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Analysing the Power of Humour to Enhance Critical Communication

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ABSTRACT

Humour is not only a source of entertainment but also a way to present sensitive issues in a lighter manner. The present research explores the humour literature in the Indian cultural context. It attempts to analyse the content of select short stories written by Khushwant Singh to find how humour becomes a handy instrument for an author to convey opaque messages in a manner palatable to the taste of even those who cannot handle the spice of grave discussions based on religion, ethnicity, and cultural evaluations. Humour helps highlight unspoken issues and break down unsaid and biased rules so that it does not seem like a violent revolutionary act. Moreover, it discusses how creatively using humour and embedding it in prose can help achieve the desired effects on the reader's mind. It also outlines how an analysis of a fictional piece of literature can help enhance critical communication. This research is a content analysis highlighting linguistic theories. These theories explain how humorous effects arise from script opposition, conversational implications, and face-saving strategies by combining literary and linguistic approaches. The study shows how humour softens conflict and communicates sensitive issues effectively; a perspective not explored in earlier studies. This evidence-based study on the power of humour

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has multifaceted aims, such as providing thematic comprehension, identifying humour strategies, and using this analysis to practice communicating critical messages with an agile tone.

Keywords: Humour; Literary Tool; Social Follies; Irony; Narrative Style; Critical Communication

1. Introduction

Humour is more than a literary device. When used carefully, it allows authors to present information that is sensitive in a way that is more accessible and less confrontational for their readers^[1]. Employing humour to convey the message to serious people about a serious topic makes it easy for the author. For the present research, the short stories written by Khushwant Singh have been selected for the discussion: (1) *Karma*, (2) *The Mark of Vishnu*, and (3) *The Riot*. These stories were chosen mainly because being Indians are brought up while listening to the history and stories of colonialism and these stories cover three important themes of Indian society: colonial arrogance, superstition, and communal tension. It was natural to grasp the attention. Khushwant Singh, a literary giant of India^[2], was not just known for his sharp critiques and prolific creativity; he was also a master of wielding humour. Being a prolific writer, he was a communicator as well who could turn humour into a medium of critique and reflection. His short stories are simple in style, yet they bring out serious issues of society. His short stories, often laced with social commentary and poignant observations, are unexpectedly peppered with humour, making them all the more engaging and impactful. This integration of entertainment and social reflection demonstrates Singh's capacity to merge incisive commentary with humour, resulting in content that is intellectually engaging and enduring. In this era of global and rapid communication, people find it challenging to convey acrimonious messages to get work done; this study with textual analysis throws light on the power of humour in writing to achieve desired effects in critical communication. Humour that conveys a strong message while maintaining seriousness is rare and difficult to craft^[3]. Singh's stories therefore offer a unique case study for examining this balance. It is vital to keep the seriousness of the message intact while putting a smile on the reader's lips. Learning how a fictional piece of literature can help enhance critical communication is necessary. To understand the successful use of humour, this study investigates the ways in which Singh's works en-

hance the communicative practices of scholars, educators, and professionals engaged in addressing critical issues within literary, academic, and business contexts. He is known for his humorous writing, which is highly satirical and ironic. Khushwant Singh has employed humour^[4] to create laughter and criticise corruption, Indian offices and employees, their work style, superstitions, Anglicized individuals, and poverty in India. He has made known and examined these Indian shortcomings, which have shown to be roadblocks to development and are why India is falling behind. In this article, we explore the content of select short stories through the content analysis methodology. The story *Karma* depicts the arrogance of Indians imitating the West, highlighting how such attitudes lead to humiliation. *The Mark of Vishnu* exposes blind faith and superstition that continue to influence the social fabric of India. *The Riot* portrays the horrors of communal tension, presented with dark humour to underline the absurdity of violence. Together, these stories represent a wide spectrum of Indian society, all treated with Singh's unique brand of humour.

In today's fast-changing world, communication often becomes difficult when it comes to sensitive topics. Words can offend, arguments can escalate, and people may resist direct criticism. Humour, when used carefully, acts as a tool to make communication easier and less confrontational. It can disarm listeners, open space for dialogue, and push them to reflect without feeling attacked. Singh's humour gives us insight into how literature can also serve as a guide for critical communication in professional, social, and intercultural contexts.

It is a matter of fact to see that there is an increase of humour in communicative Resource Management and study supports this observation. It is also observed that it is widely used in communicative Resource Management in the field of politics, and education. Romero and Cruthirds^[5] argue that when humour is used effectively in organizations it reduces tension and creates solidarity. If you look at intercultural contexts, humour serves as a bridge to reduce cultural misunderstandings. Singh's short stories show that Indian

literature already offers powerful models of how humour makes difficult conversations possible.

Khushwant Singh's background as a lawyer, journalist, and politician enriched his writing. His humour was not ornamental but purposeful. He combined irony, satire, and wit with deep human concerns. His stories often appear simple, but they carry layers of social commentary. This makes him an ideal case study for exploring how humour works as a form of critical communication.

The element of humour and its use to communicate critical messages has been studied thoroughly, which makes the research a three-fold document that can be studied with cultural, communicative and linguistic aspects.

2. Literature Review

The trait of being humorous, or humour, can be conveyed in various ways, such as through a picture, a written joke, a live performance, or even a product design. Most individuals naturally enjoy humour, and when we come across anything that makes us laugh, we feel positive emotions of surprise and delight that may or may not translate into laughing^[6]. Being humorous or having a sense of humour is common to individuals who may believe they already understand humour and do not require studies to explain it. However, the empirical research of humour comes with many captivating astonishments, building on prior research, humour has been shown to release psychological tension, foster solidarity, diffuse conflict, and enhance both social and cognitive engagement^[1,7,8], making it an intriguing and fruitful area of research across the disciplines. This study reinterprets Raskin's Semantic Script Theory of Humour^[9] and Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humour (1994) to propose a simplified three-level analytical framework. The first level addresses humour based on simple incongruities, such as puns and wordplay. The second level examines humour that engages with taboo or socially sensitive topics, including politics, sex, and religion, where humour functions as a release from inhibition. The third level considers sophisticated humour that relies on irony, satire, or intertextuality, which requires cultural and linguistic literacy for full appreciation. Contrary to the claim that everyone can appreciate the same humour, appreciation of humour is strongly mediated by culture, age, gender, and social background^[3]. Certain

forms of humour, such as slapstick, may have wide appeal, but many others are culturally specific and accessible only to certain audiences. fall into this category. A robust command over language and its stylistic systems is necessary to reach the third level of humour. The humour of the third level never loses its touch of class and charity.

If to see how is humour associated with culture, Scholars such as Farber^[10] and Colletta^[11] have argued that humour is deeply tied to cultural context, shaping how societies process satire, irony, and laughter. Humour may be so vital to a culture that it forms part of the very process of that culture. Like characters or dialogue, humour is a tool, and it would be helpful to any writer to attempt the unsounded task of expressing the incommunicable. McGhie (1979, 2019) contributed that humour can be multiple theoretical ca be analysed by perspectives—including superiority, incongruity, relief, and developmental approaches—highlighting its cognitive and social dimensions. Sometimes, something is deemed humorous when it has a surprising aspect and an unexpected turn at the conclusion, both of which provide a pleasant experience. Humour serves various functions apart from educating people on social dimensions. As Sigmund Freud believed, humour can release tension and aggression^[12]. Freud suggested that humour can benefit both the initiator and appreciator more. Nevertheless, as time went on and more studies on humour were conducted, it became clear that using humour might have far more comprehensive advantages, including social, psychological, and cognitive advantages^[8]. Humour has been shown to provide societal benefits by fostering group cohesion^[5]. Humour paves the path for building a sense of community; with this fantastic tool, literary writers use it to convey dim messages in a frisky manner to achieve a more significant impact than what they just wrote or depicted. Humour works as a literary tool. For instance, Colletta^[11] and Fleming^[13] talk about how humour and satire shape literary traditions by embedding criticism within narrative forms. It is true that Khushwant Singh^[2] tells incredibly humorous and enjoyable stories. It is also true that they have a practical approach. The author's experiences form the basis of most of them. With the references to ethereal spirits and atmospheric elements that Singh uses symbolically, most of his stories are rooted in authentic experiences of Indian life^[2] they depict the scene of Indian life. In Singh's short stories, humour acts as a vehicle for social commentary, allowing him to

address sensitive issues with a light-hearted approach. Using humour, Singh captivates his readers while subtly conveying his messages. Despite Singh's importance, methodical textual analyses of his works remain limited. Arasu^[14] offers a thematic reading of his short stories, but only a few studies have linked Singh's literary humour to interdisciplinary fields like communication and management studies. Although he possesses tremendous power to critique follies in social systems and human behaviour, his writing has hardly been analysed to serve an interdisciplinary methodology.

Though the past research work is evident, this is probably the first time this literary work has been analysed to understand critical communication and how the author's style can be perceived and used to communicate critical messages in the business and management domain. After this critical literature review and understanding of the gaps, the research aims were formulated as follows: (1) To analyse the use of humour to interpret social, religious, and cultural unrest and human reaction to it in the select short stories; (2) To study humour as a literary device that triggers readers' thought processes on critical issues without being critical; (3) To evaluate the narrative style of Khushwant Singh with textual analysis to apply it to modern critical communication practices.

The strategy adopted to achieve these objectives was to

prepare an in-depth understanding of the usage and functions of humour as a literary device and its impact on literary content and readers. Then, we identified and analysed excerpts from select short stories that indicated the impact of applying humour to address serious issues around social setup.

3. Methodology

The study approach in this research is carried out using qualitative methods. In Moleong^[15], Keirl and Miller state that qualitative research design is suitable for analysing literary pieces and their communicative impact^[16]. Content analysis was employed to select passages that showed humour, irony, or satire. After that, thematic analysis assisted in interpreting these examples in the context of larger issues like social hypocrisy, cultural beliefs, and identity. Using both methods facilitated close examination of narrative techniques and a broader comprehension of how humour can be utilized for critical communication. By applying this method in this study, the researcher aims to investigate both the impact of humorous writing on readers and the author's expertise in addressing social follies in a light-hearted manner to achieve a profound impact on the thought process. The following steps (as shown in **Table 1**) were undertaken to obtain the necessary data for the study.

Table 1. Methodological Framework of the Study.

Data Collection	Data Presentation	Data Analysis
a. Comprehensive reading of select short stories	The data is presented by displaying excerpts from the short stories.	a. To analyse the excerpts showing the author's imperatives to readers to question and critically examine their beliefs and values.
b. Critical analysis of the select short stories	-	b. The humour style and its impact were analysed in each excerpt.
c. Select excerpts from the unit of analysis	-	c. To decode and to discuss
-	-	d. To draw tentative conclusions based on the findings produced through the analysis of the data using a qualitative descriptive method

Source: Author's compilation.

The three of Khushwant Singh's short stories: *Karma*, *The Mark of Vishnu*, and *The Riot* were chosen because they highlight three major social concerns: colonial arrogance, superstition, and communal tension. These themes represent the range of Singh's satire and humour.

The research takes a pragmatic, qualitative approach. To find instances of satire, irony, or humour, each narrative

was closely studied. Humour studies frameworks, particularly Attardo and Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Humour^[9], as well as pragmatic models like Grice's cooperative principle and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, were then used to analyse these passages.

For each humorous passage and its encoding, the following elements were noted:

1. The script opposition (e.g., dignity vs. humiliation, belief vs. reality).
2. The logical mechanism (e.g., reversal, exaggeration, false analogy).
3. The pragmatic cues (e.g., flouting of conversational maxims, use of irony, indirectness).
4. The cultural context (e.g., colonialism, superstition, communalism).

This methodological framework links literary style with linguistic analysis. It highlights humour as an artistic feature and also as a communicative act. In doing so, it expands the relevance of Singh's stories beyond literary studies into communication, management, and intercultural dialogue.

4. Humour and Its Functions: Theoretical Underpinning

4.1. Functions

Humour is a powerful artistic instrument for authors, enabling them to engage readers, create memorable characters, and provoke thought. We may consider literature as a medium of strengthening morals, spotlighting uneasy realities, giving voice to silenced ideologies or breaking down the so-called paradigm of writing. Humour can bring all the blocks together and build up the castle that houses the enlightenment of the reader as well as the satiation of expression to the author. The functions can be understood with the following highlights:

4.1.1. Accentuating Subtleness

From playful satire to biting wit, writers have long used humour to expose the absurdities, hypocrisies, and injustices that plague Indian life. Wielded with precision, this literary device sheds light on social issues while disarming the reader, making critiques easier to digest.

4.1.2. Historical Standpoint

The historical significance of humour as a tool to expose social injustice is documented well. Research reveals that humour often served as an indirect form of resistance and an approach to survival under oppressive regimes^[17]. Jokes and satires operated as cultural records that exposed taboos, social tensions and fears and it also served as a relief to communities that were marginalized. Thus, humour did

more than just entertainment. It encouraged solidarity, supported collective identity and conveyed criticism that would otherwise remain unspoken.

Khushwant Singh's stories carry a lot of historical relevance. It makes use of humour to unveil the irrationalities of their rulers. Singh makes use of wit to question customs that are outdated, strict doctrines and political misjudgements. The humour he uses operates as an important tool making it easier for readers to get involved with social realities profitably.

4.1.3. Power of Laughter

Humour serves as a stimulus for self-examination. It encourages the audiences to rethink social norms as it reduces the impact of criticism. By masking criticism with laughter humour gives space for deeper thinking. It enables the readers to reflect deeply about uncomfortable truth with no resistance. Singh's stories for instance makes use of wit and irony to expose the inconsistencies in social behaviour to reexamine their thoughts and not just laugh.

Humour and laughter are sides of a coin. Humour is like a literary device while laughter is the response to humour. It's imperative to distinguish between the two, Humour functions at the level of discourse and culture, and laughter belongs to the domain of physical and social response.

It forces introspection, questions the status quo, and softens the blow of harsh truths. By making us laugh at ourselves, writers using this literary device open the door for reflection and potential change. Khushwant Singh was renowned for his ability to expose the hypocrisies nestled within Indian society, and he did so with a healthy dose of humour.

4.2. Classical Approaches to Humour

The study of humour has a long and rich tradition, going back to the earliest philosophers. Humour has never been treated as mere entertainment; instead, it has been investigated as an essential part of human psychology and communication. Three major theoretical approaches dominate the history of humour studies: the Superiority Theory, the Relief Theory, and the Incongruity Theory.

The Superiority Theory can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle. According to this theory, laughter arises when people compare themselves with others and feel superior to

their weaknesses or misfortunes. Aristotle, in his discussions of comedy, argued that humour was essentially “a representation of people worse than average,” meaning that the comic figure must have some defect or folly. For him, humour should not be destructive but should highlight faults in a way that contributes to moral balance.

In the modern period, Thomas Hobbes took this view further by connecting humour to pride. For Hobbes, laughter arises from a “sudden glory” experienced when one recognizes one’s own superiority over others^[18]. The Superiority Theory remains influential because much of satire and parody still relies on mocking others’ follies.

The Relief Theory presents a psychological perspective. Sigmund Freud, in his seminal work *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*^[7], explained humour as a release of nervous energy and suppressed emotions. Laughter provides a safe outlet for tensions that cannot otherwise be expressed. For example, jokes about authority figures allow people to indirectly express criticism without openly challenging power. Relief Theory emphasizes humour as a safety valve for society, where people find balance between repression and expression^[12].

Later psychologists, such as Herbert Spencer, also supported this theory by suggesting that laughter releases “excess nervous energy.” The theory, though debated, highlights humour’s role as an emotional regulator. It explains why people often laugh in stressful or tragic situations as a way to cope with tension.

The Incongruity Theory has become the most widely accepted modern explanation of humour. According to this theory, humour arises when there is a mismatch between what people expect and what actually happens. The pleasure of humour lies in recognizing this discrepancy. Immanuel Kant argued that humour emerges from the “sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing.” Similarly, Schopenhauer described humour as the perception of incongruity between concepts and reality.

Henri Bergson, in *Laughter*^[19], extended this theory by emphasizing the mechanical and rigid aspects of human behaviour. He argued that people laugh when they see mechanical patterns imposed on life — for example, when someone slips on a banana peel or repeats themselves mechanically. Laughter acts as a social corrective, reminding people to remain flexible and human.

Some contemporary scholars like John Morreall (1983)^[20] further developed the Incongruity Theory. He stressed that humour arises not from any incongruity but from incongruity that is perceived as “benign.” Similar to what McGraw and Warren (2010)^[21] proposed which is called the “Benign Violation Theory.”. It argues that humour occurs when something threatens a person’s sense of how the world should be but at the same time it seems harmless. This balance between violation and safety creates laughter.

Together, these three classical theories form the foundation of humour studies. Each highlights a different function of humour — superiority focuses on social hierarchy, relief focuses on psychological health, and incongruity focuses on cognitive perception.

4.3. Beyond Classical Theories

While the three classical theories remain central, they are not mutually exclusive. Attardo argues that these theories can be seen as addressing different aspects of humour: its social, psychological, and cognitive dimensions. For example, in Khushwant Singh’s *Karma*, the humiliation of Sir Mohan Lal aligns with the Superiority Theory; however, the story also works through incongruity (the unexpected twist of his downfall) and relief (the release of colonial frustration).

Contemporary humour research many times combines these theories with linguistic and pragmatic approaches. Attardo’s General Theory of Verbal Humour(1991)^[9] is built on incongruity but adds layers that account for social and linguistic context. It is similar to Freud’s ideas of repression which continue to influence cultural analyses of humour in postcolonial settings, where jokes about colonialism act as a form of collective relief.

Thus, the classical theories not only provide historical context but also continue to inform modern human studies. They remain relevant for analysing both Western and Indian traditions of humour, especially when examining how humour serves as a medium of communication rather than just entertainment.

4.4. Humour and Culture

Humour does not exist in a vacuum. It is deeply tied to cultural context. What may make one community laugh may appear strange or even offensive to another. This is

why humour is often called one of the most culture-specific aspects of communication.

In India, humour has always played an important role in literature, folk traditions, and oral storytelling. The witty exchanges of Birbal in Akbar's court or Tenali Raman in South India are classic examples of how humour has historically functioned as a tool of wisdom, diplomacy, and social critique. Humour in these tales was rarely just entertainment; it was a way to question authority and address social problems in indirect, non-threatening ways.

Scholars like Mireault and Reddy (2016)^[6] note that humour is a social learning mechanism that strengthens shared knowledge. In collectivist cultures like India, humour often functions to create solidarity rather than to single out individuals. In contrast, Western traditions sometimes use humour to highlight individuality or to challenge social norms more aggressively.

Khushwant Singh inherits this cultural legacy but reshapes it through modern Indian English fiction. His humour, while often biting and satirical, reflects cultural realities — colonial hangovers, superstition, and communalism. Unlike Birbal or Tenali Raman, Singh uses the short story as a modern medium to frame humour not only for entertainment but also for social communication.

Romero and Cruthirds (2006)^[5] emphasize that humour in professional and intercultural contexts can serve to reduce tension, increase trust, and facilitate the communication of difficult issues. Singh's stories, though literary, provide a similar model by showing how humour addresses sensitive themes without causing outright offence.

4.5. Khushwant Singh's Contribution

Khushwant Singh (1915–2014) was one of the most celebrated Indian writers in English, known for his frankness, satire, and humour. His career spanned journalism, politics, and literature, giving him a unique perspective on Indian society. His writing style is simple and direct, yet powerful with humour being a central entity to this style.

Singh's humour is never superficial. It is often satirical, ironic, and meant to provoke thought. In his short stories, Singh takes everyday events and reveals deeper truths about human weakness, social injustice, or communal prejudice. For instance, *Karma* portrays the arrogance of Westernized Indians who disdain their own culture, while *The Mark of*

Vishnu exposes the tragic consequences of blind superstition. *The Riot* uses absurd comparisons to critique communal violence.

Beachcroft (1968)^[22] observes that Singh's humour is not forced but arises naturally from his precise use of language. His skill lies in combining simplicity of narration with biting irony. This is an interesting quality which makes his stories accessible to general readers while still offering layers of social commentary.

Singh's work has been studied by several critics. Harrex^[4] noted the realism in Singh's depiction of Indian society, while Arasu^[14] specifically examined his humour. However, most studies stop at literary or cultural interpretations. They analyse Singh's humorous social critique but rarely connect it to theories of communication or pragmatics.

The current study offers uniqueness in this regard. This analysis goes beyond characterizing humour as style by incorporating linguistic and pragmatic theories of comedy, such as Grice's cooperative principle and Attardo and Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Humour. It views comedy as a form of communication that could be used in storytelling to address delicate societal concerns.

Singh's humour, therefore, can be seen not only as a literary device but also as a communicative strategy. This perspective allows us to link his stories with broader discussions about how humour functions in workplaces, classrooms, and intercultural exchanges.

4.6. Linguistic and Pragmatic Theories of Humour

While the classical theories provide a foundation, modern linguistics has offered more systematic models to explain how humour operates in language. These frameworks are especially useful when analysing Khushwant Singh's short stories because his humour is not only thematic but also linguistic, arising from word choice, irony, and pragmatic cues.

4.6.1. The Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH)

Victor Raskin's *Semantic Mechanisms of Humour*^[23] introduced the Semantic Script Theory of Humour. According to this model, humour occurs when a text is compatible with two opposing scripts. A script here refers to a structured

chunk of semantic information that represents a situation. For example, in *The Mark of Vishnu*, the scripts of “religious worship” and “dangerous snake” clash, producing humour.

The SSTH explains why certain jokes or narratives are funny by showing how they compel the reader to activate two contradictory interpretations simultaneously. This is directly applicable to Singh, who often constructs stories around cultural contradictions — East vs. West, faith vs. reason, civility vs. barbarism.

4.6.2. The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH)

Attardo and Raskin^[9] expanded the SSTH into the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), which identifies six “Knowledge Resources” that interact to produce humour:

1. Script Opposition – the clash of incompatible interpretations (e.g., dignity vs. humiliation in *Karma*).
2. Logical Mechanism – the reasoning that connects the scripts (e.g., reversal, exaggeration, false analogy).
3. Situation – the background or context in which humour occurs (e.g., a colonial train compartment).
4. Narrative Strategy – the format of the text (joke, anecdote, story).
5. Target – the individual or group at whom the humour directed (e.g., Westernized Indians, superstitious villagers).
6. Language – the linguistic choices that deliver the punch (irony, understatement, repetition).

With the help of this approach, we may analyse Singh’s humour in a methodical manner. The logical process is reversal; the setting is colonial India; the narrative approach is the short tale; the language contains Singh’s sardonic wording; Sir Mohan Lal, for instance, becomes the “target” in *Karma*; the contrast is his self-image vs his real treatment; and the situation is colonial India.

The GTVH has been widely applied in humour search across languages and cultures. Its application here highlights the sophistication of Singh’s humour, showing it to be not merely cultural but also structurally communicative.

4.6.3. Pragmatics and Humour

Pragmatics, the study of meaning in context, provides another powerful framework for analysing humour. Many of Singh’s humorous effects arise not from jokes but from conversational dynamics and narrative tone.

- **Grice’s Cooperative Principle (1975):** Communication is based on maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner. Humour often arises when these maxims are flouted. In *The Riot*, Singh creates humour by violating the maxim of relation: he juxtaposes dog fights with communal riots, creating absurd incongruity.
- **Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson 1987):** Humour often functions as a face-saving strategy. In Singh’s stories, humour sometimes softens harsh critique. For example, the satire in *The Mark of Vishnu* critiques superstition but does so playfully, preventing direct offence to readers who may hold such beliefs. Conversely, humour is also face-threatening, as when Sir Mohan Lal’s arrogance is ridiculed.
- **Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1995):** Humour occurs when a statement forces the reader to reinterpret context, discovering hidden meaning. Singh often employs irony, where the literal statement contradicts the intended meaning, requiring readers to make inferential leaps.

These realistic representations relate comedy to ordinary conversation. They demonstrate how Singh’s stories reflect conversational techniques individuals employ in everyday situations where comedy may be used to question authority, ease tensions, or manage relationships.

4.6.4. Cognitive Approaches

Recent cognitive theories also stress the role of humour in mental processing. According to Coulson (2001)^[24], comedy necessitates “frame-shifting,” in which the mind alternates between interpretations. The Punchline surprises us and this cognitive change explains why. In Singh’s instance, the readers are compelled to go from one frame (colonial dignity) to another (colonial humiliation) as a result of the unexpected conclusion of story like *Karma*.

Cognitive science supports the idea that humour is not random but structured around mental processes of expectation and reinterpretation. This aligns with Singh’s carefully crafted narratives, which are simple on the surface but cognitively rich.

4.7. Relevance for the Present Study

By combining these linguistic and pragmatic theories, the present study situates Khushwant Singh’s humour at the

intersection of literature and communication.

Unlike earlier studies (e.g., Arasu^[14]), which mainly looked at Singh's stories as cultural artefacts, this paper treats them as communicative events. The integration of GTVH, cooperative principle, politeness, and relevance theory shows how Singh's humour functions not just as style but as strategy.

This approach also broadens the scope of human studies in India. It demonstrates that Indian English literature can be analysed using the same sophisticated frameworks applied to Western humour, proving its relevance to global discussions in linguistics and communication.

Apart from being an author and a journalist, Singh has also been a lawyer, a diplomat, and a politician. These varied roles have increased his horizon and exposed him to people and professionals in different social contracts and structures. He has used the acquired knowledge from his interactions and studies to improve society by making people aware of the situations and conditions that they can be in. Humour, sarcasm, and trenchant secularism form the soul of his work, helping him to be understood by the masses. His enduring love of poetry is also evident in his work. His work alarmed the sleepy heads who followed the leader without questioning them.

Khushwant Singh's short stories explore a range of themes. His stories are satirical in tone. Comic elements are also seen in almost all his short stories. There is a severe and melancholic note in his short stories. Many scenes in his stories evoke fear and sympathy in the reader's mind. His stories deal with Indian settings. Indian people, traditions, and rural and urban Indian life are painted in his stories. His stories are based on reality. Most of his characters are drawn from sophisticated Indian society. While dealing with these sophisticated and rural characters, Singh presents them in a realistic manner. There is no artificiality in their behaviour and speech. All his writings are characterised by humour, irony, and satire, which come together to create the very soul of his work. One of the commentaries quotes him, "We Indians may have lost our sense of humour, but we still have a rich laboratory of material to work on. Every third Indian is a clown in his own right: self-esteem, immodesty, acrimoniousness, name-dropping and verbosity make a golden treasury of the ridiculous"^[22]. Khushwant Singh has consistently been praised as a brilliant storyteller. Referring

to Singh's mastery in handling the short story form, T.O. Beachcroft writes: "He has combined his often-disastrous view of the human scene with a remarkable and telling precision of form." (Beachcroft, 1968). Khushwant Singh is distinct from many other Indian writers in that he makes distinctive use of short stories, blending humour, irony, and social critique. His stories realistically portray a world undergoing convulsive changes.

The use of irony and satire with a touch of humour is quite overt in the short stories of Khushwant Singh. Sometimes, he is very harsh in employing these tools of irony and satire. At the same time, he adds sugar to it in the form of humour. Making him a humorous satirist is his ability to amuse and entertain the reader. His satire is playful and does not hurt. All the stories of Khushwant Singh are loaded with irony and satire. The tales of Khushwant Singh are mute witnesses to the flaws and errors of Indian life.

5. Decoding and Findings

Humour and Irony at their best are encountered in *Karma*. It is a delightful illustration of studied irony against the pseudo-cultural values of the anglicised Indians. In this story, we are introduced to the character of Mohan Lal, a well-educated, foreign returned, cultured, and sophisticated man. It is expected from him that, with his education and knowledge, he will guide the Indian people. He should do something to improve the situation of Indians. He must think about the poverty and illiteracy of people. However, instead of this, he is very proud of his education, manners, and anglicised appearance. He hates his fellow citizens and calls them dirty, indifferent, and insufficient. Addressing the damaged mirror:

Extract 1

The mirror was made in India. The red oxide at its back had come off several places, and long lines of translucent glass cut across its surface.

'You are so much like everything else in this country, inefficient, dirty, indifferent,' he murmured^[25].

He is so proud that he cannot bear his wife's public appearance, and the author humorously laughs at the nature of this Anglicized Indian.

This extract compares the character's fussiness and pride to an ordinary worn-out mirror. Calling the mirror "inefficient, dirty, indifferent" is humorous as these are humanized qualities given to an object. The mention that he can't tolerate his wife's public appearance makes the extract humorous. The mirror's flaws represent his own rigidity. It is by showing contrast between everyday reality and his showiness that Singh makes us laugh. It amuses us as well as makes us think deeper about ego and the cultural mindset.

Extract 2

On a small grey steel trunk, Lachmi, Lady Mohan Lal, sat chewing a betel leaf and fanning herself with a newspaper. She was short and fat in her middle forties.

She wore a dirty white sari with a red border. A diamond nose ring glistened on one side of her nose, and she had several gold bangles on her arms.

'No, I am with my master, brother. He is in my waiting room. He travels first class. He is a vizier and a barrister, and he meets so many officers and Englishmen in the trains—and I keep to my zenana inter-class.'

Lady Lal hurriedly finished off her meal. She got up, still licking the stone of the pickled mango. She emitted a loud belch as she went to the public tap to rinse her mouth and wash her hands.

He rarely spoke Hindustani. When he did, it was like an Englishman's – only the essential words and properly Anglicized^[25].

This episode shows satire. In this extract Sir Mohan Lal shows blind admiration for the English by showcasing how excited he is to see them but ends up getting humiliated. There's a gap between his expectation and what actually happens and this is what creates humour.

Extract 3

'Janta – reserved. Army – Fauj,' exclaimed Jim, pointing to his khaki shirt. 'Ek Dum jao – get out!'
'I say, I say, surely,' protested Sir Mohan in his Oxford accent.

The soldiers caught Sir Mohan by the arms and flung him out of the train. He reeled backwards, tripped on his bedding, and landed on the suitcase^[25].

He refuses to accept that he is an Indian but is reminded by the end of the story ironically by two British privates that he, too, is, after all, not different from a dirty native. Lal is lying on the platform after being disgraced, while his consort is relaxed in the inter-class section, which depicts the irony of fate.

Extract 4

As "the train speed posts the lighted part of the platform, Lady Lal spat and sent a jet of red dribble flying like dirt"^[25]!

The spat here is a winning gesture of a simple Indian female contrasting that of an arrogant and proud Indian male, who assumes his persona to be English. It ironically contrasts with the idea of Lal as he gets humiliated and treated miserably at the hands of the people he so appreciates and holds as idols.

Mohan Lal is portrayed as having undergone ironic beatings in two aspects. The first downfall he suffers is when he is demeaned by the two British soldiers, who are so admirable to him that he cannot keep up his married relationship with his wife. He despises the husband-wife relationship and tries all possible ways to be presented as an English man. He distances himself from his wife by making her travel on the general couch and himself travelling first class, only to be further unsuccessful in getting a position among Britishers. All his sacrifices get trashed, and he only ends up humiliated by those he adores and wants to imitate so much.

The second downhill journey he has is his loss of identity. Having laboured to be seen as a Britisher, he overlooks Indian dressing styles, challenges the bond of marriage, which for Indians is a commitment made for life, and, above all, he starts losing Indian values. No wonder he has not become a Britisher or remains Indian. Given no regard among the so longed-to-be Britisher, he also loses his dignity and honour among Indians. In Western civilisation, there is equality between the man and woman as a couple. This fundamental element is also absent in his marriage. All these actions and thoughts result in adversity for him.

Arasu^[14] explains that Singh instead of showing unity he focuses more on the religion being the source problem. It was after the partition in 1947, Singh was writing when India was divided into India and Pakistan. During this violence there was violence between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and

religion became the marker of conflict as well as identity. In his story - *The Riot*, Singh shows how religion is the reason for conflict. In the story the Mark of Vishnu, he mentions the superstition of feeding milk to a snake, a belief the Hindus would practice to show how blind faith makes people vulnerable.

Irony is the art of saying something without saying it, and *The Riot* is the best example. *The Riot* is undoubtedly a masterpiece of irony. "The great communal frenzy arising out of a trivial incident is not merely ridiculous but extremely ironical"^[14].

The story's first sentence, "The town lay etherised under the fresh spring twilight"^[25], evokes the image of the most pleasant of all the seasons. However, the disastrous events that are shown to be taking place during this pleasant season paradoxically and ironically prove that man has rendered it a season of hate and fear. Khushwant Singh proves that human beings indulging in arson, looting, and murder because of the so-called communal differences are more beneficial than the beasts. "In describing the stupidity, evil, and horror of such degrading acts (communal barbarism), detachment is preserved through irony and satire"^[4].

Extract 5

Rani came to Ramzan's stall and sniffed around. Moti could not have been there for some days. She was disappointed. A train of suitors followed her.

With an angry growl, Moti leapt at Rani's lover. Other dogs joined the melee, tearing and snapping wildly.

Ram Jawaya had also spent several nights keeping watch and yelling back war crimes to the Moslems^[25].

In this extract Singh uses the dog's behaviour as a satire to human violence. Rani, the female dog visits Ramzan's stall. She is followed by other male dogs who want to get her attention. Another dog, Moti approaches and attacks one of the male dogs resulting in a chaotic fight. Singh made use of animals to allegorically comment on human society. This scene is humorous at the surface level but has a deep meaning associated with it. Just how dogs are seen to be fighting for no reason similarly humans get into pointless fights too seen as Ram Jawaya shouts insults to Muslims. The humour here is dark and biting

Extract 6

He slept soundly with a heap of stones under his charpoy and an imposing array of soda water bottles filled with

acid close at hand.

The shopkeeper picked up a big stone and opened the door. With a loud oath, he sent the missile flying at the dogs.

The stone did not cause much damage to Ramzan, but the sudden assault took him aback. He yelled 'murder!' and produced his knife from under his shirt. The shopkeeper and the grocer eyed each other for a brief moment and then ran back to their houses shouting.

Men emerged from their houses, making hasty inquiries^[25].

In this extract, the story is from a time of communal tension, where even small incidents got mistaken as deliberate attacks and provocation. The passage is satirical as Singh exposes a situation where people make elaborate preparations for violence and then overreact for minor incidents. This shows how a small everyday incident of a man throwing a stone at a pack of street dogs creates a scene of chaos where due to the fear, rumours and preparedness for violence produce a disproportionate response to everyone being on edge and this results in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Extract 7

A Moslem or a Hindu, it was said, had been attacked. Someone had been kidnapped and was being butchered.

They were met with a fusillade of stones, soda water bottles, and acid. They hit back unthinkingly. Tins of kerosene oil were emptied indiscriminately and lighted. Flames shot up in the sky, enveloping Ram Jawaya's home and the entire neighbourhood, Hindu, Moslem and Sikh alike.

Some months later, when the peace was restored, Ram Jawaya came to inspect the site of his old home.

There lay Rani with her litter nuzzling into her dried udders. Beside her stood Moti guarding his bastard brood^[25].

Singh often used animals to depict contrast between the behaviour of humans and animals to a certain scenario. His dark humour and satire is evident when he portrays a scene where humans are killing each other over religion, while a family of dogs continue living and protecting their family. He uses this humour to show that under conditions of violence and communal tensions, animals seem more rational than us free thinking and intelligent humans.

This passage shows that under certain condition humans can behave like savage animals while animals.

In *The Mark of Vishnu*, the ironic mode is used explicitly satirically. This story's irony arising from the gulf

between superstitious belief and tragic reality is strikingly shown. Irony is the keynote of *The Mark of Vishnu*. The narrative is a satire on the superstitious nature of Indians. Gunga Ram paints a “V” mark on his forehead as he worships Vishnu. He serves milk to cobra every day and worships him as a god. The same cobra bites him on his forehead, and the snakebite has fatal results.

Extract 8

‘This is for the Kala Nag,’ said Gunga Ram, pouring the milk onto the saucer. ‘Every night, I leave it outside the hole near the wall, and it has gone by the morning.’
‘Perhaps it is the cat,’ we youngsters suggested.

He will not bite anyone in this house if I give him milk.

‘Oh, nothing. There are so many frogs about. They must taste better than your milk. You never put any sugar in it anyway’^[25].

In Hindu tradition, snakes are considered very sacred and given divine power. Singh uses this to create humour in the text. Singh turns this belief into humour as he contrasts a man who is leaving milk for the snake, so he does not bite him or his family, while the local boys don’t believe the snake has any interest in the milk. He creates a satire showing the contrast between a superstitious old man and young boys with a more modern outlook.

Extract 9

The Phannyar is the male, so it could not have laid a hundred eggs. You must have laid the eggs yourself.

‘Must be Gunga Ram’s eggs. We will soon have a hundred Gunga Rams.’

The teacher pushed himself back on the chair and toppled over. He fell on the floor and stared at the cobra, petrified with fear. The boys stood up at their desks and yelled hysterically.

Kala Nag surveyed the scene with his bloodshot eyes.

On his forehead were little drops of blood. These the teacher wiped with his handkerchief. Underneath was the V mark where the Kala Nag had dug his fangs^[25].

Singh uses an exaggerated situation where he depicts what should be a terrifying scene of a teacher getting bit by a king cobra, however blends it with humour instead and the

students in the class find the teacher getting bit and falling off the chair to be hilarious. He uses satire to show that both blind faith and arrogant disbelief are both absurd and one should always have an open mind.

Humour is best used in literary fiction, which lasts and is produced methodically, has sane logic, steadiness, poise, and a meaningful creative ending. Outstanding literary fiction is projected for character development and maximum drama. Every narrative is meaningful, meaning it is usually tied very closely to a character’s awakening or enlightenment due to events and acts in the tale. Every productive narrative is pleasurable, resulting in irrevocable changes in readers’ thought processes.

6. Theoretical Implication

6.1. Communicative Implication

The study addresses essential research gaps in the area of literary research. Though there has been very little research on the literary work of Khushwant Singh and some research in the field of lighting your harsh communication with humour, there is hardly any research found like this that intersects textual analysis of literary work with the practice of communicating critical messages. There have been multiple incidents where the authors, speakers, and leaders have faced backlash from the general public or teammates in the business when communication is critical, as well as disciplinary messages. This research, with the study of the author’s style and thematic analysis, has fantastic implications and is a significant contribution to the theoretical body of knowledge.

Humour is not merely a literary device; it is a communicative tool. In Singh’s stories, humour frames sensitive issues such as colonial arrogance, superstition, and communal violence in ways that encourage reflection rather than confrontation.

This supports theories of human communication, where humour serves as a lubricant for difficult interactions. Romero and Cruthirds^[5] observe that human organizations reduce tension, enhance trust, and make sensitive messages easier to deliver. Similarly, in intercultural communication, humour helps manage cultural differences and prevent conflict. Singh’s stories illustrate this by showing how humour critiques sensitive topics in society without alienating the

audience.

Humour helps to bring out such risky topics for public discussions and helps everyone to understand the situation and the repercussions of neglecting them. Humour brings out all the shelved emotions and feelings of the people affected by the culture and religion, both positively and negatively, and those with a third-person view of it. Initiation of such discussions helps ignite the lamp under which the flaws can be amended, and the strengths can be supported, nourished, and, most importantly, shared with those who do not support or follow them. It helps voice concerns against those misleading the masses in the name of religion and culture. Scrutiny of the process, irrespective of how sacred and flawless it may seem, helps to maintain sanity in society.

6.2. Thematic & Stylistic Implication

Indian ethos reflected in texts has been studied remarkably. However, the thematic and stylistic aspects juxtaposed with the communicative aspects have hardly been researched to address the research gap. This study offers theoretical insights and practical implications and hence will be valuable to interdisciplinary stakeholders which include scholars doing research in literature, cultural studies and communication as well as educators. The works of Khushwant Singh studied here move to the very heart of critical topics like religion, culture, relationships, social unrest, and most importantly, the human reaction to the outcomes of them being practised and nurtured. The same story is presented in the books with different viewpoints of different characters at different times. This not only narrates varied perspectives of the scenarios but also helps people with diverse mindsets be included and heard. This invites a larger audience to the conversation. Hence, it facilitates the exchange of ideas and beliefs. Humour in Khushwant's narratives is not merely a source of entertainment and laughter but rises much higher to speak the otherwise unspeakable and to avail the unavailable concepts of literature. It is commendable how the portions come together to be baked in a unique, sweet cake that utilises less than all available tools at his disposal.

Stylistically, Singh's humorous style is simple yet layered. His language is straightforward, but the irony and satire are sharp. This accessibility ensures that readers from diverse backgrounds can understand and appreciate his stories.

Considering from a linguistic perspective, Singh's style

demonstrates the overlap between narrative technique and pragmatic strategy. Script opposition, conversational implicatures, and ironic understatement all serve communicative as well as literary functions. This makes Singh's humour an ideal case for studying how literature and communication intersect.

Thematically, Singh's hardcovers a wide range: the arrogance of Westernized elites, the dangers of superstition, and the irrationality of communal hatred. Together, these themes represent enduring challenges in Indian society. By presenting them humorously, Singh encourages reflection without despair.

6.3. Broader Implications

The implications of this study go beyond literary analysis. In the management field humour is recognized as a leadership tool that can build rapport, reduce stress, and improve decision-making^[26]. In education, humour enhances learning by making lessons memorable. In intercultural dialogue, humour breaks barriers and creates shared understanding. Singh's stories, though fictional, embody these communicative functions, proving that literature can offer lessons for practical communication.

By analysing Singh's humour through linguistic and pragmatic theories, this study contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship. It bridges literary criticism, linguistics, and communication studies, showing how humour operates across fields.

6.3.1. Theory Implication in Karma

The story *Karma* presents Sir Mohan Lal, a Westernized Indian who looks down upon his own culture. He prides himself on his English accent, Oxford education, and whisky-drinking habits. He despises his wife Lachmi for being "too Indian."

"You are so much like everything else in this country, inefficient, dirty, indifferent," he murmured in his mirror^[25].

Sir Mohan believes his adoption of Western manners makes him superior. The humour arises from the irony of his situation: the very culture he adores humiliates him. In the end, two British soldiers throw him out of the first-class compartment despite his impeccable English.

This scene exemplifies the Superiority Theory of humour, where the reader feels a sense of triumph over Sir Mohan's arrogance. But it also aligns with the Incongruity Theory because the outcome clashes with expectations: the Anglicized Indian, who sees himself above others, is reduced to ridicule.

From a linguistic perspective, the story demonstrates script opposition: "refined vs. vulgar," "coloniser vs. colonised," "privileged vs. humiliated." The logical mechanism is reversal, as Sir Mohan's pride turns into disgrace. Pragmatically, humour arises from the violation of Grice's maxim of manners: the blunt insults from the soldiers attack his social face, stripping away the dignity he had tried to build.

Khushwant Singh's choice of language enhances the humour. He describes Sir Mohan's vanity with a tone of understated irony, allowing readers to laugh at his foolishness without overt commentary. For example, Singh mentions Sir Mohan's fondness for "The Times," whisky, and company of Englishmen as if these were badges of honour. The detached narration makes the downfall even more striking.

The story also reflects colonial history. Many Indians in the early twentieth century adopted Western culture, believing it conferred superiority. Singh critiques this mindset by showing how colonial powers never truly accepted such imitation. Instead, they reinforced hierarchies that humiliated the colonized, regardless of how "Westernized" they became.

This cultural critique connects directly to communication studies. The story highlights the dangers of inauthentic communication — when individuals adopt styles or identities that are not genuinely their own. In professional or intercultural contexts, similar problems arise when people imitate others' communication styles without understanding context. Singh's satire warns against blind imitation and stresses the importance of authenticity.

Another humorous element in *Karma* is the contrast between Sir Mohan and his wife Lachmi. She is content sitting on the platform, eating chapatis and pickles, talking freely with strangers. Sir Mohan, in contrast, isolates himself in a luxurious compartment, convinced of his superiority. Ironically, it is Lachmi who experiences comfort and social connection, while Sir Mohan faces humiliation.

This juxtaposition reflects the Relief Theory of humour.

Readers release social tension by laughing at Sir Mohan's pretensions while sympathizing with the simplicity of Lachmi. Singh positions Lachmi as authentic and grounded, while Sir Mohan becomes the butt of humour.

The methodological application of humour theories to this story demonstrates the value of interdisciplinary analysis. It combines literary, cultural, and linguistic perspectives in which we see how humour functions at multiple levels: as entertainment, as social critique, and as communicative strategy.

6.3.2. Theory Implication in The Mark of Vishnu

This story critiques blind faith and superstition in Indian society. Gunga Ram, a simple-minded servant, worships a cobra, believing it to be a form of the god Vishnu. He offers the snake milk as an act of devotion.

"He will not bite anyone in this house if I give him milk," said Gunga Ram^[25].

Ironically, the cobra later bites him, leading to his death. Singh uses humour to expose the futility of superstition without directly mocking religious belief. The humour lies in the incongruity between expectation (the snake will protect him) and reality (the snake kills him).

This reflects the Incongruity Theory, as the outcome sharply contrasts with cultural expectations. It also reflects the Relief Theory, since readers release tension through nervous laughter at the tragicomic ending.

In terms of linguistic theory, the story demonstrates script opposition: "life vs. death," "worship vs. danger," and "safety vs. threat." The logical mechanism here is a false analogy: let's have a look at Gunga Ram's experience with cobra where he treats the cobra as divine, but the analogy fails tragically. Pragmatically, the humour arises from irony—the servant's confident statements are undermined by the fatal outcome.

Singh's narration is subtle. He does not openly ridicule Gunga Ram; instead, he allows the events to unfold naturally, creating space for the reader's reflection. The humour is dark, making readers laugh uneasily while also confronting the dangers of superstition.

If we look from a communication perspective, this story illustrates how humour critiques sensitive issues without provoking hostility. Religion is a deeply personal subject, and

direct criticism often causes defensiveness. By using humour and irony, Singh enables discussion of superstition in a way that engages readers instead of alienating them. This demonstrates humour's value in intercultural and professional communication, where sensitive topics must often be addressed tactfully.

6.3.3. Theory Implication in The Riot

This story focuses on communal tension, one of the most serious problems in Indian society. It begins with a description of trivial quarrels, even among animals, which gradually escalate into human conflict.

"A Moslem or a Hindu, it was said, had been attacked... Flames shot up in the sky, enveloping the neighborhood"^[25].

The humour lies in the absurdity of comparing petty fights to violent riots. The initial dog fight seems unimportant, but it foreshadows the irrational escalation of human behaviour. Singh employs bathos, moving from trivial to tragic in a way that is both comical and horrifying.

In terms of humour/theory, the story exemplifies the violation of Grice's maxim of relation. By connecting unrelated events (animal fights and communal riots), Singh creates absurdity that exposes the irrational nature of communal violence. The script opposition here is "trivial vs. catastrophic," showing how small conflicts can spiral into devastation.

The satire is biting yet controlled. Singh does not present communal hatred through direct preaching. Instead, he shows how irrational escalation mirrors the behaviour of quarrelling dogs. The humour is uncomfortable but effective, forcing readers to reflect on the absurdity of hatred.

From a pragmatic perspective, the story also shows how humour can be used to subvert authority and question social norms. By laughing at the ridiculousness of communal riots, readers are encouraged to view violence as irrational and unnecessary. This links humour with social critique, aligning with Attardo's view that humour is not only about amusement but also about critical reflection.

The story resonates with modern contexts where small disputes can trigger large-scale conflicts, both in communities and in organizations. In intercultural communication, minor misunderstandings can sometimes escalate into major

conflicts. Singh's story, though literary, models how humour reveals these absurdities and prompts more thoughtful responses.

6.4. Comparative Insights

When viewed together, the three stories — *Karma*, *The Mark of Vishnu*, and *The Riot* — demonstrate the range of Singh's humour. *Karma* critiques colonial arrogance, *The Mark of Vishnu* exposes superstition, and *The Riot* highlights communal tension. Each story uses humour differently: reversal, irony, bathos.

The comparative analysis shows that Singh's humour always combines entertainment with critique. It exposes weaknesses without resorting to hostility. This aligns with global theories of humour. It also proves that Indian English literature can engage in the same analytical frameworks as Western texts.

Humour here is more than style; it is a communicative strategy. Singh shows how laughter can carry serious messages, making it possible to discuss sensitive issues like colonialism, religion, and communalism in ways that are memorable and thought-provoking.

Humour was incorporated into his writing and narration style. Some of the most astounding elements used are shown in **Figure 1**.

The recurrent theme in his stories is the corrupt and decadent social setup of present-day India. In his short stories, Singh criticises the bureaucracy, the hypocritical man, the Westernized Indians, the illiterate Indians, the irresponsible government servants, and the hypocritical Indians abroad. The study of selected short stories of Khushwant Singh has revealed the significant role of humour as an artistic instrument for the author. Through his masterful use of wit, satire, irony, and absurdity, Singh employs humour to engage readers, challenge societal norms, and critically comment on various aspects of Indian society. This paper has explored humour's various forms and functions in Singh's short stories, highlighting its effectiveness in conveying complex ideas, fostering empathy, and encouraging introspection. Thus, the study provides thematic and stylistic insights to academic and literary researchers, and the outcomes can be used to improve social practices and communicative style.

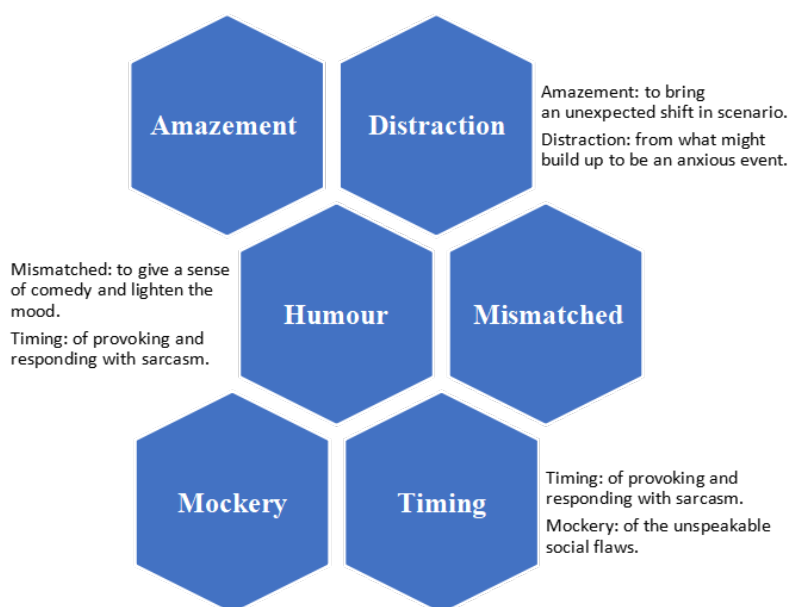


Figure 1. Elements of Humour.

Source: The author.

7. Conclusion

This evidential study on the power of humour has multifaceted aims, such as providing thematic comprehension, understanding the style to use humour, and using this analysis to practice communicating critical messages with an agile tone.

The originality of this study lies in shifting focus from purely literary analysis^[14] to communicative analysis based on pragmatics and human theory. By applying frameworks like the General Theory of Verbal Humour, Grice's cooperative principle, and politeness theory, the study shows how Singh's humour functions as a communicative strategy.

Humour is a rich resource, and Khushwant Singh uses it fully. A potent reminder that laughter can be a source of strength and healing, even in the most trying situations, is Singh's ability to find humour in the face of hardship. Khushwant Singh has ridiculed Indian poverty, superstitions, anglicised people, democratic elections, Indian offices and employees, and corruption through his writing. He has exposed and ridiculed these Indian drawbacks, which India is lagging, as they proved to be obstacles in progress. Singh has multiple instances to create a vivid narrative through events that will softly tickle the reader's foot and sometimes be hard on the ribs. This study is concluded by understanding the style of humour the author applied and its desired impact; this understanding will also help the fraternity enhance communication while expressing critical yet significant messages.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, S.G.; methodology, S.G.; software, M.J.; validation, A.B.P.; formal analysis, C.S.; investigation, S.G.; resources, S.D.-R.; data curation, S.D.-R.; writing—original draft preparation, S.G.; writing—review and editing, S.G.; visualization, P.G.S.; supervision, P.G.S.; project administration, S.G.; funding acquisition, K.B.D. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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