CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

HIS BIRTH

Khushwant Singh was born in 1915 at Hadali in West Punjab, for sometime he worked as Professor of Law at Lahore Law College. He felt a sudden urge to throw away his Law books and the partition helped. Interestingly, Khushwant Singh did not become a full-time writer by choice, he had no such intention. The decision to write came to him only when he had found something compelling to write about. This was at the time of partition; he was greatly moved by the harrowing events during those turbulent days. His outlook to life underwent drastic change. He felt thoroughly disillusioned with the contemporary situations. As it was, his faith in the intrinsic nobility of mankind was completely shaken.

The beliefs that he had cherished all my life were shattered. He had believed in the innate goodness of the common man but the division of India had been accompanied by the most savage massacres known in the history of the country. He believed that the Indians were peace loving and non-violent; that they were involved concerned with the matters of the spirit, while the rest of the world was involved in the pursuit of material things.
After the experience of autumn of 1947, he could no longer subscribe to these views; he became an angry middle-aged man, who wanted to shout his disenchantment with the world. He decided to try his hand at writing.

Singh was a witness to the holocaust that followed in the wake of the partition of the country. It was indeed one of the bloodiest upheavals of history that claimed innumerable innocent lives and loss of property. The traumatic experience made Singh restive and in order to give vent to his feelings, he took to writing and hence Train to Pakistan. "The partition themes", writes Singh, "was born out of a sense of guilt that I had done nothing save the lives of innocent people and behaved like a coward." He reminds us of Joseph Conrad who as a young boy quit Poland, which was then under the oppressive rule of Russia, and who later on always carried a feeling of guilt having betrayed his country, by not coming to the rescue of his countrymen.

**HIS LITERARY CAREER AND LITERARY INFLUENCES**

Like Chaman Nahal, Khushwant Singh, has a first-hand experience of the horrors of the partition; there is a controlled tension in Nahal's narratives and it often reminds the reader of the 'The Grapes of Wrath'. Nahal's own envenomed memories as a victim of the partition have not, however, warped his sensibilities. 'Azadi' indeed lives at many levels-political, religious,
social, cultural, historical-and certain images haunt the reader. Manohar Malgonkar having been a high-ranking officer in uniform and a devoted scholar of history is a close observer of the nation's moods and hazards.

The novel that deals with the earliest dates is 'I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale'. It is a story of a Sikh family, in fact, a study of the Sikh psyche in its exposure to the British Administration, and the place of violence involved therein-i.e. The Sikh mind and the British Administration. The Sikh mind as it had come to be in the early forties. As a state of mind, colonization is an indigenous process released by external forces. Its resources lie deep in the minds of the rulers.

This impress of the colonizer that the native has received does not end with his formal emancipation. It lives on in his mind culture that which begins in the mind can end only in the mind. Caliban as he stands before Prospero now is neither that Caliban who met him for the first time, nor is that Caliban who drudged on burning with colonial hatred, but an entirely changed being. Now he is willing wise, disillusioned and repentant, not living in the present alone but looking to future.

As, that I will, and I will be hereafter and seek for grace, was thrice-double as was I. (The Tempest)
His permanent transformation symbolizes the permanence of the influence of colonization. Significance and need for violence get altered in course of the colonial process of social reform, mental training and revised standards for legitimizing violence. The mad frenzy of burning blazers and fur coats in bon fires should have no other justification. With a little more of the same consciousness Buta Singh allows his unflinching pride to yield place to ‘double-facedness’.

People like Buta Singh who had been proud of being servants of Her Britannic Majesty were made to feel apologetic and even ashamed of themselves. Loyalty became synonymous with servility, respect for the English officers synonymous with sycophancy...By many people, Buta Singh was described as double-faced any compromise in a situation like the one in which Buta Singh found himself would appear to unsympathetic people as double-faced. The colonial psychology was further complicated by the war to the colonial hatred’ was added the uncertainty that always comes in the wake of a calamity when the future of nations in the balance.

In the first few years, say, up to 1940 the distant view of the war more or less an enchantment to the view. Sitting in safe corners and coteries the gabs floated rumours like fairy tales of their invention about the science miracles of Germany. Hitler’s propaganda with the fulcrum of the Aryan superiority idea won much sympathy from the emotional ignorant. Gandhi’s
willingness to give all out support to the Allies of the British figured like another anigma, particularly when nations were falling one by one to the Nazi forces like 'house of cards' Gandhi's option seemed like betting on a lame horse.

There has been an astonishing flowering in Indian writings in English particularly in fiction – during the last two decades. A systematic and balanced account of the literature of this period is perhaps the need of the hour. Such an attempt has more than one justification. The contemporary evaluation has its own special appeal. A contemporary critic rise to what Matthew Arnold termed "The comprehension of his age", more effortlessly than his successors because he himself is part of the age. Prominent among the writers like Manohar Malgonker, Salman Rushdie, Mulk Raj Anand, and 'Temer Murari, Khushwant Singh began his literary career after independence. He was highly influenced with the historical myth of Indian cultural and its dignity. He is the true representative in the Indian History.

Singh is India's best-known writer and columnist. He begin a distinguish career as a journalist with All India Radio in 1951. He has been founder-editor of Yojna (1951-1953) and editor of the 'Illustrated Weekly of India' (1969-79) 'The National Herald' (1978-79) and the (1980-83). He has also had an extremely successfully as a writer with 'Hindustan Times' career a writer. He is also the author of several books, which include the

Khuswant Singh is the writer of India and Pakistan culture. He is highly influenced with the historical and cultural aspect of these countries. He portrays history as a living character, so I select his fictional works to evaluating the historical importance. He comments about his writings: “I had written a lot of short stories before I embarked on writing my first novel ‘Mano Majra’, better known by its later title ‘Train to Pakistan’. I had no idea how one wrote a novel. I did not think I had the stamina to write one.” He had no idea to depict the theme in his novel and lived through the civil strife that engulfed the whole of Northern India. Almost every other day of the spring to summer of 1947, we heard stories of massacre of Sikhs and
Hindus in villages of the Northwest Frontier Province an Rawalpindi and Campbellpur district; and of thousands of refugees trekking eastwards to areas where Hindus and Sikhs were in preponderances. When communal violence broke out by the sounds of the gunfire and mobs yelling; Allah-o-Akbar from the one side and Har Har Mahadev and Sat Sri Akal from the other side.

At the time the novel was taking nebulous shape he was in London. He decided to throw up his job and try to live by writing. He took himself off to the Italian lakes to put his ideas on the paper. He chooses the location for his novel, hamlet along the river Sutluj. In the novel ‘Delhi’ presents the ambitious chronicle covering history of its life more than eight hundred years. He declares: While the blood and flesh were “History provided me with the skeleton I covered it with flesh and injustice blood and lot of seminal fluid on to it. It took me twenty five years to do so.” certainly indispensable, the necessity of the making principal characters swim in the sea of semen, it is not quite clear. One finds oneself agreeing with the narrator’s friend, who justifiably asks him, “Do you have anything accept sex on your mind?”

**HISTORICAL EVENTS AND POLITICAL UPHEAVALS**

The years 1939 (the British had declared war on 1939) and 1940 were the years of stunning reversals, or say, whirlwind victories for Hitler. At
home, under the shadow of all out of a total war it became good season of a political lull, rumours and myth mongering among people who did not matter, those who mattered specially in politics and administration, preferred to stay cautiously lenient, like the collector Mr. Taylor, because now there was a greater need for mutual fellow feeling than sheer loyalty.

Other English officers had kept their distance from the Indians and set up the pattern of the rulers and the ruled. Taylor, on the other hand, met Indians as equals made friends with his subordinates, but also openly expressed his sympathies with Gandhi and Nehru. At first Buta Singh had looked upon Taylor's professions with suspicion. When he was convinced of the Englishman's sincerity, he began to look upon him as an oddity an oddity he respected and liked.

Buta Singh had earned his right had position by vigorously furthering war efforts which meant and money for the war. The collector assured Buta Singh, "Your excellent work in the collection of war funds and in recruiting soldiers will not go unrewarded. I will speak to the Commissioner. The first glimpse of improvement in the war situation was from Greece in November 1940. After the ten-year pact of Germany, Italy and Japan came in September, the first trial of Italian strength was repulsed by Greece. Greece then made several successful attacks. England continued to be struck by Blitz air attacks from Germany; the woes at the sea were more grievous. Yet
the spell of under helplessness seemed to have passed. Everyone was wakeful too the stress. It was a favourable factor that Japan did not begin its hostilities for one year after the November 1940 pack.

It was during this one year that Patrick Malligan the Superintendent of the Cellular Jail gave a talk to the convicts on the progress of the war. He says: British Army was immense, powerful, its resources inexhaustible, they had all the troops were needed for the growing appetite of the war, to fight in Europe and Africa and the Arab countries and to spare. And as almost as visible proof of that might, in January 1941, a whole company from a Scottish battalion arrived at Port Blair marching up to their camp to the music or bagpipes. The camp had been pitched halfway between Navy Bay and the Main jetty, in the grove of palms, a row of neat, individual huts for the officers, and another, longer row of clean white tents for the troops.

But when Japan declared war in December 1941, it snooped across several countries, coming nearer to Indian at every stride. The enemy from a thousand miles away had sprung into action Pearl Harbour as flattened, Indo-China, and Malaya. The Dutch East India, crumbled like mud houses in a monsoon floor and disappeared, leaving sad little heaps of unrecognizable debris and thick, oil bubbles on the surface.

On the whole, the year 1941 and 1942 were not so bad as the first two years of the war but neither were they so decisively lucky as to repel the
given, the impinging ethos cannot be overlooked, and certainly it was not conducive to terrorism, at least for two reasons.

1. The strength, confidence and sympathy that the British government had attained during the twenties and thirties and the sense of moral rectitude it had inculcated had almost obviated recalcitrantism. It was this time when, writes Singh, people prayed, “O Guru bless our sovereign and bless us their subjects o that we remain contented and happy”.

2. Gandhi adumbrated an antipode to terrorism for he had personally found that the later would not work. His substitute for terrorism and violence though often to a vast variety of interpretations was a forcible, perhaps, more powerful than violence itself.

Gandhi’s appearance, on the political scene, in fact, brought so many changes:

Things shad began to change. Gandhi had made loyalty to the British appear like disloyalty to one’s own country and traditions. Larger and larger numbers of Indians and begun to see Gandhi’s point of view. People like Buta Singh who had been proud of being servants of his Britannic Majesty were made to feel apologetic and even ashamed of themselves. Loyalty became synonymous with servility, respect for English officers synonymous
News of American and Russian victories also started arriving by the end of 1942. When aggression meets resistance and destruction mount. So 1942 was the bloodiest of the war year so far. To the common man, the war did not mean much, except for some rise in prices of consumer goods, a strict and well-run Rationing system to combat scarcity, a few ARP restrictions when a Japanese air attack was apprehended and day. For India the war drums were still distant. Entertainment and festivity ran as high as ever.

The cinema was crowded. Peasants who had turned up for the Baisakhi festival from neighboring villages were milling around the stalls selling soft drinks. Such was the scene at the cinema to which Madan had taken Beena and Sita. At Simla it was like a fashion parade where everyone was both the mannequin and the audience... Davicos Restaurant was jammed. The air was thick with cigar smoke, perfume and the smell of whiskey.²

The Japanese took even Rangoon, the bliss of ignorance was still unbroken: Rangoon? What did it matter? He had only a vague idea where Rangoon was. A city on the map, known for what? Rubies-rice? But what did make a deep impression on him was the way Mulligan seemed to have taken it.
No sensible man, not to speak of the exceptionally talented thoughtful novelists could really over look the factors and the circumstances where the colonial situation, the imposition of war and a sort of general drift towards violence were served as it were with the daily needs. Violence during these years was establishing not only as a reality to suppress a novelist by its immensity but was looming as a major force in all affairs of man. An author goes to the extent of saying that even our language of ordinary conversation is becoming violent.

It has to be noted with all this in view that the performance and omni presence of violence in its various forms is to be approached in the pages that follow. The Second World War that began in 1939 gave a keener edge to Gandhi's argument. Gandhiji stood by the British and their cause inspite of the doubt voiced by the working committee. The Congress protested by asking the British Government to declare its war aims in regard to democracy in so far as India was concerned. Gandhi appears to have had a full faith in the victory of the Allied and that he would then be in a better position to shame the British if they failed to accede to the aspirations of the freedom movement. It was against the backdrop of such consciousness that 'August Offer' of 1940 was rejected by the Congress and the civil disobedience movement was launched. Once again Jinnah erected the stumbling block.
The British had left Malaya and Burma, had certainly not in response to such slogans. Those who called on them to quit were now languishing in prison. The British would never quit a country just because a lot of them dressed in dhotis and white caps implored them to do so. The appeal could be regarded as either pathetic or indecorous, according to whether you were Indian or British. The British would give in only to force. If only the terrorist movement had gone on and had flared up as widely throughout the country as Gandhi’s non-violent agitation seemed to have done, this would have been the time for the final assault on the British, they would have needed just one last push. In Assam, he observed many of them had already begun evacuated their women and children. It was almost as tough the anticipated in last, unthinkable contingency-withdrawal from India:

The Indian National Army was a by-product of the Japanese activity. The Indian Captain made Brigadier in the Japanese Liberation Army (the name given to I M A in the novel), is a detestable specimen of those who went over to the side of the enemy. Debi Dayal had reason to hate the Brigadier and also to feel that the British were far better than the Japanese in so far as the future of Indian nationalism was concerned. The exodus from Burma after the fall of Rangoon, of which he himself was a part, convinced him so thoroughly that he decided to go to Calcutta to consult Basu about the further course of action. It is needless to say that violence was the chief
Muslims, and the Muslim League fixed upon 16th August 1946 as the day of “Direct Action.” On that day, while some of the supporters of the league contended themselves with demonstrations of a peaceful type, a rowdy section of Calcutta got completely out of control. A number of Hindu were killed and their houses and shops were looted and burnt. Soon the Hindus retaliated and for a number of days the streets of Calcutta were also a scene of communal riots of the worst type. Neither the League Ministry, nor the Governor and the Viceroy, who were ultimately responsible for laws and order, took adequate steps to stop the hideous violence that disgraced the name of the first city of Modern India. The tense atmosphere continued till 20th February 1947, when the British Government made and important announcement of the policy. It declared its intention to quit India by June 1948, and appointed Lord Mounbatten viceroy of India to arrange for the transfer of authority from British to Indian hands.

The Calcutta of the direct action is illustrated in the fact of Basu’s life and the Lahore direct action constitutes the atrocities done on the family of the Kerwards. The partition violence was neither sudden nor unforeseen, only the leaders blinded themselves to the writing on the wall. An article published in The Hindustan Times enunciates almost the same idea. At that time “Mountbatten task” was made all the more difficult in that the three men with whom he had to negotiate to resolve what were in effect
country. After all, mixed populations (Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christian, and so on) were more the norm than not in rural and urban India, making the very notion of two homelands, one with a Muslim majority and another with a Hindu majority, somewhat difficult to realize. Apparently the leadership expected what was euphemistically referred to as "an orderly exchange of population" in spite of the fact that the boundaries were officially announced on August 17, 1947, that is, after the actual transfer of power to the two successor states on August 14–15, 1947. Individuals, families, and communities that found themselves on the "wrong" side of the border were dispossessed of land and home, faced with the threat of bodily harm, spent months on the road and in refugee camps, and began the long process of resettlement. The place where the shock and disbelief first register, as do attempts to negotiate an impossible history of violence, is the literary text. This article attempts to introduce a literature that self-identifies with this traumatic historical experience. Partition literature is best contextualized by developments in two academic, disciplinary fields: history and literary criticism. Disciplinary history has only recently acknowledged the need for a social history of Partition and literary criticism has only recently expanded to allow for ways of discussing a traumatic literature other than the limiting one of "literariness." Thus the article attempts to interweave a discussion of Partition literature with a discussion of shifting critical approaches to it. By
represented, deployed and refashioned in the creation and contestation of nationalism?

To complicate the equation of "gender" and "woman," to offer a fuller account of the gendering of nationalism, I want to argue that it is imperative to examine the construction of both masculinity and femininity together in the articulation of cultural and national belonging in public and political discourse. Thus, while recent feminist work has argued that women become symbols of the nation in moments of ethnic conflict – not only in South Asia, but around the world –, I suggest that a new look at the narration of violence against men in the postcolonial Indian public sphere reveals that masculinity and men as gendered subjects can also become critical sites for the symbolization of nationality and belonging. While the violence perpetrated by men against women's bodies has received much attention, this essay deliberately focuses on the cultural representation of violence suffered by male bodies in the public sphere.

New directions in feminist studies have begun to take up this problem of rethinking masculinity, towards reconceptualizing the project and politics of feminist transformation. With the exception of Mrinalini Sinha's Colonial Masculinity, these studies explore new conversations and questions about the historical and cultural production of
masculinity in largely Euro-American contexts. For example, in his historical exploration of Euro-American conceptions of masculinity, Leo Brady has already illuminated how the ideal of European masculinity "has been shaped by the idea of the nation and citizenship." This piece seeks to pluralize this engagement, by exploring the question of masculinity and nationalism in decolonization and postcoloniality. In interrogating the slide from "gender" to "woman" by re-examining masculinity, I hope to, as Peter Hitchcock suggests about masculinity in a different context, "complicate our historical sense of the relationship between" gender and nation. Many scholars like Anne McClintock and Elleke Boehmer have suggested that in the nationalist scenario, women "are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation" while in contrast, men are "contiguous" with each other and with the national whole. However, in the literature of the 1947 Partition of India, it is notable that often, men become symbolic national icons; through their suffering masculinities, they index the violence of both colonialism and elite nationalism. In excavating then, the gendering of nationalism in the Indian public sphere post 1947 — in what I will call the postcolonial public sphere —, what one witnesses is an ambivalent, complex construction of both male as well as female subjects as
symbolic representatives of (ethnic) community and nationality. In particular, the literature that engages the history of decolonization, Partition and independence in India, deploys the gendered body, marked by ethnic difference, as the literal and symbolic site of national violence.

This literature, as a part of postcolonial public spheres that become increasingly transnational, articulates a critique of nationalism through the representation of violence and displacement experienced by its heterosexual male and female subjects, by the couple and the patriarchal family. In the process, these narratives make visible how both male and female bodies become sites subject to intimate violence and displacement. By showing how the state thus generates suffering citizens and resisting subjects, these cultural accounts reveal new contours of gendering that mark discourses of ethnic identity, nationalism, and postcolonial citizenship.

**INDIAN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AFTER INDEPENDENCE SUFFERING MASCU LINITIES**

The task of a critique of violence may be summarized as that of expounding its relation to law and justice. The common assumption for all of us, who begin, in the study of colonial and postcolonial culture, with the intolerable facts of global suffering and injustice, ought surely to be...that progress is an absolute necessity. On 21 March 2000 in the war torn state of
Kashmir, Islamic militants massacred 35 Sikh men from the village of Chitti Singhpora. It was Holi, the festival of colors. Militants with bright Holi colors on their faces wore Indian military uniforms, arrived in the village, told the villagers they were from the army, and dragged the Sikh men out of their houses on the pretext of an "identification parade." All the Sikh men, young and old, were lined up against two walls in the village, and then shot to death. Since the targeting and subsequent exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir, this was the first time the Sikh community was targeted and brutally massacred.

This incident immediately invoked the 1947 Partition of India: as one newspaper headline remarked, "Ghosts of Partition return to haunt Sikhs." Many of the Sikhs in the villages in Jammu and Kashmir were migrants from Pakistan who had been displaced during the Partition. The killing of the male members of the family also evoked Partition: once again, it left so many women without any traditional male support. Many women, young and old, were now faced with utter poverty, bereft of the breadwinners in the family. The Sikhs constitute only two per cent of the population in the valley (around 80,000), and this massacre in what has largely been a Hindu-Muslim conflict in Kashmir filled the Sikh survivors with terror. Kashmiri Sikhs were forced to contemplate an exodus similar to that of the Kashmiri
Pandits over the past decade – for many, a double displacement due to ethnic violence, once in 1947, and again, 53 years later in 2000.

This event is exemplary in many ways. Caught up in the midst of writing the cultural story of South Asian ethnic and national belongings after 1947, it brought home to me with indelible force and clarity how partition continues to haunt contemporary life in India -- not only for discourses that debate the place of religion in India, but also for the historical interpretation of justice and minority belonging, and for the tension-ridden struggle over the production of secular national culture in the subcontinent. After all, the militants chose, not Christians, Parsis, Tibetans, or other minorities in Kashmir as targets: they targeted Sikhs – Sikh men, as if re-iterating the violence of 1947. Furthermore, the narrativization of this massacre in public culture made visible how it is to partition that we often turn, even today, as an evocative repository of the meanings, metaphors, and conceptions of contemporary ethnic belonging in South Asia. This gendered ethnic violence, like the violent demolition of the Babri Masjid, is a crisis that refracts the ethnicization of territory and national belonging that have marked the checkered history of secularism in the subcontinent.

The decolonization of India in 1947 was accompanied by its partition into two nations, India and Pakistan along religious lines. This partition granted Independence to a supposedly Hindu India, and created a new nation
Pakistan to be predominantly populated by Muslims. What made this simultaneous partition and independence a singular event was the large scale ethnic violence and mass migration that accompanied it: in the nine months between August 1947 and the spring of the following year, by unofficial counts, at least 18 million people - Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims - were forced to flee their homes and became refugees; at least a million were killed in ethnic violence. Many of these refugees eventually migrated to the UK and the US. A singular feature of this violence was the large-scale abduction of over 120,000 women by men from the other community. Thus, freedom was accompanied by traumatic loss, nations gained through homes lost forever for millions. Despite the scale and nature of violence involved in this partition, making it one of the most violent events in the history of nation-formation, and indeed the world's biggest mass migration in under nine months, very little attention has been paid to the critical impact of this violence and mass migration on the discourses of national belonging and citizenship in South Asian public spheres. Unmemorialized institutionally, the collective memory and cultural effects of the 1947 violence and migration can be apprehended in their imaginative inscription in the literature and film that inhabit the public sphere. In particular, this public sphere archive illuminates the contours of the complex relationships amongst rhetorics of masculinity and femininity in nationalist violence.
civil war, fascism, or ethnic cleansing) that marks the life of nations in the modern world.

**SECULAR MASCULINITIES**

Salman Rushdie's novel Midnight's Children (1981) was, apart from Anita Desai's 'Clear Light of Day' (1980), one of the first South Asian novels in English that returned to the question of nation formation and partition after a long silence in the South Asian public sphere. Furthermore, this turn to re-considering 1947 emerged in the South Asian Diaspora, and after Partition had largely disappeared from discussion in public life in India for over a decade. Thus, Rushdie's return to the meaning and effects of partition marks the Diaspora return to questions about national history and memory, a turn paralleled by subsequent work in the late twentieth century by film-makers, Subaltern Studies historians and anthropologists on partition. The novel is particularly interesting for its representation of the violence suffered by male bodies in postcolonial India and its relationship to the history and legacy of the Partition.

In 'Midnight's Children', the story of the male narrator Saleem Sinai, "buffeted by too much history," becomes an allegory of the divided Indian subcontinent. Midnight's Children is about the one thousand and one children born in India in the novel at precisely the moment India gained
independence from British colonialism, and became a nation-state. The protagonist and narrator Saleem Sinai is one of the five hundred and thirty-one children who survive adolescence, and so symbolize the post-independence generation. When Saleem is born at midnight on August 14, 1947, newspapers designate Saleem as 'MIDNIGHT'S CHILD' and "the Happy Child of that glorious Hour," and a personal letter from the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru also claims him as the representative citizen of the new nation:

Dear Baby Saleem, My belated congratulations on the happy accident of your moment of birth! You are the newest bearer of the ancient fate of India, which is also eternally young. We shall be watching over your life with the closest attention; it will be, in a sense, the mirror of our own.  

Nehru's congratulatory note and its eventual tragic denouement emblematize the complex, collusive and conflicted relations between the nation form and the everyday life of its citizens. The nation's address to Saleem in this note not only writes him as the nation's present and its representative citizen, but also subjects him to the disciplining scrutiny of the nation-state apparatus as its pedagogical object.

If, in contemporary postcolonial literature, suffering secular masculinities that represent the nation are often urban and middle-class, the
2002 mass media representation of the Sikh male villagers shot in Kashmir evoked earlier popular cultural accounts of the partition. In the early national period in India immediately after 1947, considerable partition literature constructed the male peasant as secular hero and suffering citizen in the new nation. Singh's novel 'Train to Pakistan' (1956) is a prize-winning novel from the early national period about how partition violence in different parts of India eventually creeps into the once syncretic village community, an oasis of peace – Mano Majra, a small village near the Indo-Pakistan border, Mano Majra's seventy families include one Hindu (a moneylender Lala Ram Lal), and about an equal number of Sikh and Muslim families. The Sikhs are largely landowners and the Muslims are tenants who shared the tilling of the land. The novel's melodramatic plot centers on the forbidden inter-ethnic romance of Juggut Singh, a Sikh ruffian, and Nooran, a young woman who is Muslim. Set in the summer of 1947, the novel describes Mano Majra as initially untouched by the partition, its harmonious everyday life regulated by the rhythms of the trains that rattle across the nearby river bridge. When, in this peaceful haven, some thieves murder the moneylender, suspicion falls on Juggut Singh who is a known village thief. In the meantime, even as a Western-educated Communist political worker Iqbal arrives in the village to preach class struggle and communal harmony, a train from Pakistan comes over the bridge at an unusual time and the
villagers discover it is full of dead Sikhs. When the same thing happens a few days later and another train carrying dead Sikhs arrives, the village becomes a site of ethnic violence and forced migration.

'Train to Pakistan' makes visible how, locally and individually, the villagers begin to rearticulate their identities and alliances following the advent of the trains laden with dead Sikh bodies and of the Sikh refugees from Pakistan. From being unified as an old, rural community of Mano Majrans, they now become polarized into new ethnic groups – Hindus and Sikhs vs. Muslims – in an abstract nation. When their desire for revenge violence is questioned, "what have the Muslims of this village done?" (My emphasis), many, from native Sikh Mano Majrans to the local sub-inspector say, "They are Muslims." Thus, neighbours are marked ethnically, and in that process, othered – a familiar story of many other global scenes of ethnic violence.

In the end, events proceed very dramatically: as Hukum Chand (the magistrate newly arrived in Mano Majra "to maintain the peace") has planned, the Muslims of Mano Majra are forced to leave the village. They are evacuated first to a refugee camp in a nearby town Chundunnugger, and then to Pakistan by train, with only as many belongings as they can carry in hand. Their property is ransacked and taken over by local dacoits and Sikh refugees from Pakistan that had taken shelter in the village. Finally, these
same people hatch a plot to kill as many Muslims as they can when the train carrying the Muslim refugees from the Chundunnugger camp passes through Mano Majra's railway station. Refugee trains at this time overflowed with passengers, with people traveling even on the rooftops of the trains, as the compartments were overcrowded. Their plan was to stretch a strong rope across the span of the bridge, a foot above the height of the funnel of the engine, such that when the train passes under it, it will sweep off all the people (at least five hundred) sitting on the roof of the train. The plan is foiled when Jugga uncovers it, and discovers that his beloved Nooran (who, unbeknownst to him, is pregnant with his child) is on that same train. He heroically cuts off the rope just as the train arrives; wounded, he falls and is crushed under the train even as it passes on safely to Pakistan. Jugga's love for his departing Muslim beloved saves the lives of hundreds of refugees. The novel thus valorizes heroic inter-ethnic love, and envisions it as the only redemptive force in the midst of this senseless violence.

On the one hand, 'Train to Pakistan' registers the rhetoric of avenging women's dishonour that many men from both communities voiced at this time. The conversation between the sub-inspector at Mano Majra and the magistrate Hukum Chand early on, when Chand arrives there, is pertinent. As government employees, both are responsible for maintaining law and order; Chand is expressly sent to the district for this purpose. However, the
conversation between them sheds light on a much regretted but underplayed aspect of partition violence: that despite the purported official condemnation of the violence on the part of both, the Indian and the Pakistani states, the workers and officials that constituted the state apparatus were not always neutral or secular. In fact, they often deployed their position as state officials and representatives to engineer communal violence and displace people from the other community. The sub-inspector says, "Sometimes Sir, one cannot restrain oneself. What do the Gandhi caps in Delhi know about the Punjab? What is happening on the other side in Pakistan does not matter to them. They have not lost their homes and belongings; they haven't had their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters raped and murdered in the street." Like the "Gandhi caps" or nationalist politicians he is criticizing, the sub-inspector has not lost his home or belongings, seen his wife, sister or daughter raped and murdered in the street either. On the other hand then, this scene also makes visible the distance and dissonance between elite, secular nationalist politics, and the alienated, resentful actors in the state apparatus entrusted to translate that secular national vision into reality – actors voicing popular communalist rhetoric and for whom local, ethnic, class, and caste affiliations were often more compelling than the imagined nation. To the sub-inspector's outburst Hukum Chand responds, "I know it all. Our Hindu women [...]" so pure that they would rather commit suicide
than let a stranger touch them." Chand’s response not only erases from the ethnic community the presence of the raped Hindu woman, but also endorses the contemporaneous popular ideology, voiced momentarily even by Gandhi, of suicide as the only option for women raped, or about to be raped. Chand thus not only reinforces the common Hindu nationalist rhetoric about women's purity and defilement, but also locks the 'Hindu woman' into a discourse where sexual violence is a form of 'dishonor:' a dishonoring which amounts to social death, and therefore supposedly makes the very victim – the woman – of that violence desire physical death. The novel's structure reinforces this symbolic violence to the figure of the 'Hindu woman:' the Hindu and Sikh women who are raped die in the novel's account. In contrast, both the Muslim women—Nooran and Haseena Begum, who have sexual relations with non-Muslim men-Juggut Singh and Chand—do not die, but migrate to Pakistan – their troubling bodies banished beyond the Indian national border. In addition, Nooran, the new Muslim citizen of the incipient nation Pakistan is pregnant with a child fathered by a Sikh.

Hukum Chand's machinations to displace Muslim Mano Majrans and his relationship with Haseena Begum (a Muslim child prostitute) both reveal Chand to be a corrupt bureaucrat. He rationalizes away his misgivings about her age, because she has been procured for him at his own behest. He reminisces that she reminds him of his daughter, and then deliberately
dismisses those thoughts to proceed to have sexual relations with her. Later, he realizes that he has developed feelings for this girl, whom he had sent away to Chundunnugger after a couple of days with her in Mano Majra: "No fool like an old fool.' It was bad enough for a married man in his fifties to go picking up women. To get emotionally involved with a girl young enough to be his daughter and a Muslim prostitute at that! That was too simple ludicrous. He must be losing his grip on things. He was getting senile and stupid." 6 It is when he realizes that as per his own plans, she was being evacuated along with all the Muslims in the district to Pakistan, that Chand seems to regret his actions:

Why had he let the girl go back to Chundunnugger? Why? He asked himself, hitting his forehead with his fist. If only she were here in the rest house with him, he would not bother if the rest of the world went to hell. But she was not here; she was in the train. He could hear its rumble. Hukum Chand slid off his chair, covered his face with his arms and started to cry. Then he raised his face to the sky and began to pray. 7

Thus, the end of the novel redeems Hukum Chand's communalist acts through his realization of his 'feelings' for the Muslim girl sex worker. In other words, his sentimentality about the Muslim sex-worker and refugee mitigates his communalist sentiments. In doing so, the novel criticizes communalist ideology, but fails to challenge the production of women as
sexual objects and cultural symbols that grounds ethnic sexual violence. Ultimately, the novel's ambivalence towards Chand perhaps exemplifies the middle-class sentiment about communal violence in this moment: the narrator both embraces Chand's criticism of nationalist politicians and the price that ordinary Indians paid for their so called freedom and tryst with destiny, as well as reveals Chand to be a communalist, mean, and corrupt state representative who engineers the destruction of Mano Majra's peace. In this ambivalence, where Chand is almost but not quite a hero or a villain, the novel articulates the middle-classes' ambivalence towards communalism—and consequent complicity with its ethnic violence—at this time. It is this ambivalence that becomes the condition of possibility for the resurgence of Hindu ethnic nationalism in contemporary India; in a sense, the bureaucrat Chand prefigures the current popular heroicization of militant, middle-class, status, Hindu masculinities in transnational Indian public spheres as also uncovered in Anand Patwardhan's critical documentary 'Father, Son and the Holy War' (1994). Here also lies the novel's failure in transcending and envisioning a beyond to the patriarchal and communalist discourses of its time.

It is notable that all the inter-ethnic sexual relationships that appear in the novel are between Sikh/Hindu men and Muslim women. Nowhere is the Muslim man a figure of embodied masculinity and heroism, involved with a
non-Muslim woman. The Muslim woman here is represented through the paradigmatic opposition of either girl-whore (Haseena Begum) or mother (Nooran). Nooran's pregnant body carrying the product of Sikh-Muslim love becomes symbolic not only of the birth of the Pakistani nation, but also suggestive of the impurity of ethnic and national identities. At the same time, this birth of the Pakistani nation is inscribed as symbolically enabled through the violent sacrifice of Jugga's strong, potent, masculine, and heroic body – the Sikh male body. Jugga's wounded, peasant body becomes an embodiment of both the region of Punjab and the secular Indian nation. Simultaneously however, this embodiment of true India becomes a victim of nationalist politics and its failures. Thus, in the epic romance of this novel, it is the sincere, secular, male peasant who is both victim and authentic representative of true India. In other words, through the performativity of sexed masculine identities, reinforcing codes of chivalrous masculinity, the novel produces Jugga as both secular hero and victim of the nation. The violence to the heterosexual male citizen's body thus becomes the evidence of the failure of the Indian nation-state as a utopian site for granting freedom from colonial violence, and the failure of nationalist politics, in much contemporary literature. Like Saleem in Midnight's Children later, Jugga embodies a secular Indian nationalism. But if Saleem is an urban mirror-citizen of the nation and of 'the great Indian middle class,' Jugga as a secular
peasant hero typifies the critical representation of national citizenship and it’s suffering in the early years of Indian independence.

‘Train to Pakistan’ draws upon a familiar motif of epic romance: the lover takes care of the beloved, at the cost of his life. Jugga’s secular love, transcending communalism, is banished from the structural-symbolic world of nations secured through ethnic difference in this novel; yet, Jugga’s somatic sacrifice is not simply an imaginary contestation that engineers the failure of communalism in this moment of crisis. It is also, in the shape and form of Nooran’s pregnant body and his own crushed one, a troubling return of a humanist, non-national, non-communal force illuminating the violent and contingent boundaries of communalist nationalism – as Judith Butler puts it in a different context, “an enabling disruption, the occasion for a radical re-articulation of the symbolic horizon in which bodies come to matter at all” 8 Jugga’s male body takes the wound of the nation-state, in an embodied performance of a sensate, secular democracy; however, Nooran and Haseena’s bodies, sexually and culturally bothered (through prostitution and pre-marital pregnancy) are deployed differently – they are not coded as heroic. The only heroic femininity in this discourse is that of the Sikh women who commit suicide to stave off potential rape and are dead. Both male as well as female bodies are being worked in this novel’s narrative; yet, if the male body is heroicized, the female body is a transitional object, a
symbolizing site of intelligibility in the rhetoric of nationalism. In other words, the imminent temporality of the Indian nation can exist only through the traumatizing banishment of inter-ethnic love, and of impure, unintelligible, inter-ethnic identities whose future possibility is embodied by a pregnant Nooran. The novel brings out what Arjun Appadurai has called the uncertainty and impurity of ethnic national identities— which communalism disavows—through the figure of Nooran; yet it displaces this uncertainty and hybridity of ethnic location embodied by Nooran's fetus elsewhere, on the other side of the national border, in Pakistan. If Jugga's is an ideal, honorable masculinity, then Nooran's fecund femininity, because of its Islamic origins, must both inspire it (to symbolize the secular) and disappear (to stave off the threat of ethnic impurity in the "secular" nation).

This theme of inter-ethnic romantic love as the only transcending force in the face of ethnic violence was also popular in other novels, short stories and films. It also resurfaces in the contemporary public sphere, in representations like Deepa Mehta's 1998 film 'Earth', which was based on Pakistani writer Bapsi Sidhwa's novel Cracking India (1991). That such narrations of inter-ethnic love usually ends in tragic ways suggests that the problem of imagining a way of living with ethnic difference in the intimacy of domesticity, (thus destabilizing the family purity upon which ethnic
communities are built), perhaps foreclosed the realization of this love. A similar and melodramatic narrative is the contemporary Punjabi film Shahid-e-Mohabbat (Martyr of Love), which was popular in the UK and US, and has been broadcast regularly on television in India since 1998. It is based on a true story, widely reported in Indian newspapers in the early fifties, of a Punjabi Sikh man living in India who is forcibly separated from his Muslim wife (when she is "returned" to Pakistan by the Indian government as part of the rescue and recovery project). The man, Buta Singh, after several futile efforts to be reunited with her across the border, died pining for her love. However, in 'Train to Pakistan' the origins of this motif lie, at least in part, in the tropes of urban middle-class secularist discourse about ethnic difference in India: the syncretism of religious social life in rural India; the fabled peaceful and harmonious communal relations pre-Partition; the rural as both destroyed by urban politics, and as the site of 'real' India. Both Gandhi's Autobiography: 'Story of My Experiments with Truth' as well as Jawaharlal Nehru's 'Discovery of India' contributed to this dominant nationalist construction of the rural as folk, as "authentic" and representative of true India.

In accounting for the collective, historical production of nationalist discourse in South Asia, it is also important to examine how certain kinds of oppositions, like Hindu-Muslim, men-women, and secular-communal
become conventional and become the norm in our historicist accounts. The literary recollection of partition violence, as in Train to Pakistan, shows how these terms are not opposite but aligned to constitute the nation on the body of the heterosexual couple. The literature of this crisis, and this novel in particular, shows how communality and nationality do not always coincide or work in tandem. ‘Train to Pakistan’ illustrates that often, people cared little for the nationality being thrust upon them, and ambivalently responded to communalism, in a political situation where one nation (Pakistan) was being explicitly founded on the basis of religious commonality – for Muslims. It is this very anxious and ambivalent space between the communal and the national that the state seeks to fill through the figure of the ethnicized woman. This ethnicized woman, Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, enjoins nation-state and community as both property owners (of women's bodies) and masculine authority. ‘Train to Pakistan’, in placing Nooran squarely within the territorial limits of Pakistan, re-inscribes this patriarchal social and ideological discourse about gendered ethnic belonging. These texts' ambivalence towards inter-ethnic love emerges in their movement from the valorization of inter-ethnic romance, to their inability to allow its realization in their representations – all such romances end in heroic-tragic ways.
‘TRAIN TO PAKISTAN’ (1956)

This is the first novel by Khuswant Singh, and presents the history of India and Pakistan. That time was the parting time of India and Pakistan. This novel is the simple story of a close-knit family divided by conflicting political loyalties. It is the time to set around the ‘Quit India’ movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi during the II World War. The main characters are the father who after years of loyal service to the British Raj, expected to be honoured with a title of the King’s Birthday Honours list and his young son who, undetected by anyone in the family, had joined a band of terrorist to disrupt arms supplies traffic on road and rail, and perhaps kill an Englishman or two. The story was built around his own family. He located it in Amritsar. He portrait Indian history in this novel as an alive character. In the preface of this novel Arthur Lall comments:

If this novel were to be submitted today as an unpublished manuscript, I believe a half-dozen publishers would readily accept it. Its intrinsic qualities as a fine novel grip the reader. Throughout, the action sweeps one along. The characters are vivid and highly credible and Khuswant Singh keeps them going magnificently on two levels; in their quotidian matrix
compounded of their passions of love and revenge, their tremendous sense of belonging to a village community, their insolence and heroism, and then again on the wide stage set by the tornado that breaks on their lives in the shape of the cataclysmic events of the partition of the India and Pakistan in 1947. But this is not only a work of fiction wrought with great skill. In addition it has significant values as a social document that portrays vividly many facets of the great upheaval that accompanied the creation of Pakistan. For historians, sociologists, students of human affairs in general, this is a highly relevant piece of writing by a person who, as a Punjabi whose family was uprooted from its ancestral home, experienced at close quarters the terrible tragedy that overcame the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent in 1947.

Reading Train to Pakistan in 1981, twenty-five years after it was written one finds that the passage of time has not in the least diminished the freshness of this excellent novel. The book continues to be one that any reader of fiction would greatly enjoy. It deserves to be recognized as a classic.¹²

Singh presents the time of partition between India and Pakistan. The time was the summer of 1947; it was hotter than other summer of the Indian history because he says that it was the reason not for Muslims and Hindus
fighting but it was the cause of their sins. Both of them were blame each other and killed the people of both sides.

The fact is both sides killed, both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. Both tortured. Both raped. From Calcutta the riot spread north and east and west: to Noakhali in East Bengal, where Muslims massacred Hindus to Bihar, where Hindus massacred Muslims. Mullah roamed to Punjab and the Frontier Province with boxes of Human skulls said to those of Muslim killed in Bihar.  

‘I SHALL NOT HEAR THE NIGHTINGALE’ (1956)

This is the second novel and deals with theme of historical and political upheavals in the society. This novel relates to a period of history in which discipline and administration made more stringent owing to the war put any formidable violence, other than that related to a crime, out of question, but a big question mark seemed to be forming at all established institutions and values. ‘A Bend in the Granges’ also touched the Quit India period. Most of the details relating to the uncertainties and the violence pertaining to the period have been mentioned in the course of the discussion of that novel. One thing, however, has not been specifically mentioned. In the wider context of violence as the major theme of the novel other motifs like the one to be taken up here became only the minor issues. When we
come to ‘I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale’ this subdued theme of falsehood and uncommunicativeness comes to the force. There cannot be any naked blatant violence in the well-placed and cultured Sikh family of Buta Singh. By venturing a generalization, it may be said that in the times in which institutions and values are on a slippery ground men loose their rectitude, veracity and credibility. Their loyalties are shaken. They cease to be upright men but not violence for a remedy. Naturally the precautious state of war, the indefinite future of the nationalist movement, the unpredicted shape of things coming up, the fast changing equations at the international front made it difficult for the ordinary man to pin his fate firmly to any cause. The way Hitler was leveling one countryman after another it was difficult to foresee what could happen to India’s Independence at the end of the war. Shall it have to be negotiated with the British or the Germans or the Japanese? Even a firm anti-British reactionary like Debi- Dayal was at his wits end at this confused hour.

Looking to the initial loses in the war the chances that the British will emerge victorious from the melting pot appeared not very bright. Similarly the success at the political front at home could not be a foregone conclusion. In short, the malady of indecisiveness generates, not clear violence, but only subdued surrogate of violence i.e. undecidedness of character. Undecidedness when it gets tangled with the demands of everyday life,
people are bound to wobble and lapse into deceitfulness, lying, simulating and withdrawing into their shells. Gian in 'A Bend in the Ganges' who is by and large a noble character suffers from the ravages of this shaky ethos. Later when his cousin in a family feud killed his brother over property, he forgot his vow to non-violence and murdered the assassinator of his brother. He confessed his guilt to the Police and was dispatched to the Andemans on a life sentence. Starting from this point his life would be bundle of lies and a series of deceitful deed.

Outrageous violence would have been out of place in 'I Shall Not Here the Nightingale' also because Khushwant Singh has traced the same predicament in the Sikh family. The fact that it is a story of a Sikh family has added yet another tangle to the confusion of the times, namely the chivalric heritage of the Sikh community caught in the conflict with not so chivalric way of life. In the life style of Butta Singh and his family there is internally little scope of violence but the uncertainties of the times push each person in the direction of violence but the uncertainties of the times push each person in the direction of violence, instead of being violent they can only suffer from split personalities and ambivalent social entities. There is a tug of war between the warrior element within the non-violence politics around; the former Sikh loyalty to the British and the present challenge to it.
Thus one more dimension of violence arising from uncertainties and conflicts got to the problems of the family. Khushwant Singh has delineated the violence arising from these complexities through different characters allotting different issues to different persons. Ordinarily any one person’s mind, like that of ‘Mrs. Dalloway’ in Virginia Woolf’s novel could be the battle ground of the upheaval of the times, but Singh has been more artistic in his handling of this unfinished pictures of the times.

The male characters particularly Buta Singh and the Headman bear the burden of lying, simulating and practicing deception, whereas the Sikh heritage is personified in Sabhrai and by transsevance of the ideal violence to some extent in Sher Singh. However, each character shares the violence of uncommunicativeness. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in this “Novel of Character” the bond of uncommunicativeness, which includes lying, deceiving and concealing is a stronger bond than familial contiguity. As regards women other than Sabhrai they have their share of uncommunicativeness but otherwise stand for the general drift of the sex without any special reference to the violence in the time.

To enumerate the instances of lying and hiding like that of Champak about Mundu and the bucket of Buta Singh viz. his colleagues or the letter that went with the Christmas gift of oranges from our garder bought from the bazaar, would amount to tenous duplication. It all fairness a novel of
character should be given the dignity of a novel of character. But a word here about the community element i.e., Sikhism would not be out of place, because it goes a long way in determining the psychology and the nature of violence of its surrogates must be viewed in the light of the artistic, religious devotional, traditional contents of their psyche which tended more towards agitation than towards conformity. To some extent their martial identity ill-at ease at present was to a certain extent responsible for drawing in their tentacles and they clung closer and closer of the Granth Sahib. The violence in the novel is therefore a compromise of the inherited Sahib. The violence in the novel is therefore a compromise of the inherited psyche, the race subconscious and the present trend separatist, factional communal behaviour. The two elements are well worked out in the impulsive history of the Sikhs and in the allegiance to the British. Sher Singh and his mother touch to the fringe of the former impulse and Buta Singh falls between the two stools.

Buta Singh true to the arboreal associations of his name should be sheltering Patria-protestus of the family. He is the first of the blissfully ignorant lot poor ironically enough supposed to run the domestic administration as well as the government of the district. The secret of his success at home lies on his defense to the deeds and thoughts of the members of the family as if resigning all coves into the hands of a
propitiated, all protecting Guru. Out of home, he works in the dazel of the aura that falls naturally around him by virtue of his singular official position. His sole endeavour has to be able to keep his immediate superior (Mr. Taylor) impressed with his loyalty and thereby earned a title for himself. He keeps his colleagues good humouredly conscious of his comfortably softer nearness to the English Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Taylor-the nerve-centre of the body corporate.

We first meet Buta Singh the Baisakhi day prayer at his home, long after the activities of his only son Sher Singh have emphatically shown that he knows nothing of son’s terrorist pretensions.

He let his son cast his clot with the nationalists and did not object to his organizing the students and making political speeches.\footnote{14}

Buta Singh’s unsuspecting liberality at home made the resultant freedom rather enigmatic to the erring. As the family sat in silence waiting for Buta Singh to say something Sher Singh was particularly nervous. Would his father ask him about misusing the government jeep for a private outing? It is in the same spirit that superseding the refusal of the mother aroused the daughter to go to his colleague Wazir Chand’s house to see Sita.

Instances of such independent, almost enigmatic behaviour are quite numerous. As said above Buta Singh was not likely to be grossly violent.
Under the stress of the times the predictions to violence had to flow down the vicarious channels of lies and falsehood. Why should he present to his family a distorted version of his conversation with the Deputy Commissioner? We know the conversation ran as follows:

Taylor received him in his dark, air-cooled office. The shook hands and Buta Singh took a chair on the other side of the working table. Taylor helped himself to a cigarette and pushed the box in front of his guest. Buta Singh shook his head. Beg your pardon, Buta Singh: I keep forgetting I mustn’t officer a cigarette to a Sikh.  

Buta Singh explained, “That is all right, Sahib, Just an old superstition.” His reaction to a similar indiscretion by a fellow Indian would have been a little more emphatic. Taylor lit his cigarette; a cigarette usually determined the length of the interview.

Sorry to have you sent you on a holiday; it’s something like Christmas for you isn’t it? I hope you don’t mind.” “mind?” queried Buta Singh in a tone of righteous indignation. “Mind, Sahib! It is our duty. What impression would the people in Delhi get if they heard that while these Japanese are at our gates, we can’t even keep law and order in our towns just because it is Baisakhi Day and the Magistrates want a holiday? Sahib must have seen what the American paper ‘The New York Times’ Japam acts!’ There is some truth in that. Air raid
warnings in Calcutta, bombs dropping on Colombo, and here, our so called nationalists and Muslims a quarrelling about little details with the English instead of getting on with the work. 16

Buta Singh explained, “I wish other Indians talked like you, I rely on you to guide them. I do not anticipate any trouble today but one never knows. A small incident may lead to a major riot. There are some politicians looking for trouble. I am told there are meetings this afternoon.” Taylor paused to drop the ash off his cigarette. As Buta Singh made no comment, he continued. “The Superintendent of Police informs me that your son has also organized a meeting of the students. I told him not to bother about him. ‘If he is Buta Singh’s son’, I said ‘we can trust him, even if he is a Nationalist or a Communalist or anything else.’ “You are most kind, Sahib. He is young man and you know what youth is! Hot and full of ideas. But he is all right. He is as you say Buta Singh’s son. And through his hobnobbings with these Gandhi-scaped Congress wallahs and Red flag wallahs, Buta Singh knows what is going on the city and whom to watch.” Buta Singh’s accent and vocabulary changed when he spoke to Englishmen, “Wallah” figured prominently in his speech.

Taylor stubbed his half-smoked cigarette. Buta Singh understood that the interview was over. “What are the orders for the day sahib?” he asked,
standing up. "No order, Buta Singh," answered Taylor, coming up "just tell
the magistrates to leave information of their movements so that we can get
them as quickly at short notice; you can organize that I will be the fair. Shall
I see you there?"

Buta Singh was not going to lose the opportunity of being seen in
Taylor’s company by milling crowds. Almost the entire Sikh population of
the district turned up to see the procession and the fair outside the walls.
"Yes sir, I will be there in the afternoon and then with the procession."

Well, see you later, Buta Singh Your excellent work in
the collection of war funds and in recruiting soldiers will
not go unrewarded. I will speak to the Commissioner.
Thank you, Sahib. Thank you. You are most kind. Buta
Singh knew that this was a reference to the next Honours
list. That sort of thing still mattered although other
things mattered more. "Sir, I have a small request to
make". "Yes." "You know. Sir, I do not ask for personal
favours." "Yes, yes Buta Singh. Anything I can do far
you, I will what is it? Sir, my work in collecting funds
and furthering the war effort has caused a lot of envy. I
receive letters threatening my life. I am not afraid, but it
I could get a police guard at my house for few days, it
would stop evil designs.17

The chief characters of this novel are Sikhs. Singh highlights the 15th
century history at the time of Guru Nanak. Nine other Gurus of whom the
last, Govind Singh, turned them into a military brotherhood succeeded Nanak. The Sikhs became the ruler of Punjab in 18th century. Sikhs wear their hair and boards unshorn. They also add the suffix Singh to their names. They have two modes of greeting. One is to say ‘Sat Sri Akal’, which means ‘God is truth’. In other mode one person says, ‘Wah guru ji ka khalsa’ – ‘the Sikhs are the chosen of God’ – and the other replies, ‘Wah guru ji ki fateh’ – ‘and victory be to our God’. Buta Singh’s family is portrays by Singh in this novel.

‘DELHI’ (1999)

His third novel ‘Delhi’ is the historical study. Delhi presents the ambitious chronicle covering history of its life more than eight hundred years. He declares: While the blood and flesh were “History provided me with the skeleton I covered it with flesh and injustice blood and lot of seminal fluid on to it. It took me twenty five years to do so.” 18 certainly indispensable, the necessity of the making principal characters swims in the sea of semen, it is not quite clear. One finds oneself agreeing with the narrator’s friend, who justifiably asks him, “Do you have anything accept sex on your mind?” It had the prolonged gestation. The idea of telling the story of his city, in which he had spent most of his life, came later he has read ‘Ivo Andric’s’ The ‘Bridge on the Drina’, which tells the story
Yugoslavia through events that occurred on a bridge. He portrays the history of various periods like Rajput Raj in India, the life of ‘Hazrat Nizamuddin’ and Emperor ‘Aurangzeb’. The British Period he relied on his ancestors, his father and grandfather had taken the lion’s share in the construction of New Delhi. Likewise for the impact of partition and the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. He examined Pyare Lal’s documentation of the last day of Mahatma Gandhi. The murder of Mrs. Gandhi and the massacre of Sikhs that followed, were deeply imprinted in his mind. Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib comments: “I asked my soul: What is Delhi? She replied: The world is the body and Delhi its life.” 19 Singh tells the history of Delhi from its earliest beginnings to the present times. History provided him to with the skeleton. Actually Singh’s invention of Bhagmati a bisexual whore, as the objective correlatives of the city of Delhi was the brilliant stroke of imagination foregrounding the plight of the city dominated and despoiled by all shorts of tyrants over the centuries. But Bhagmati does not emerge as a Tiresias – like figure. Her performance are described with such salivating zest and titillating detail that the significance of the putative symbol, which should really have been the novelist’s main concern is almost totally overridden by the sordid actuality of the referent, to the determent of the thematic concern of the novel.
Mohan Kumar is the hero of this novel and portrait by the novelist as the erotic or sexual desirous man. He was married and his married life was not going smoothly his wife decided to leave him with the divorce. She was custody by her two children and her husband began to feel more freedom. He ordered his wife to take everything belonging from her father like jewellery, furniture and pictures besides the children but she does not want to take anything she merely wants to get red of to him. She left his house and went to her father’s home. Mohan Kumar began to think about his new bigning and feels more freedom to do whatever he like. His children fight each other and his six-year-old daughter complained him about her brother’s bullying but he ordered her not to disturbed him. He also thinks about the relation of his wife. It was what people described as a love-cum arranged marriage. But of course it was nothing of the sort. He was a young computer engineer and the only one son of the retired middle-level government servant with middle-class level dreams. He was married with the daughter of a rich man namely Rai Bahadur Lala Achint Ram, the owner of two sugar mills and considerably real estate in Delhi.

Recently separated from his nagging ill-tempered wife of thirteen years, millinery businessman decides to reinvent his life. Convinced that ‘lust is the true foundation of love’ he embarks on an audacious plan: he will advertise for paid lady companions to share his bed and his life. Thus begins
vision for the future of India. He returns from university in England determined to bring the benefits to modern industry to the subcontinent becomes the country’s biggest tycoon. But this is not the only ideal of Gandhi’s that he defies facing a middle crisis he feels passionately in love with a tantric god – woman (who keeps a tiger as her pet and has dubious past). She introduces him to the pleasures of unbridled sexuality, but also becomes the reason for his downfall. Comic tender and erotic by turns, Jai Dhagwan’s father Krishana Lal Mahto wanted to bring up his only son as an English aristocrat. He often told his wife and children that in order to deal with the British, one had to speak English like them, mix with them socially as an equal, learn to eat their kind food on expensive Chinas using silver forks and knives and serve them premium scotch and vintage French wines of better quality than they afford. The historical background of this novel deals with the modern history on India.

**INDIA: AN INTRODUCTION**

This is the historical fictional work by Khushwant Singh. He presents the image and the reality of Indian history with the different taste. This is a highly readable and rewarding initiation into a complex ancient civilization, by one of India’s most widely read writers and journalists. He tells the story of the land and its people from the earliest time to the present day. In broad,
vivid sweeps he encapsulates the saga of the upheavals of a sub-continent over five millennia, and how their interplay over the centuries has moulded the India of today. More, Singh offers perceptive insights into everything Indian that may catch one's eye or arouse curiosity: its ethnic diversity, religions, customs, philosophy, art and culture, political currents, and the galaxy of men and women who have helped shape its intricately inlaid mosaic. He is also an enlightening guide too much else: India's extensive and varied architectural splendours, its art and classical literature.

Singh presents the various phase of India in this fictional work. He portrait India with all the reigns of the foreigners. He offers perceptive insights into everything Indian that may catch one's eye or arouse curiosity, its ethnic diversity, religions, customs, philosophy, art and culture, political events, and the galaxy of men and women who have helped shape its intricately inlaid mosaic.

He presents the image and the reality of Indian history with the different taste. This is a highly readable and rewarding initiation into a complex ancient civilization, by one of India's most widely read writers and journalists. He tells the story of the land and its people from the earliest time to the present day. In broad, vivid sweeps he encapsulates the saga of the upheavals of a sub-continent over five millennia, and how their interplay over the centuries has molded the India of today. More, Singh offers
perceptive insights into everything Indian that may catch one’s eye or arouse curiosity: its ethnic diversity, religions, customs, philosophy, art and culture, political currents, and the galaxy of men and women who have helped shape its intricately inlaid mosaic. He is also an enlightening guide too much else: India’s extensive and varied architectural splendours, its art and classical literature.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES


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14 ‘I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale,’ p. 23

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