

THE QUEST FOR EXISTENCE IN KAVITA DASWANI'S 'FOR MATRIMONIAL PURPOSES'

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ABSTRACT:

The novel, 'For Matrimonial Purposes', focuses on the topic of arranged marriage for Anju, who has passed the marriageable age and has not yet been able to retrieve an acceptable alliance within her culture. On the basis of research, she goes to America hoping to find an alliance faster than at home, in India. Though time goes by, there are no suitable alliances coming her way, but as a fashion reporter she succeeds professionally. Her career gives her an independent identity, of which she is proud, but at the same time she is conscious of the insecurity of her parent and her own isolation and desire to get married.

Keywords: *Diaspora, Space, Marriage, Immigrant, Dislocation.*

Kavita Daswani is comparatively a recent writer among the Indian Diaspora community who have been living in the USA. She serves as a fashion correspondent for CNN International, CNBC Asia and Women's Daily Wear. She has written for the Los Angeles Times and the International Herald Tribune. She was also the design editor at the Hong Kong South China Morning Post. Originally from Mumbai, however, grew up in Hong Kong. She is now living with her husband and two sons in Los Angeles. The diasporic writings have the meaning of dislocation and exist between the two communities. Jasbir Jain points out that "Authors who have moved from one community to another are caged between two societies and sometimes participate in a cycle of self-recovery by resorting to past and recollection or in an act of change in a process of self-preservation"¹.

The word "diaspora" derives from Greek meaning 'scattering or spilling of seeds.' The Diaspora is not only a question of dislocation or deterritorialization, but "composed of individuals, numerous travels, quiet points and border crossings ... formed by their economic positions, their professional abilities and their political ties between country of origin and their adoption"². In fact, the immigration rules of the home nation play a significant role in rendering the diaspora taste salty, pleasant, acidic or hot. The concept of home is deeply rooted in diasporic experience. The sense of belonging persists in the subconscious of the expatriate.

Daswani's novel, 'For Matrimonial Purposes' is about middle class woman in Bombay, Anju, is planning an arranged marriage. A partner is looking for her in the entire novel. Her space dimension is reduced and expands in line with the quest for a life partner by

herself and her parents. Anju's personality is of a single teenager who has gone into her thirties. Her involvement, colleagues, and work in New York are never asked of her.

At the very beginning of the novel, we notice Anju observing her cousin Nina's marriage ceremony. Her personal space is influenced by other people's opinions. Since arriving in Bombay, she has received several items – “advice, consideration for compassion ... empathy and warmth”. She often wondered, "why aren't you married yet? The personal and emotional environments overlap with the social space and conflicting emotions compete with the other spatial regions.

While she stays in New York alone, she has a deep faith in her own Indian culture. She sees marriage as a partnership and a reconciliation. But this should be achieved on both hands, not only on the side of a woman. For this very cause, she refuses the proposition of an Indian man, who only wants a glorified woman (wife) to take home in Ghana. From the age of 21 to the present, there are many proposals, but most of them sadly have a fatal flaw. In the meantime, she seeks a chance to create her political, literary, spatial, intellectual, physical, socio-cultural places, and moves to New York. But when a proposal comes at home for her, she has to erase her personal and literary spaces, as well as her geographical and mental spaces. She has been told the etiquettes, wait until the boy first speaks, smile and reveal as little as possible ... Don't show you any opinions or intelligence. Boy don't like it. You can say what you want after you are married, but be quiet until then.

Anju's mother is trying her best to fix the marriage of her daughter with any proposal from any country. Her vain attempts never lift her dreams. She is conservative but has a personal room in which she worries for her daughter intensely. She believes Anju is her other half. The human space is still included in this relation. In refusing the suggestion of her friend, she states, “... boys would be more open-minded and thought-out in these days. It's his loss if he doesn't want to marry my daughter. We're trying to pursue someone stronger”.

Only her manager, Marion, has Anju's fellow impression. She is really involved in the situation of Anju and encourages her to go and find a husband. It never interferes with the personal space of Anju and creates an area for Anju too. The human room has a close connection with the personal environment. Creating 'room' for oneself is not so easy and it is rather challenging for women. They do have to contend with the oppressive systems. A woman with higher levels of social standing and expertise faces more difficulties in building 'space.' The lower position of women in our patriarchal culture lets people feel relaxed.

Anju's brother, family and friends face these challenges. And her aunts' female counterparts threaten to obstruct Anju's travel to New York to continue her studies. They send Anju's mother all kinds of excuses to convince her to quit Anju. They say, "Girls going to 'Umrica' get too free, too spoiled. They can't adapt then. Few boys like them, though. You need to get better influence over her. You can at least see her online. Not there? But there? How are you to learn when she is doing to do there?"

This is not their responsibility, though. These are the social norms that make them believe that they can not create a space for themselves. Often Anju curses herself because she is a child. The standards set for girls make her feel unhappy. She is battling for her own freedom while following all the tasks to find a boyfriend. Arvind and Anil, her two brothers

recognize their elder sister well. They have a soft corner for their sister in their domain (from human space). The personal space of Anju forces her to select her own husband. But Udhay, says the astrologer, She's a person of a particular nature. She's going to need a different kind of boy. Not for the boys of these mummies. She'll find her own boy, and he'll be independent like her, too.

Anju eventually finds Rohan, a civil rights lawyer, who resides in Los Angeles as her long-term fellow countryman. Like Anju, he too is exiled from his family and resides in the diaspora. "It's not pleasant to be alone at 39," he notes. A life partner is needed to create new opportunities, to create new places, both together and independently. Their unification contributes to a more fresh intermingling of different dimensions of space.

Ultimately, I may conclude that Kavita Daswani depicts Anju's agony for seeking an acceptable marriage in her novel, *For Matrimonial Purposes*. Anju is battling for her freedom while doing the traditional stuff to get a husband. Nevertheless, her mother has complete faith in Anju. When she was finding her a partner, community criticized her, including her relatives, even women relatives. Daswani delineated woman's misery in the form of Anju for her own marriage. However, she eventually succeeds in trying to find a suitable partnership and marry Rohan.

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