwant was left with his grandmother, who was an extremely religious and doting lady and left indelible influence on him. Almost all the mothers and grandmothers in his fiction including major women characters like Sahbrai in *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*, the grandmother in the short story in *The Portrait of a Lady*, seem to be based on the novelist's mother. The author himself has admitted the story "The Portrait of A Lady" are modelled on his grandmother.

Since he spent most part of his childhood at Hadali, the place of his birth, its pastoral environment also influenced Singh to a great extent. As he himself asserts in *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*, it was "not only the source of life, but also their most exciting impact with nature".  

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Singh was escorted to the primary school by his grandmother regularly. While he learnt and studied the Gurumukhi Script, his grandmother read the scriptures in the nearby village temple. Since the classes ended before noon he had ample time to observe the village life at close quarters, and his pleasant memories are contained in short stories like "A Punjab Pastorale" and his novels *Train to Pakistan* and *Delhi*, in which the rustic life of Punjab has been depicted realistically.

While at the Modern School in Delhi, Singh dreaded the school and often bunked it. He was good neither at studies nor at games and barely scraped through his examinations. As he himself says, "the nine years at Modern School gave me examphobia which I have not overcome to this day." He was extremely glad when he passed his matriculation examination in 1930. Significantly enough, he has not created any memorable child character in any of his fictional writings.

Singh recalls a Sikh bride's abduction, who was carried away by a gang of decoits and was converted and married to a young Muslim soldier. No arrests were made on the complaints being lodged because most of the police were Muslims. These kinds of periodic incidents of loot, abduction and killing kept him in constant dread of his Muslim neighbours. Such incidents find expression in his novel *Delhi*, in which Ram Rakha's sister Lachmi is abducted.

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At St. Stephen's College, Singh was very happy. He used to attend the Bible classes which developed in him a flair for the English Language. He admits: "The Old Testament became my favourite reading — not because of its moral precepts but because of its sonorous language". The impact of the New Testament on his style of writing is quite obvious at places.

While at the college in Delhi, Singh came into contact with E.N. Mangal Rai, who was from a Christian family. Singh was much influenced by Mangal Rai's agnosticism. Singh claims in his autobiography: "Being an agnostic, I write a lot against conventional religiosity and the cult of goodman." Singh's agnosticism can be traced both in his novels and short stories — particularly "A Punjab Pastorale", "The Great Difference" and "The Mark of Vishnu". In his personal life, however, he is essentially a religious man. All the chief characters of his novels — Jugga in Train to Pakistan, Sabhrai in I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale, and the chief characters in Delhi, are true religious humanitarians. After completing his Intermediate from St. Stephen's, he joined Government College at Lahore, where he came into contact with Ahmad Shah Bokhari and other well-known writers such as Tahseer, Intiaz Ali Taj and Faiz Ahmad Faiz. In Delhi a number of fine Urdu poems are appropriately quoted.

4. Ibid., p. 17.
5. Ibid., p. 34.
After passing the Bachelor of Arts examination in the third division, Khushwant Singh opted for the King's College, London, for Bar-at-Law from the Inner Temple. While in London, he was seduced by a cunning and cautious lady teacher — the experience which opened "The Sexual Pandora Box". 6 Though he was overcome with a strong feeling of shame and revulsion along with the fear of sex, in his letter to a friend he created a world of fantasies about his amorous adventures with white girls. He continued, even in Delhi, his bragging of his sexploits, which he claims to be perhaps his "earliest foray into the world of fiction". 7 His characters like chisti in the short story "The Red Tie" and Jugga in Train to Pakistan also brag of their sexual exploits and experiences. Some of his women characters seem to have been portrayed after his Lady Teacher. Begum Sahiba and Kamala in Delhi and Champak in I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale are as cunning and cautious as she might have been.

While in London, Singh came across a Sikh girl, Kaval Malik (the daughter of Sir Teja and Lady Raj Malik) with whom he fell deeply in love. He courted her and finally married her on 30 October 1939. The same year he came to Punjab after obtaining the degree of law. He spent the War years in Lahore working as a lawyer and a part-time lecturer in the Law College. In Lahore he befriended Manzur Qadir, a person of an incredible ability and integrity, who

6. Ibid., p. 21.
7. Ibid., p. 22.
was like Singh, an agnostic and "rose to be Pakistan's foreign minister and chief justice". The legal profession gave Singh a discerning insight into complex human character. But soon he got bored with law and "turned to reading English poetry and classics, which I had ignored in my college days".9

Singh also had his share of sad memories from his childhood which continue to haunt him till to-day. The village Hadali, where he was born, was largely populated by Muslims who were proud of their martial traditions. Sikhs and Hindus on the contrary, were tradesmen and money-lenders. Singh writes: "The muslims relied on them for their supplies of tea, soft spices, vegetables and ready cash. They were usually indebted to us. If we refused to give them credit or became too insistent on being repaid, they thought nothing of instigating gangs of dacoits to teach us a lesson."10

Singh was a voracious reader, and this further sharpened his sensibilities. He witnessed the freedom movement and the traumatic turmoils of the partition days. He was forced to leave Lahore handing over the possession of his house to Manzur Qadir for safe-keeping. The horror tragedy of the partition played an important role in shaping the mind and career of Khushwant Singh.

8. Ibid., p. 25.
9. Ibid., p. 25.
The second period (1948-1970) relates to Singh's continuous quest for identity. This comprised various administrative and diplomatic assignments. He also began to write short stories for literary journals and cultivate writing and editing skills. It was in Canada that his literary efforts first appeared in print in the Canadian Forum, Saturday Night and Harpers. His transfer to London as the Press Attache and Public Relations Officer proved to be a turning point in his career. There he interacted with eminent journalists like Kingsley Martin, Harold Evans, William Clarke, and David Astor, and writers like C.P. Snow, and C.E.M. Joad and poets like W.H. Auden, Louis MacNiece and Dylan Thomas. Singh's first collection of short stories, The Mark of Vishnu and Other Stories (1950), published in London by Saturn Press, is largely based on his experiences in Lahore and Ottawa. Relinquishing his job in the Indian Foreign Service after four years in 1951, he seriously thought of taking up writing as a professional career. He thought: "If I want to become a writer, it had to be now or never ... The now or never became now. I put in my resignation in 1951 to try to make myself a writer".  

From now onwards Singh devoted his full time to writing in English. He chose to study his own people, the Sikhs. Singh writes about his decision:

My decision to become a writer was made by head and not the heart. The decision about

what I should write was equally unemotional .... I had a vast and unexplored field before me and I chose to make the history and religion of my own community my subject of study and purposed to confine even my fiction to the Sikhs and the Punjab. 12

Singh confined himself to the Punjab countryside, the urban Indo-Anglian Delhi and the Sikhs in his fictions. All the major characters of his fiction — Jugga in Train to Pakistan Sabhraii in I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale, Jaita Rangreta, Nihal Singh, Ram Rakha and the omnipotent narrator in Delhi are Sikhs.

Khushwant Singh returned to Delhi in the summer of 1951. He went off to Bhopal to start his work on his first novel — Mano Majra, which was later renamed as Train to Pakistan. This novel is the outcome of his personal experiences of partition. Singh writes:

It is a period of disillusionment --- the beliefs that I cherished all my life were shattered. I had believed in the innate of goodness of the common man. But the division of India had been accompanied by the most savage messacres known in the history of the country ---. I had believed that we Indians were Peace-loving and non-violent, that we were more concerned with the matters of the spirit, while the rest of the world was involved in the persuit of material things. After the experience of the autumn of 1947,

I could no longer subscribe to these views. I became … an angry middle-aged man, who wanted to shout his disenchantment with the world ---. I decided to try my hand at writing.  

He worked on his first novel *Train to Pakistan* in Bhopal in the mornings and took long walks through the deep forests. He also feasted his eyes occasionally with the bird life on the lake. We have vivid descriptions of animals and birds in his novels. The draft of the novel was ready in three months. He also worked for a year or so with the All India Radio where he befriended Nirad C. Chaudhuri and Ruth Prawar Jhabwala. But he resigned his job to join the UNESCO in Paris. After working for a good few months, once more he got bored and quit this job. He moved near Houdun, a small town near London and started working on his second novel, *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* and finished the first draft in three months.

Back in India, he applied to the Aligarh Muslim University to sponsor him for a fellowship, and was commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation and the A.M.U. to write a history of the Sikhs in 1958. He completed in four years the two volumes of *A History of the Sikhs* (Vol. I in 1963, and Vol. II in 1966) and established his credentials as a scholar.

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Singh's interest in religion was aroused early in life as he was born in a highly religious God-fearing family. His characters in *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* bear testimony to the fact that he had studied different religions in detail. Though an agnostic, Singh began to study great works of various religions. He studied and attended the Bible classes. While working on the Sikh Scripture, he studied the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and varied holy books on Jainism, Buddhism and others. The author himself admits: "Islam was the last religion I turned to, largely to free myself of anti-Muslim prejudices which I had been instilled into me as a child". 15 His views on religion are unconventional. The views of the narrator in short stories "The Great Difference" and "The Punjab Pastorale" may be regarded as the novelist's own views. The author maintains that despite his avowed agnosticism, he continues to be obsessed by religion and gets emotionally moved by Keertan. His views on religion are contained in his essay "Need for a New Religion in India".

In the third period (from 1971 onwards), we find Singh in various roles. Since 1986 he has been leading a retired life, devoting himself to free-lance journalism and writing. All his accumulated experiences of twenty years or more have finally culminated into making of Khushwant Singh

as a novelist of considerable worth, as is proved by his recently published novel, *Delhi* (1989).

Singh's dedication to journalism and magazines marks his reputation as a journalist, editor and columnist. He was commissioned by *The New York Times* and *The Observer* (London). He remained the Chief Editor of *The Illustrated Weekly of India* for long ten years from 1969 to 1979. The success went to his head. He admits: "I became a name-dropper and arrogant. My nemesis came in 1979". 16 He had, in fact, become something of a "cult figure". 17 He has written for most national dailies and foreign journals. He edited *The National Herald* (1979-80), *The New Delhi* and finally *The Hindustan Times*. He has also been the consulting editor of Penguin Publishers of India.

Singh's latest novel *Delhi*, published in December 1989, took twenty-five years to complete. The book is ambitious in its concept: it is a vast landscape of history of the old and new Delhi. Singh puts an intricate mosaic of the story of Delhi from its earliest beginnings to the present times. He has spared no pains to give minute details of the city of Delhi, which Singh claims to have "constructed ... from record chronicled by eye-witnesses". 18

17. Ibid., p. 234.
As mentioned earlier, Khushwant Singh had his primary education in his village and was greatly influenced by his pious grandmother. The village atmosphere left an indelible impression on his mind.\textsuperscript{19} The village and rustic environmental image is re-created in his stories and novels. His mind and personality were later, however, gradually moulded by Western education and culture. Singh himself says: "I am the product of both East and West \textemdash I am, if I may coin the word an Orio-Occidental".\textsuperscript{20} He learnt sophistication from abroad, but he retained his Indian identity. Vasant A. Skahane very aptly comments:

The Punjab country-side; Urban Indo-Anglian Delhi; and the liberal, sophisticated city of London are the three most dominant influences on Khushwant Singh. Exposed as he has been to the ideas and attitudes of the West, Khushwant Singh is essentially an oriental who has retained his Indian self and individuality. Although he has admirably succeeded in maintaining his individuality, the journey of the spirit has not been without its travail. This process of attainment of selfhood is reflected in his literary career, and it is a ceaseless quest for identity through the medium of art.\textsuperscript{21}


\textsuperscript{21} Khushwant Singh, p. 19.
In fact, in Khushwant Singh there is a nice blend of values of the West and the East.

Since Khushwant Singh has always been a voracious reader, he has read extensively works by men of letters like Dickens, Thackeray, Hardy, Eliot, Hamingway and others. Just as these British and American writers have exposed the socio-political and cultural ills of the society of their times, so has Khushwant Singh done in his works. Like Thackeray's novels, Singh's short stories and novels are full of satirical shots aimed at the snobs of the society and its problems. Singh's art of the satirical portrayal may be seen at its best in the short stories "Mr. Kanjoos and The Great Miracle", "Rats and Cats in the House of Culture", "Man, How the Government of India Run!" and "The Voice of God". As in Dickens, the satire in "A Bride for the Sahib" is double-edged. The author hits simultaneously at the grafted manners of the Anglicized Indians and at the uncouth habits of Indians. Although we cannot claim that Dickens' writings influenced Singh's very much, the latter are full of life, commitments and spontaneity as those of Dickens. Regarding the influence of Dickens on Singh Shahane writes:

Dickens shows the artist's capacity for a satirical rapier thrust, a profound irony and an abandoned sense of virile humour. Though Singh does not have the Dickensian touch, or the characteristic Dickens' sense of the largeness of life, he has other impressive
qualities, particularly the ability to present a situation with down-to-earth worldliness and to reveal the tragic in the actualities of life.  

Singh might have been influenced by the O'Henry and Maugham as well. Singh's short stories such as "The Convert", "The Morning After the Night Before" and "The Rape" have the shocking and surprising endings. These stories aim at creating a single effect on the sensibility of the reader and thus conform to the basic element of the form practised by Somerset Maugham.

Singh's favourite English writers are Oscar Wilde, Dylan Thomas and Aldous Huxley. When Singh was asked about his favourite books and favourite authors he answered:

I still prefer to read classics including the Bible, Shakespeare, English and Urdu poetry. My favourite authors were Aldous Huxley and Evelyn Waugh.

Regarding Huxley, Singh writes: "Whenever any one asks me, who is the author who inspired you most? I answer without hesitation, Aldous Huxley".

The influence of Henry Fielding, D.H. Lawrence and E.M. Forster on Singh can also be traced - specially in the

22. Ibid., p. 83.


treatment of love and sex. The free and frank treatment of love in and outside marriage is found in all the novels of Singh. Fielding used satire for unfolding the realism of social life. In this respect Singh has an affinity with Fielding. As for his latest novel, Delhi, Singh admits to have been inspired to write it after reading the Yugoslav novelist Ivo Andic's noble prize winning novel The Bridge on the Drina.

Among Indian English writers, Singh admires Nirad C. Chaudhuri most. About Chaudhuri he writes:

No Indian has to this day handled the English language with greater skill; whatever he says is said with felicity and a witty turn of phrase. He [Chaudhuri] is the most quotable of Indian authors.  

Singh was an admirer of Saadat Hussan Munto and Munsi Prem Chand. He translated the story "Toba Tek Singh" written by Munto as "The Exchange of Lunatics". It is about a Punjabi Muslim who had a natural bent for erotic, which is also found in the works of Singh. In Delhi, for example, one session of sexual athletics is followed by another in the chapter on 'Bhagmāti', which becomes too vulgar and nauseating at times.

Khushwant Singh was also influenced by some Punjabi writers. He has quite a few things in common with

25. Ibid., pp. 81-82.
Amrita Pritam, Balwant Gargi, Gurudial Singh, Jaswant Singh Kanwal and Kartar Singh Duggal. Regarding the influence of his mother tongue on his writings, Singh says: "Although I spoke Punjabi as a child and have continued to speak and read it, I have used it to embellish my English — not the other way round". 26 Singh's use of the English language is realistic, down-to-earth idiom being transposed from Punjabi to English. For his realistic portrayal of characters and events, he has been described as India's Malcolm Muggeridge who holds nothing sacred.

The three most important influences on Khushwant Singh thus are Punjab's countryside where he spent his childhood, the cosmopolitan atmosphere of New Delhi, and the sophisticated city of London. These influences have already been mentioned earlier. The contemporary socio-political trends, tendencies and attitudes in India which contributed to the making of the novelist, may also be point out briefly. Singh deals with the contemporary themes in his novels. After World War II the situation became more horrible and grim because of the British cruelties and the desire of Indians for national freedom. India suffered a lot in the World War II because the Britishers had declared India a party in the War. As a result, the Japanese invaded India from the Eastern side. The political leaders of our country were extremely disappointed and their discontentment resulted

in the Quit India Movement. In 1943 West Bengal suffered a horrible famine and millions of people died of starvation. After a long struggle we got Independence in 1947. But the dawn of freedom brought with it the holocaust of the partition of the country. The partition which caused much blood-shed among the Hindus and the Muslims, left behind in the people's mind the heinous and loathsome memories of the spectacle. Khushwant Singh belongs to the generation of writers who were not acquainted with the freedom struggle merely through the books of history but were the eye-witnesses of the freedom struggle, Independence and its aftermath.

As a lawyer, Singh had to take up murder cases for investigation. In that connection he went to the countryside and saw the lives of the Punjab peasantry at first hand. He writes:

I made a point to visit sites where the murders had taken place, interview the person relatives. All this gave me some insight into the lives of the Punjab peasantry and exposure to the countryside. 27

It is natural that his portrayal of characters belonging to legal profession is based on his own experiences. In I shall Not Hear the Nightingale Buta Singh's views are his own. He himself claims: "It is a novel of tensions; it's basically

one family. I am the main character and therefore, I was more at ease with it. In *Train to Pakistan* Hukum Chand the magistrate, too, seems to air the views of the author. In *Delhi*, the narrator in the Chapter 'The Builders' is an honorary magistrate, who reflects Singh's views:

I was out of step with the times. I believed that British rule was good for India; We Indians never had and nor ever would be able to run an administration which was just and fair to all the communities ---. I persisted in my belief that the English would stay in India as rulers in my life time. I had eaten their salt and was not going to betray them.

Thus Singh's legal profession extended his knowledge of human nature and made him see men and life in the raw bereft of all external embellishments. His early short stories contributed to foreign magazines are the products of real experiences gleaned by him during his "briefless days as lawyer in Lahore".

Singh took up the diplomatic assignment in free India. His experience as a diplomat in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs brought him closer to the British ways

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of life. He came to believe that if India should have been subjected to any foreign domination, it were better British than any other. Britain had created an efficient, though costly, administration system and an effective reign of law which had given security to property and life. It was, again, as a diplomat and the Press Attache that he came across a variety of people, ranging from the lowest to the highest and the meanest. The diplomatic service also gave him knowledge of the duplicity, sham and hypocrisy of human character at all levels. The innumerable luncheons, cocktail parties and receptions provided him with the raw material for portrayal of characters like Mr. Towers in "The Interview", Mr. and Mrs. Kanjoos in "Mr. Kanjoos and the Great Miracle", Mr. Singh in "Mr. Singh and the Colour Bar" and Mr. Banerjee in "Black Jasmine". His first collection of short stories The Mark of Vishnu and Other Stories was largely based on his personal experiences in Lohore and Ottawa.

In the portrayal of characters such as Taylors in I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale, Mr. Dyson and Mr. Tyson in "The Memsahib of Mandla" and "India is a strange country" respectively, we find Singh to be impartial. It is because he lived amongst them and found that not all British Civil Officers in India were cruel. They were quite human and helpful to Indians. Regarding his great attachment for English, the author told Atma Ram:
I am an anglophile. Despite our experiences of British Imperialism and racial attitudes towards Indian in India, my many long years in England made me fall in love with the English.  

Singh is impartial in his treatment towards both the Englishmen and the Indians. He has treated the contemporary life without any exaggeration. As a true realist, he has depicted the picture of various classes of society faithfully.

The period between 1942-1943 was of great political unrest in India, and Singh did not remain untouched by it. His novel *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (1959), which portrays the life of a sikh family during the pre-independent India, is set against the decaying power of the British Raj in Punjab during the period April 1942 to April 1943. Singh concentrates on inner tensions and external movements of an upper middle-class sikh family in Punjab.

After a long freedom struggle under the leadership of Gandhi, India became free on 15 August 1947. The freedom, however, ushered in a state of severe psychic and physical trauma, turmoil, displacement, dispossession and disappointment unleashed by the way freedom was won. The problems were forced and tribulations undergone by the people as victims of the bagaries of political change.

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Singh's first novel, *Train to Pakistan* (1956), is primarily a grim story of individuals and communities caught in the maelstrom of partition of India. *Train to Pakistan* is the first novel in English on the theme of partition, though a number of novels have since been written on the same theme by Kartar Singh Duggal (*Twice Born Twice Dead*, 1979), Raj Gill (*The Rape*, 1979), H.S. Gill (*Ashes and Petals*, 1974) and others. Through his fiction, Singh has tried to expose the sordid realities of Indian life. Harish Raizada aptly remarks:

If *Kanthapura* was the microcosm of the national upsurge in the country in the twenties, *Mano Majra* became the microcosm of vivisects India. *Train to Pakistan* is, however, a classic in the Post-Independence Indian English fiction not only because of the bold, brutal and unrelenting realism with which it tears asunder the mask of hypocrisy and exposes the sordidness and savagery of human life, but also because of the author's optimistic and affirmative world-view that emerges from it his eduring faith in the value of love, loyalty and humanity and unconquerable spirit of man in the face of mighty forces of wickedness and savage cruelties.  

Khushwant Singh's forte is his daring spirit and enduring faith in love, loyalty and humanity.

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Khushwant Singh is deeply involved in the socio-political realities of his times. Commenting on this aspect of his fiction, Iyengar writes:

Khushwant Singh ... has succeeded through resolved limitation and rigorous selection in communicating to his readers a hint of grossness, ghastliness and total insanity of the two-nation theory and partition tragedy. The pity and the horror of it all! — and the novel adequately conveys them both. 33

Singh has surely his own identity and his own scale of values, with which he seeks to impress his readers. He realized that he had a talent for creative activity and that the wealth of varied experiences which was available to him could be transformed into a fictional world. His writings — specially his novels and short stories — exhibit an astonishing fluency, lucidity and narrative ability. An attempt will be made in the present work to evaluate in detail Singh's fictional world, social ethos, characters and other related issues.