

## **Life, Lust and Lament of Mohan Kumar in The Company of Other Women**

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### **Abstract:**

Khushwant Singh is considered as the India's most excellent Post Colonial English Literature author and columnist. He is founder – editor of Yojana. He is an exceptional, gifted, versatile acumen writer. He is recognized for his comprehensive roles in his celebrated life as a Critic, Journalist, Editor, Essayist, Novelist, Translator, Diplomat, Historian, and a Politician (as a Member of Parliament) all rolled into one. He values Indian faith, traditions and other ingredients of the society and is deeply rooted in the soil of India. "I am the product of the East and the West", he declares, "I am coin the word, an Orio-Occidental."

Khushwant Singh has written four substantial novels - Train to Pakistan 1956, I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale 1959, Delhi 1990, and The Company of Women 1999, as a fiction writer. On scrutinizing, these four novels, it is noticeable that he is fundamentally a pragmatic and humanist.

The company of women commemorates the ubiquitous and the unending anecdote of man's relationship with woman: the association of love, sex and passion. This novel illustrates this relationship in a very bizarre and creative style, which is not only uninhibited and bawdy, but at the same time extremely enthrall and gripping.

This research paper deals with the core protagonist Mohan Kumar and his depiction of Life, desire and mourn in Khushwant Singh Novel - the Company of Women. The paper is divided into three fractions – His existence, longing and for what he laments. The paper will analyse every parts in order to reveal all the element of his passion.

### **First Fraction:**

#### **Kumar Mohan – Existence**

To begin with the sketch of Mohan Kumar – a fiction character of Khushwant senile fantasies. Khushwant Singh is not the foremost author in the history of man to inscribe about the masculinity. Different author such as Paulo Coelho - Adultery, D.H. Lawrence- Lady Chatterley's Lover and Gillian Flynn – The Gone Girl are some of the examples where the writer have tried to explore the contentious phases of their experience, but it only Khushwant Singh who dares to talk about the sexuality in The Company of Women. Here, Khushwant Singh explores mentality through the sex.

Mohan Kumar, the chief protagonist is the only son in his family; his mother died giving birth to him, his father a retired middle level government employee. From childhood, Mohan was a gifted student, achieved a state scholarship to DAV college; topped the university in degree examination; received scholarship from six different universities of America. He opted for Princeton University, where Einstein has taught mathematics and made his home. He attained his degree in computers and business management. He was the only princetonian to earn a summa cum laude, the highest academic distinction anyone can earn in any American university. (90). In spite of a bright future, he flies back for his father. "I would not abandon him in his old age." (73) His father has a dream as all the parents have, that their son should get married and settle down with a nice, caring and girl having good family values. His father gives a matrimonial ad in some national dailies, with captions extolling Mohan academic achievements. This customs of finding bride/grooms stills prevail in India. Mohan Kumar follows whatever his father tells him to do. Despite the fact that he does not like the social system, for his father's insistence he remains "a mute spectator, eyeing one girl after another." (74).

Mohan Kumar marries Sonu, a girl with wealthy background. Actually Rai Bahudar lala Achint was the highest bidder for Mohan Kumar. Sonu was convent educated, having high spirit and fair complexion. From the beginning, Mohan Kumar felt suffocated as Sonu family interfered a lot from his honeymoon to his divorce. Mohan didn't want to get married to Sonu, due to lack of class status. Mohan once tried to weighed, the pros and cons of marriage and thus conclude that "Love is an elusive concept and means different things to different people. There is nothing elusive about the lust because it means the same things to all the people: it is the physical expression of liking a person of the opposite sex.....Love cannot

last very long without lust. Lust has no time limit and is the true foundation of love and affection.” (108)

Despite the fact that sex is the physical act, it is also associated with human consciousness and persona as a whole. It is not that Mohan seeks friendship; only the company, not of a human being of opposite sex, but of female body just for mating. This only corroborates with his faith that lust rather than love shapes human life.

After a grand marriage cum display of the dowry, true colour of Sonu was visible, be it honeymoon act or any other act. She was quick tempered, possessive and wanted to grab everyone attention at all the time (4). At one instances, Sonu parent’s reaction made Mohan felt like a criminal ‘The first time you take Sonu out you bring her back sick.’ (127)

Within a year Mohan and Sonu were blessed with a baby boy. But this blessing was not welcomed by Sonu as well as his parents, they both blamed Mohan for this. ‘She missed her period. She was angry. Why didn’t you use condoms?’ she demanded (129). ‘You could have been more patient; she is only a child of twenty – one .There was plenty of time to start a family’ (130) remarked her mother.

Mohan didn’t react towards her nagging and needling .He ignored her and kept out of her way, this infuriated Sonu. So finally she picked on her father-in-law, she started to feel bitter about her father –in-law presence. Will your old man live with us all his life’ she once asked in disgust. I married you, not both of you,’ (4). Sonu tries new-fangled technique on daily basis to harass her father –in-law. Ultimately mental harassment bestowed by Sonu towards his father-in-law, made him finally moved to Haridwar.

At one instance, Sonu overheard Mohan talking to one of his women friends. She accused him of having a liaison with ‘that whore’. She called him a lecher (5). Sex became a dutiful ritual performed once or twice every month. After six year of ranjit born, they were blessed with a baby girl. There is a common belief that children cement a marriage, but nothing improved but it degraded, five year passed without getting closer and Sonu was at her peak in annoying, irritating Mohan. To add more, Mohan didn’t intend to inform Sonu about her father death, infact he said ‘why should you be? You drove him out of this house, ‘I said in a burst of rage. ‘He will not bother you anymore.’ (160). Fights between them was a common routine, after her father death it increased and once evening it reached its peak where Sonu slapped Mohan and shouted I’ll teach you how to behave like a gentleman, you filthy lecher!’ Mohan lost his control and slapped Sonu .Sonu stunned ‘I’ll teach you a lesson you ‘ii never forget for the rest of your life.’ Mohan returned from police station. Sonu had gone with children to her

parent's house. Sonu come back after a month but still nothing changed, after a month's quarrelling, fighting, abusing, mental and physical torched, pain, agony Mohan gave up and demanded a Divorce to which Sonu agreed. Mohan loved the children and for their sake tried to keep the marriage working but failed in last.

Mohan who was a good scholar with great achievements failed miserably in his married life. He achieved everything from scholarship to an elite member of well known club but his marriage and moreover Sonu attitude forced him to kneel down before her. What a waste of life .achieved a lot a little age. In spite of his sex adventures at Princeton, he tries to begin his married life anew with no hankering back, but Sonu has no desire either to develop or continue that relationship. She finds fault with him, never responds to any of his efforts to be happy. As a result, Mohan Kumar is also extremely dejected. She makes his life impossible. He cannot even enjoy his evening drinks and TV. He slowly drifts away from her. It is true that Mohan Kumar has an exceptionally strong urge for sex. But due to his disturbed married life, he could not enjoy sex even for months. His domestic life is not successful. His married life is most unhappy. His wife, Sonu, is sadist and revengeful.

The projection of Mohan might seem extremely obscene at times but on a stern note, through some light fencing, the role which he played of a loving son was noteworthy. After the demise of his father, throughout his life till the end he kept going back to Haridwar as a part of his promise to his father and stayed at his father's room.

## **Second Fraction**

### **Kumar Mohan Longing**

The story proceeds as Mohan, in an effort to overcome loneliness, decides to publish an advertisement for having contractual trysts with women for a mutually agreed time - duration in the leading newspaper – The times of India and The Indian Express. Through the add ,different woman got in touch with Mohan which included Sarojini Bharadwaj a Hindu English professor from Rewari. Molly Gomes, a Christian trained physiotherapist from Goa. Mohan being a young millionaire, always believed that sex was more pressing need than love or companionship. He was convinced that Lust has no time limit and is the true foundation of love and affection (108). Mohan uninhibited and erotic account of sexual life is clearly visible. Mohan doesn't intend to get involved with any particular woman; he says 'As soon as I sensed a feel getting emotionally involved in me, I dropped her'. This declaration shows that he is only concerned with lust and for him lust is the true foundation of love and affection. Mohan emerges as a human figure who is cursed with lust.

His sex escapades, were bizarre and mixed, including his repeated relations with his ever-obliging maid, Dhanno a sweeper, a class so called untouchable (13) with whom he had practiced charm on the bed. As per Mohan, Dhanno was not the sort of companion he had advertised, but lust was also an aspect of love –perhaps its most important constituent (19). Another woman, Mary Joseph a Christian, dark, plump TAMILIAN nurse in her thirties who worked as a nurse to his son .She tacitly almost invited Mohan with these words, “Saar, one life to live, not to waste it on a drunkard husband. You agree?” Kumar has agreed (138) Sarojini Bhardwaj, a Hindu divorced mother, surprised Mohan at the first meeting by touching his feet. And, when it came to sex, the lady professor demonstrated that she was stronger than many men. Molly Gomes, another lady who was “not only as an incarnation of sensual impulse, but also as a mistress of sexuality.”

Mohan affair with all these girls only proved his belief that lust is the foundation of love and affection .Moreover he believed that that with the sex urge gone, there was little left for him to look forward to. This confidence proved wrong when he was informed by his family doctor that he is HIV Positive. Finally after two years of struggle, Mohan died a coward death by consuming thirty sleeping pills.

#### **Conclusion:**

Mohan being intelligent, who have travelled globally and had imminence knowledge on everything opted for a coward decision to end his life. As a result, this long line of paramours points to no development or awareness in Mohan Kumar. It only confirms his belief that lust rather than love shapes human life. This consciously level of lust took away his life. The story also serves as a sort of modern-day morality tale, with Mohan Kumar committing suicide as he realizes he has AIDS, in effect, paying for his promiscuity.

#### **Third Faction**

##### **Kumar Mohan lament**

Mohan always mourn for a well established family life, from being a middle class to young millionaire was not an easy task for Mohan. His family life was full of pain, anguish and suffering. He tried his best to keep his family life intact but failed miserably. Even he was not able to keep his God Fearing father in his house due to his ignorant ill tempered wife. He was not allowed to speak or meet his children as Sonu has filled them with poisonous against their father or rather brainwashed their feeling towards him. Mohan believed that children cement the marriage but in his case it was totally opposite. Even his two children could not save the marriage.

Whatever Mohan suffered was his destiny. He didn't forgot those who were with him during his good or bad times be it servant, bearer, driver and Vimla Sharma all had a share of Rs 50,000 in cash. His house equally distributed among his children, jewellery to his daughter and car to driver.

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