CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION
Khushwant Singh is one of the major Indian English novelists of our times. He is not only a novelist but also a short story writer, a columnnist, a journalist, an editor. He has five novels to his credit besides a large number of works on other subjects. He is a reputed social realist. He is a sensitive artist who has used realism so as to present his humanistic vision of life. He is very keen to explore the realities of life. He has a sensitive understanding of the problems of contemporary Indian society. His intimate knowledge of rural and urban India life is an outcome of his minute observation of life. A keen observation of the details of social life is necessary for writing a successful social novel. His long spell as a journalist and his trips abroad in his professional capacity have brought him into contact with different kinds of people and a variety of experience. He is a product of western education and culture but he is at heart a Sikh and an Indian.

Realism is a remarkable feature of Indian English novel in which Indian sensibility is expressed through a foreign language. T. Anganeyulu rightly says:

Realism shows real life, facts in a true way. It omits nothing that is ugly and painful and idealizes nothing. The term ‘realism’ means (1) a theory of writing in which the familiar ordinary aspects of life are depicted in a matter of fact, straight forward manner designed to reflect life as it actually is, (2) treatment of subject – matter in a way that presents careful descriptions of every day life, often the lives of so-called middle or lower-middle classes. Realism which refers to both the content and technique of literary creation has been evident in literature from its very beginning.

(A Critical Study of the selected Novels 3)
Indian novelists show a passionate awareness of life in India - the social awakening and protest, the poverty and hunger of the peasants, various dimensions of the struggle for independence the tragedy of partition, social and political changes along with inner life of the sensitive, suffering individuals. Different Indian English novelists have treated different aspects of social life. Mulk Raj Anand writes about India of yogis and sadhus and beggars. He has presented a true picture of inequality, poverty and exploitation with a sense of rebellion and reform. The novels and short stories of R.K. Narayan present a comprehensive picture of modern India, rooted in ancient traditions. Narayan's special contribution lies in the portrayal of social life in India. Class - struggle is not the reality; his social novels transcend this ideological boundary and present the real picture of society encompassing the broader humanity. Kamala Markandeya has a deep sensitive appreciation for the peasants' suffering and their vitality. Her Nectar in A Sieve and A Handful of Rice are sensitive records of peasants' life. Manohar Malgonkar presents the true picture of socio-political life of contemporary India. He in his own way is a realist in that he tries to project the true picture of the Indian historical figures. The Prince is the most authentic record of princely life. His A Bend in the Ganges tells about the political ideologies during the freedom movement. Chaman Nahal's Azadi exposes the harsh reality of partition in 1947. It's a tragic tale of migrated people.

Khushwant Singh, like other Indian novelists, explores social, political realities of contemporary Indian life. His main concern is the man and the reality. He has established himself as a distinguished writer of social realism with the publication of his first novel, Train to Pakistan. The term social realism means the
depiction in literature of social reality in its true colours. The emergence of social
realistic novel in Indian fiction in English is due to the rise of Nationalistic
Movement. The novelists who have been influenced by this movement roused the
feelings of nationalism in common man through their works. They also tried their
hands to make the people socially and economically conscious. In this context
T.Anganeyulu says:

Realism is the term but social realism refers to the events in
contemporary society. The novel of social realism presents a mirror
reflection of the actual life. Social realism means the accurate
depiction of social reality in literature as it is; there should be a
point to point resemblance of society depicted in literature and of
the actual society. Social realism differs from socialist realism
which means the depiction of social reality, not as it is but as it
should be idealized. This socialist realism is the typical Marxist
approach to literature. The main difference between social realism
unusually contemporary events or problems are presented and
sometimes solutions to those problems are offered.

(A Critical Study of the Selected novels 5)

Most of Khushwant Singh’s critics have talked about his realistic portrayal
of sex and violence, they have not fully apprehended the expensive scope of his
vision of humanism. Khushwant Singh is, no doubt, a writer of social novels but
not only sex and violence. He does not keep the surface reality. Unlike the other
social writers Khushwant Singh selects his material from the bewildering variety
of life and his vision is truly comprehensive.
In shaping the emotional world of an artist the social milieu is one of the determining factors. The more deeply he reflects on the basic trends of society and the more sensitive he is to its processes, the more significant is his work.

Khushwant Singh’s special contribution lies in the portrayal of political life in India. Sex, violence are not the only realities Singh’s social novels transcend this ideological boundary and present the real picture of society, encompassing the broader humanity. Through his characters he enlivens the contemporary Indian life. He portrays man objectively in relation to society without making him a mouthpiece of any preconceived ideology.

Khushwant Singh’s fictional world indicates the richness and depth of his apprehension of reality. He deals with various aspects of social reality. He is the oldest living monument of Delhi. He himself is history. He is the witness of pre-partition national movement, post-partition, Independence, and the modern complex world. He is much interested in human relation. His East-West education and rural-urban life help his fictional world to record contemporary socio-political tensions. He, thus, presents a panoramic view of Indian life.

The relation between literature and society is integral and eternal. The reflexive value of literature though important, cannot be the sole basis of evaluating literature. The angle of vision with which the artist undergoes the experience also shapes the picture of reality presented in his work.

Khushwant Singh’s work has socio-religion-political context, but he is not always in the mood of iconoclastic anger. He is not a committed writer in the narrow sense of being bound up with an ideology or a school. There is no didacticism or moralization in his novels. He neither uses his art for allowed
propaganda, nor professes indulgence in art for art's sake. He is the artist's
detachment with a humanistic basis.

Khushwant Singh's angle of vision is also shaped by his devotion to
human interest. As for example, *Train to Pakistan* shows the unconquerable spirit
of man in the face of mighty forces of wickedness and savagery. The novel
implies Khushwant Singh's optimistic and affirmative views and his enduring
faith in the values of love and humanity. As V.A. Shahane observes Khushwant
Singh's realism:

> Is not an attempt at a book-keeping of existence, but an artistic
> endeavour to transcend the actual, asserting the dignity of
> individual stimuli and expressing the tragic splendour of man's
> sacrifice for woman.  

*(Khushwant Singh 347)*

It is a grim story of individuals and communities caught in the holocaust of
partition of the sub-continent into two states India and Pakistan in 1947. *Train to
Pakistan* is a social, realistic novel. Its social realism is found in characters, scenes
and language.

As D.Prempati says:

> What sort of social realism does one find in *Train to Pakistan*? The
> formula which got this novel its well deserved popularity was: A
> sincere belief in traditional moral and social standards of Indian
> society and a charming narrative skill.... It is, therefore, obvious
> that *Train to Pakistan* is a documentary novel with no claims
whatevers to the artistic technique and extra artistic philosophies of social realism and naturalism.

(Three Contemporary Novelists 113-114)

The setting of the first three novels, *Train to Pakistan, I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale, Delhi* is in the context of some historical framework. Khushwant Singh at the same time plays the role of a writer as well as historian. They have an intrinsic quality and ability to look beyond his time. As a novelist he is most responsive to the call of equality, freedom and human rights. It is the writer Khushwant Singh whose writing make the common people socially, politically and culturally conscious. He designed the novels not only to give insight into a period of history, but are exemplary; he illustrates action and are ideal in the sense of manifesting the universal form of human action. Like the other Indian writers, Khushwant Singh responded to these happenings with a sense of horror. A large number of novels were written on freedom movement and on the theme of partition. The novelists skillfully records the reign of violence and the complete destruction of human values.

The first novel, *Train to Pakistan* may remain the most comprehensive description of this catastrophic human situation. Khushwant Singh was greatly moved by the harsh events during those turbulent days. His bitter experience made drastic changes towards life. He felt thoroughly disillusioned with the contemporary situation. His faith in the fundamental virtue of mankind was totally shattered. Partition one of the bloodiest upheavals of history claimed countless lives and loss of human values. Khushwant Singh was a witness to the massacre in the wake of partition the country. The date of India’s Independence, August
and the effect of partition was not simply the birth of two Nations but the growing tension in every home and heart.

I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale; the second novel of Khushwant Singh again has a historical backdrop. The action of the novel takes place during the war years from April 1942 to April 1943. In terms of Indian history, the freedom movement or quit India movement has a great significance. Khushwant Singh not only treats the plot realistically but the novel has its roots in the freedom movement. The novel represents the colonial encounter between Indians and the British Government against the background of Punjab. There had been a mixed reaction among Indians towards the British Raj.

The main theme of the novel Delhi is history. The story start at 1265 A.D. come way down to 1982 A.D. covering all major incidents that gave Delhi its present shape its present identity. The reader is taken way back to 1265 A.D. When Delhi was ruled by Sultan Ghaisuddin Balban. Then it covers the reign of Khilgias, Mughals and British Raj. And the second last chapter describing India’s partition and Independence, and assassination of Gandhiji. The novels ends with the 1984 riots after Indira Gandhi was shot dead.

Literature is the reflection of life. Various events and experience find representation in books. Not all are good, pleasant or profitable. It is the business of a writer to hold a mirror to life. In doing so he may paint some ugly pictures. Who can label these pictures ugly and why if he has comprehended literature? There is nothing good or bad in literature. The writer espies a person or observes an event and records his opinion in a language and style known to him. It all
scribblers were to subscribe their views identically, English would be reduced to sheer 'Arithmetic'.

Khushwant Singh very efficiently portrays the real picture of the contemporary society and the social, political and religious behaviour of the people. As we find in *Train to Pakistan*, the original pictures of the village Mano Majra before and after partition, the love story of Nooran and Jugga, the greedy people, death and violence. Khushwant Singh depicts the peaceful co-existence of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh in a multi-religion society. It has only three brick buildings, one of which is the home of Hindu money lender Lala Ram Lal. The other two are the Sikh Temple and the Mosque. Their common sharing of the 'large peepul tree' is unmistakably the rich common heritage shared by different communities in India. Here life is regulated by the trains which rattle across the nearby river bridge. Lala Ram Lal is murdered by Mali and his gang. Suspicion falls on Juggat Singh, the village gangster, who is carrying on a clandestine affair with Muslim girl Nooran. A western educated communist is also involved. A train comes full of dead Sikhs. Some days later the same thing happens again, and the village becomes a battlefield of conflicting loyalties, and neither magistrate nor police can stem the rising tide of violence.

*I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* is appreciated for significant portrayals of the Sikh life and traditions in the days of pre-Independence India. Buta Singh and Wazir Chand both the magistrates cherish pro-British ideology. Their son Sher Singh and Madan are anti-British in their attitude. The womenfolk of Buta Singh's family and of wazir Chand's family are not bothered about the political life of the country. They are mainly concerned with the security of family life and
comfortable living. Sabhrai, wife of Buta Singh happens to be a very religious lady who believes in the sanctity of Granth Sahib and the supremacy of Guru Govind Singh. Champak represents the clandestine affair of the contemporary high society lady. The illicit relationship between Shunno and Peer Sahib is depicted as a counter part to the affairs between (the upper class) Madan and Champak. Khushwant Singh tells us that sexual and sensual urges are very common in all classes of society. Mundoo represents the poor condition of child labour in pre-Independence India. Buta Singh’s relationship with Taylor speaks about the behaviour of British rulers with Indian officials.

The novel Delhi is full of Muslim customs and rituals. The novel is not a dirge sung over lost empires. It is a celebration of the unique power of a culture and civilization, the power to generate some of the finer values of life; the power to ensure the survival of these values in the face of a nation; collective debasement, and above all, the power to ensure that when all is lost, an awareness of loss remains. It is superb in its vulgarity and myriad evils of perversity. It is also superb in symbolism of the Indian society, its contradiction, balances, caste and religious communalism, racial and ethnic strife, the spirit of unity in diversity.

The trio-Musaddi Lal Kaysatha, Nihal Singh and Jaita Rangreta in their monologues make a rational assessment of social and political situation and plight of the people in general. Musaddi Lal in his helplessness compares himself with a hijda, as is the case of Bhagmati, a symbol of Delhi, for their inherent qualities to adapt themselves to any circumstances. The writer depicts every kind of sexual encounter efficiently.
The Company of Women is also based on man-woman relationship. The novel begins with its hero Mohan Kumar, a successful Delhi's businessman, breaking off with his wife and his everlasting 'lusty' effort to set up more flexible arrangement for appeasement of his physical needs. The novel also provides middle class aspirations, the concept of arranged marriages in India, which are often akin to business bargains and the desire for scandalous gossip of the urban elite. The novel chronologically presents the women with whom the hero beds, including his wife. Here Singh seems to have been extending the idea that love and sex know no caste, class and community bar.

Violence is another fundamental aspect in Khushwant Singh's novel. But his final aim is not only to highlight communal violence death, disaster, hate, and vendetta but also to show the path of humanism. Singh's protest against violence, bloodshed and hatred is not merely a physical phenomenon but a continuous process of human civilization. In Train to Pakistan the Hindu – Muslim and Sikh – Muslim riots, death, violence, disorder, chaos are intricately depicted not only at the political level but also at the personal level. At the end Khushwant Singh hints at the ultimate humanism through the love story of Nooran and Jugga. Love has great impact in human life and it seems to be the only resisting human power against all inhuman evil forces. In the days of communal riots, the human relationship among the Hindus – Sikhs and Muslims determines the human values; man - woman love relationship has greater power than the other evil forces. No evil force can subdue love in respect of time or society as the writer presents in the novel.
In *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*, Khushwant Singh is again preoccupied by the theme of the antithesis between violence and right moral conduct and the notion that the only redemptive feature of a situation which justifies pessimism, or cynicism of outlook depends on a single demonstration of personal sacrifice, honesty and moral consistency. In the novel *Buta Singh* and *Taylor* represent not only two different communities but also two different nationalities. At the end Mrs. Taylor and Sabhirai transcend all narrow thoughts of traditional and religious belief. The essence of humanism is in ‘love’ not in hate and this we find in a micro level in the novel.

Hindu-Muslim riots, Sikh Hindu riots, Jaliwanawala Bagh massacres and assassination of Indira Gandhi are efficiently depicted in the novel *Delhi*. The anti-Hindu feeling that has prevailed ever since the first Muslim invader came in is emphasized throughout the novel. The arrogance of the Islamic leaders, their dreams of uprooting Hinduism and their belief that they are the only race capable of salvaging the Hindus comes through a number of characters like Taimur, Augangzeb, and Nadir Shah.

Sufi idealism is depicted here as the way of humanism. The Sufi way of life, its philosophy, is imparted to the readers through saint Nizamuddin in his long discourses with Sultan Ghiasuddin Balban. Bhagmati is a symbol of Delhi and from the beginning to the end displays non-communal attitude and has an intrinsic urge to protect the Sikh narrator.

Ultimately, Khushwant Singh tries to establish his vision of humanism as an antidote against violence and communalism. Being a humanist, he cannot help speaking from the point of view of the common man. He warns us that we should
stop letting the politicians use religion to take advantage of the sentiment of the masses. This only leads to bloodshed, tremendous loss of life and property. Singh very competently analyses the use of religion by the rulers from the earliest times. He indicates the politicians and holds them responsible for the ills that plague our society. Instead of addressing the real issues like economic disparity, the people in power are only concerned with consolidating their own positions.

He also makes the readers aware of charlatans in our society who prey upon unsuspecting people in the guise of religion. He does this in a very genial, good-natured and humorous manner. He does not try to hurt the sentiments of any particular religious community in any of his writings. Neither does he mock at those for whom belief in their particular religion is something holy and sacred. Rather, he reveals the positive aspect of religion also in *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*. It is the intense faith of Sabhrai that provides succour to her family and holds it together in the face of crisis. Religion also provided comfort to the minorities and the down trodden as is seen in the case of Mussadi Lal and Jaita Rangreta, in Delhi. Down the ages, religion was exploited by successive rulers to strengthen their own position. Of these, it was the English who exploited it to the maximum to foster divisive tendencies. After they left, the national leaders ignored discontent among the masses. Over the years this dissatisfaction was channeled into communalism, again by leaders intent on securing power for themselves. This led to further alienation between the different communities. This is the sinister side of religion, and Singh tries to make one aware of this. Indian history is replete with examples of religion being used as a tool by rulers to secure gains for themselves. Khushwant Singh has desperately tried to expose this
unpalatable fact through all his works, specially *Train to Pakistan* and *Delhi*. He exhorts people to see through the manipulations of the leaders in the name of religion, and to stop being used as hapless pawns by them. He writes of this so brilliantly that the reader cannot help being moved.

In India there is an inexorable link between religion and politics. Khushwant Singh being a journalist and a sociologist of sorts has taken note of this fact.

Khushwant Singh is able to write so feelingly about religion and politics because he has been personally involved with the subject. His earliest memories are those of his grandmother reciting passages from the Granth Sahib and the Sukhmani. Years later he was a spectator to the horror unleashed by the partition. He was also a witness to the terrible tragedy of the anti-Sikh riots. It is his close association with these subjects that has enabled him to write so poignantly about them. Beginning with Hadali and his grandmother, both of whom have been immortalized in his writings, Singh has written about every subject that has touched him. His friends, family, and his identity as a Sikh; all find a place in his fiction. Apart from this, he writes feelingly about the partition and the city of Delhi that has been home to him ever since he left Lahore. His writing has been enriched by the substantial autobiographical note which is all pervasive in his fiction. In fact, two chapters in *Delhi*, "The Builders" and "The Dispossessed" have been fashioned through the history of his own family. There has been a growth in the autobiographical content in Khushwant Singh's works. This is evident in *Delhi* where he is not afraid to speak his personal views and the details of his life. This reveals the maturing and innate honesty of the writer, whereby he
is equally comfortable with the squalid, as well as the wonderful aspects of his life.

Khushwant Singh’s characters, whether two-dimensional or three dimensional never become mouthpieces of the writer. They are independent, often offering contradictory viewpoints, as often happens in actual life. But the presentation is done in such a way that a careful reader can realize where the authorial sympathies lie. The implicit way of presenting the authorial point of view without comments is a rare phenomenon among Indian English writers. This is a unique feature in Khushwant Singh, considering the fact that he is basically outspoken to the core.

He juxtaposes events and situations, and the characters as well. Character-interaction results in an action or development of idea which reveals the idea behind the action. What is interesting is that the authorial viewpoint is effectively communicated without the reader having to feel it as an intrusion. Through characterisation the author’s wrath against religious fanaticism and political opinions finds expression.

The affirmation in the goodness of humanity is the sub-text of the novels, which Khushwant Singh makes the readers feel without ever mentioning it. The sub-text evolves naturally through the interaction of characters, and the real art of Singh lies in the fact that such a dominant writer like Khushwant Singh is silent and authorial point of view is revealed only implicitly. Khushwant Singh’s characters have a touch of ambivalence which makes them real and convincing. In fact, this kind of characterization is a revolt against the writers of romance. Romance idealized human beings so that the behaviour of its readers might be
improved. It depicted heroic encounters between the impossibly good and the incorrigibly evil. Each character is right from his or her own point of view. Khushwant Singh gives full freedom for all points of view.

A book is not only for the consumption of the writer or for the readers. It is mostly for the common people. It then goes without saying that it should incorporate the words and terms, expressions and experiences of the common mass of humanity. Further, the term 'Indian English' implies the element of Indianness in English. How can anybody expect the entire absence of Indian words, ways of life, sources of recreation, outbursts of anger in the works of an Indian writer in English.

Khushwant Singh began his literary career by writing short stories. He has some very definite ideas regarding the form of a short story. He feels that a good short story is one that follows a set of prescribed rules. Although most of his stories do adhere to these rules. There are some which do not. A number of his stories have a distinct beginning, middle, and end: whereas some are more anecdotes than stories For instance, the story "When Sikh meets Sikh" is more an anecdote than a story. So there is a discrepancy here in his belief and the actual practice of it. There are some stories where he begins in the manner of an essay like, "India is a Strange Country." Evidently he tries not to follow an identical narrative structure for all his short stories. However the majority of his stories follow the rules faithfully and this accounts for their abiding popularity.

Unlike the short stories, Singh has not enumerated the rules or principles that should govern a novel. This is just as well because his three novels are diametrically different from each other as far as their narrative structure and even
content is concerned. The first novel *Train to Pakistan* has a well-planned structure with a distinct beginning, middle and end. It is a straightforward tale, which is fast-paced, has an unexpected and gripping climax, and a suitable heartwarming ending. It tells of the effect of the partition on the lives of the people of Mano Majra. The second novel, *I Shall Not Hear The Nightingale*, is different from his earlier one. It paints a picture of the lives of the members of the Buta Singh household against the backdrop of the Quit India Movement. This novel does not have a tight structure, and is rather haphazard. It fails to hold the complete attention or retain the interest of the reader because the pace slackens at several instances. There are too many digressions in the narration that detract from the main story. The climax is also fairly tame, and one is easily able to anticipate it. The ending, probably intended to be humorous, comes across as being rather flat and in no way enhances the novel. The third novel, the magnum opus, *Delhi* is an entirely different entity. Here he follows a pattern somewhat reminiscent of the Indian mythological stories where there is a *Sutradhar* who narrates different stories woven together into a single fabric. However, the only thing that the narrator in Delhi has in common with a *Sutradhar* is that he is the common link between the semi-historical chapters. Otherwise all the chapters have their own narrators. The novel has been structured in such a manner that each historical chapter alternates with a chapter depicting modern Delhi. Khushwant Singh has experimented with a different and somewhat unique narrative structure in this novel. The common thread running through the novel is the effect of religion, politics and violence in shaping the city of Delhi from the times of Ghiasuddin Balban upto the anti-Sikh riots in 1984.
Evidently, Khushwant Singh does not believe that a novel should be structured according to any particular rule. Rather, it is the subject of the novel that should govern the structure, which is to be adopted. The simple narrative structure like that used in *Train to Pakistan* would be impossible to use in order to convey the vast sweep of *Delhi*. This stand has helped him to make both the novels extremely interesting, which in turn accounts, for their popularity.

An admirable quality of Khushwant Singh is his ability to laugh at himself. He does not take himself too seriously and that is why he is able to lay bare his life in a candid manner. He is essentially a humorist and has no qualms about mocking at himself also. The basic quality of his writing is its ubiquitous humour. It is his unique sense of humour and his ability to portray it effectively in his writings that makes him one of the most popular writers today. His essays, pen portraits and travelogues are immensely readable due to their all pervasive comic spirit. He also uses satire and irony as a weapon to expose the drawbacks that plague the system. Humour is also used to show up the pretentiousness of people. He does this genially, and raises a laugh, exposing the weakness of a particular character. He does not sit in judgment of such characters but merely sees it as a part of being human. In his later works, particularly *Delhi*, there is a downslide in the standard of humour. It is more adult, perhaps in keeping with the highly competitive and commercial era of the 90s. It is also because he wants to provoke the hypocritical Indian society into acknowledging the existence of topics that are normally brushed under the carpet. He usually focuses upon the ills that plague our country and exposes them in an amusing manner. In this way he avoids making his writings harsh and too moralistic. Instead he gives the reader some
kind of lesson in an unobtrusive style which is primarily entertaining. In all, the
ability to raise a laugh or even a smile from the reader is a tough task for any
writer; but Singh is able to accomplish it seemingly effortlessly.

Overall, he is a humorist, a humanist and a social and political critic. His
writings are immensely readable and he is able to convey serious issues in a
deceptively simple style. His fiction entertains, educates and widens one's
awareness all at the same time. Through his writings, Khushwant Singh has tried
to fulfill his duty as a writer. He has pointed out the drawbacks that plague India,
which hold her back from moving full steam ahead on the path of progress.
Humanism is a term that is used with different shades of meaning and implication.
The term reminds us of the Greek humanism, the Renaissance humanism, and the
humanism of the romantics.

Humanism literally means devotion to human interests, and suggests a
spirit that is concerned with the welfare of mankind. It is opposed to all kinds of
suffering and indignity of man. Humanism proposes to improve the conditions of
human beings. Writers and artists expose the oppressors of mankind and make the
people aware of their rights and needs. Khushwant Singh's humanistic vision
should be viewed in this light.

Man and his life in the world is the highest reality. Man's highest duty is to
realize his full potential for a complete life, for which he needs full freedom.
Social, cultural and religious barriers which stand in the way of man's self-
realization must be destroyed.

The novels of Khushwant Singh embody a positive vision of life which is
obviously humanistic. In his novels, he explores the causes of human sufferings
and suggests their possible remedies. When we compare Khushwant Singh with other Indian contemporary writers we find that Khushwant Singh woefully lacks the degree of creative imagination and emotive content, which characterize their sensibility and their work. And yet to be measurable, he has been gifted with such rare qualities not to be found in his contemporaries that accord him an individual status in modern Indo-English literature. There is the comic spirit, exploration of the world around and presenting it in all its nudity and truth and the capacity to capture reality in all its magnificence and horror, the felicity of expression, the capacity for clear and realistic portrayal, the ingenuity, compression, stark originality, unique lightness of touch mingled with a touch of fantasy.

Khushwant Singh’s fictional world indicates the richness and depth of his apprehension of reality. He deals with various aspect of social reality. The relation between literature and society is integral and eternal. The reflexive value of literature though important, can not be the sole basis of evaluating literature. The angle of vision with which the artist undergoes the experience also shapes the picture of reality presented in his work. Khushwant Singh’s angle of vision is also shaped by his devotion to human interest.

An artist’s response to the simultaneous existence of good and evil, negative and positive aspects of life in the world is one of the factors that determine the nature of his vision. Singh is quite aware that evil exists along with good. A mind cannot be honestly painted with one colour white or black. And being a humanist he loves to explore the positive aspects of life to show the ultimate path of mankind. His social realism is lifted above the level of prosaic propaganda because of his balanced vision and love for life. It does not merely
mirror the ordinary reality. It is marked with the under current of his deep devotion to human interests.

As a realist he portrays life in its true colours and as a humanist he loves that rainbow of experience. His human interest enlivens his fictional world and saves it from being a sapless abstraction. His social realism is not only full of violence, sex, bloodshed, but an expression of his essential humanism. Khushwant Singh's apprehension of life transcends the limits of social theory and becomes humanized through his figures. His success as a social realist artist is optimized in his creative vitality.

On the background of the contemporary criticism regarding Khushwant Singh's social realism and his treatment of communal harmony, the present study, thus, proves that Khushwant Singh's social realism acquires a new dimension. His realism is not a doctrinal socialism but an expression of his essential humanism. This interpretation is fortified by various discoveries on the conceptual and structural levels. The present study also renders a new perspective for evaluating Khushwant Singh.
Works Cited


