

**Quest for Marriage and Traditions in Kavita Daswani's**

*For Matrimonial Purposes*

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***Abstract***

The novel *For Matrimonial Purposes* focuses on Anju, who dreams of her marriage. As Anju's marriage is very difficult to finalise, she follows the words of an astrologer and a swamiji. They advice her to follow fasting on Monday, for it is the best day for Lord Shiva and advises her to pray God by giving some mantras. Anju follows these old beliefs to satisfy her mother. At the meantime she wants to get married. Some proposals come close to marriage but she rejects them, because they chose Anju as their wife only to fulfill their domestic purpose. She wants to lead her life freely. So she goes to America and succeeds in her career and creates her own identity. At the same time, she is conscious of the insecurity of her parents, her own isolation, and desire to get married.

***Keywords:*** Culture, Domesticity, Host Culture, Marriage, Tradition.

Introduction

Kavita Daswani is comparatively a recent writer among the Indian Diaspora community who lives 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, she grew up in Hong Kong. She now lives with her husband and two sons in Los Angeles.

The diasporic writing has the meaning of dislocation and exists 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” (180).

This paper attempts to explain, in this society, how marriage plays vital role among the teenage girls, how the society looks at girls who have not get married at proper ages. As the marriage delays, Indian girls are compelled to follow the blind tradition and culture. Here Daswani suggests that marriage can take place at any age, but the selection of life partner is very much important in everyone's life. In the select novels her protagonist wants to escape from the topic of marriage. So she decides to go to America for higher education. The author discusses the problems she faces in the host culture and her achievement as a magazine editor to create her own identity.

Daswani's *For Matrimonial Purposes* is about Anju, a middle class woman from Bombay, who plans to have an arranged marriage. She looks for her partner in the entire novel. Anju is a teenager who is now in her thirties. The novel starts with her grandmother, who got married at the age of ten. Her mother got married at the age of twenty. Anju is expected get married at least at the age of thirty. But now she is thirty-three, still unmarried.

Two days after Anju's twenty-first birthday, her mother goes to meet the astrologer, Udhay, with her birth chart. He says that rahu stays in her seventh house. So this is not the good time for her marriage, so that they have to wait for her marriage, “Your daughter has rahu in her seventh house, he said, pausing. The timing is not good for her now for marriage. She must wait” (FMP 75). Her mother asks how long should they wait for her marriage. Udhay says to wait some more years for the good time. By hearing some years, her mother is stunned. Then he continues if she might have born twenty minutes before, there is no problem. Anju thinks that is not her fault that she was born too late.

Udhay says that the planets in her birth chart are not good at the exact time when she was born. If she gets married, something will happen to the boy, maybe she doesn't like him. He advises Anju's mother to arrange her marriage at the age of twenty six. Anju's mother feels very disappointed and angrily says that who will marry her at the age of twenty six. Anju feels crying not by hearing the words of astrologer, but she makes her mother to disappoint. He says her mother to be very patient and continue her prayers, so that one day the miracle will happen.

For Anju, proposal is a big deal, so she is ready to follow some of the mantras and beliefs because she wants to get married. After some days, her mother takes her to Swami Upananda, for she does not get any good marriage proposal. He says that there is a curse upon Anju. Some years ago her father's cousin wants to marry him but he marries Anju's mother. So she puts her curse on their first born child that the child would never get married. To remove the curse, Anju should recite small mantras and he says Monday is the apt day as it is the day of Lord Shiva. So she used to say mantras by using a long rosary and go around the rosary eleven times. Swami Upananda comments "Some cousin of your husband, long ago. She wanted to marry him, you see. And, bas, when he married you, she became most angry. She went to her grave a nyaarni, a virgin. And she put a curse on your head that your first-born would never marry" (FMP 92).

Anju's family seeks the advice of astrologers, family priests, and professional matchmakers. They advice her to pray God and follow some fasting. Anju's mother motivates her to say more prayers and to follow the fasting strictly. She knows that most of the girls at their marriageable age used to follow Monday fasting for Lord Shiva, for Lord Shiva is the provider of good life. She remembers that her aunt used to say that her cousin, Lata, Gita, Nina, Nita all are good girls as they follow the fasting for Lord Shiva. There is a belief that He will be happy about their prayers and fasting, and bless them with a good boy. She decides to follow fasting to make her mother happy and get herself married. Though these superstitious beliefs and customs are very ridiculous, truly it is a part of Indian tradition. Though they sound funny and ridiculous; unfortunately they have been a part of the tradition from the past, "Marriage, suggest numerous writers, does not guarantee the safety of home or a clear identity for the women. Many women writers in India, for instance, emphasize that marriage might indeed be detrimental to the woman's identity...She subsumes her identity under that of the family" (Nayar13).

Within a month, Anju's parents take her to four pilgrimages across India. They visit many swamis, saints, gurus, healers, and astrologers. Everywhere she bows her head at the feet of God's statues and the feet of all the people, they meet. She ties a lot of thread around her hands and a ring with color stones. Anju's mother used to attend the prayers and rituals at the small temple near the house. Every day she washes the statues of Lord Ganesh, Lord Shiva, and Goddesses Lakshmi with milk and rose water, covers them with fabrics. Sometimes Anju also

goes with her mother for some resolution. She believes all her fasting and prayer would help her to whither away all the troubles in her birth chart and will bring a good husband for her.

Nowadays Anju is very much afraid to attend the family functions because of her relative's words, which really hurt her. She returns to Bombay from New York to attend her cousin, Nina's marriage. Nina is so younger than Anju. Her aunt asks her how long they will wait for Anju's marriage. Anju forces herself to smile in front of her aunties. But inside her mind she feels a lot, for not getting a suitable spouse.

Anjus' cousin Nina, at the Jhule Lal Temple, is going to become a wife in the presence of three hundred people, most of them are whom she met already and some of them she had never met. Anju feels sad as an elder, unmarried cousin. Everyone who watches her understands that she stands with guilt, pain, and jealous that her another younger sister is going to get married. Her aunt Mona consoles her "Don't worry, beti, it will be your turn soon, Auntie Mona consoled, patting me on the back. God will listen to your prayers. It's all karma. Tsk Tsk" (FMP 7). Anju concentrates on Nina's marriage, she and her groom pray in front of a small bright orange fire, both of their parents stand near by watching the family priest, uttering thousands of Sanskrit words.

Now the ceremony comes to Anju's favourite part, that the groom takes a sindoor and places it in his new wife's hair-parting. According to Anju, it seems that "You're mine now. We belong to each other. He looked at her with something that appeared to be the pride mixed with awe. While it might not yet be love, the happiness seemed real, born of gratitude. He also seemed relieved. He had done it; he'd found the perfect bride and the fun could start" (FMP 8). Here Daswani portrays the real mind of Anju about the concept of marriage. At the same time it also reveals her thirst for selecting her husband, to lead her remaining life happily.

Daswani reveals the importance of physical beauty in Indian culture. On Nina's marriage, the hair dresser insists Anju that as her sister is going to get married, she needs some make up saying, "Your cousin is getting married! You need some decoration!" (FMP6). Anju, while talking with her friend, Sherly, says when she was a child her mother used to apply chick pea flour mixed with lemon to make her look fair but she hesitates to use it. Now a days her aunt blames her for not using the homemade concoction on her face, for, she thinks, it is the reason

for the postponement of her marriage. Nobody wants a dark wife. When Anju goes to meet Swami Upananda, he also advises Anju to spend some money to thread her eyebrows and use some fairness cream. Here Daswani expresses that for marriage fairness also plays an important role in India.

Anju says that most of the girls dream to become air-hostess, a movie star, a queen, etc. But Anju wants to be a social worker or a manurist; but her mother, Leela used to say that girls first should get married; afterwards they can do as they wish. Most of the girls in Bombay get married at their tender ages. If they are not, they remain a big burden to their family. Marrying off the daughter at the right age is a matter of great concern for the parents because the whole process is a huge complicated ritual in the Indian society.

The Indian parents are very proud of their daughters because they teach them all the household works. In the same way Anju's mother teaches her all the household works and how to be a good wife. Anju's parents are very proud that their daughter is a sensible and clever girl. Anju's mother says that a wife should not address her husband by his name and advises her that she should consider her husband as her lord and treat him with dignity and respect. In the Indian context, marriage is sacrifice and compromise. Anju has a great dream about her marriage with the blessing of all her family members. She eagerly waits for her marriage. She believes that a girl can marry a boy with the wishes of both families. It is an act of piety that traditionally brings many, many blessings.

Domesticity is considered the only goal of an Indian woman's life and therefore every girl should be trained before marriage for domestic life. When Anju gets a proposal from a boy named Puran, the two families decide to meet each other. Anju's aunt Jyoti advises her to wear a simple salwar kameez, "It's better, Anju, you'll look more Indian, more domesticated" (FMP35). She dresses very comfortably, her mother advises her to wear some nice jewellery. When she enters, Puran's mother after noticing her from top to bottom says, "Most mothers of supposedly eligible Indian men want their sons to marry unspoiled and domesticated girls from wealthy families" (FMP38). Puran's mother expects nothing from her family in the name of dowry even though she believes that Anju will carry silvers, silks, jewellery, and gold coins.

In the Indian society, a woman is considered blessed if she gets a good marriage life blessed with children and financial security. Sharma quotes “Our society conditions young girl to believe that Real Life consists of getting married, having children, promoting one’s husband’s career by planning huge, endless meals for overfed people, buying the latest model of this and that and so-forth” (38).

Anju and Puran spend some time alone. While they are talking, Puran asks her the time when Anju wakes up in the morning. As she doesn’t expect such a question from him, he says in Accra everyone should wake up very early because there is too much of works to do. He advises her now to start practice to rise up early, it’s very helpful to adjust with the family. Then he continues that they have three maids in his house. They still don’t know how to use vacuum cleaner. Then he asks Anju whether she knows how to use it.

Anju thinks about her own life. Puran continues that his mother is old, so Anju must take care of all the household activities. As he runs a very stressful business, he wants his wife to cool him by pouring whisky with soda, but he doesn’t allow her to drink with him, for he thinks that taking alcohol by a woman is a bad habit. Then he says that he likes getting massages. Anju talks disparagingly about Puran, who shows some interest in marrying her. Anju says:

I sighed. This is what my life had become. I was in one of the most beautiful hotels in Bombay, on a sultry evening, dressed in silk, sweet and smiling and basically being a delightfully charming dream-date. And walking next to me was a man who only wanted to marry me because he needed to supplement his domestic task force. (FMP 41)

Anju decides that he is willing to marry her to fulfill his needs and to do all domestic works in his house. Puran doesn’t want to know her wish, interest, ambition, future life, etc. He expresses his expectation about his marriage and the needs of his wife. He does not bother about the feelings of his wife; he is not even willing to spend some time with her. Anju thinks that he is interested to marry her. She doesn’t have the confidence that she can lead a happy life with him. Anju’s mother advises her to marry him, telling her that he is not perfect in Anju’s eyes but he likes her. Anju’s mother thinks any way she wants to get married because her age is going on, no one is ready to marry an elder woman. She advises her daughter everything will be ok after the marriage. But finally Anju rejects the proposal; her mother too accepts her decision.

There are many instances in the novel where Anju's mother compels her to get married soon. But Anju searches for pure love and care from her future husband. So all her proposals end up hilariously. She says "But the great official husband-hunt, as I had come to call it, was well under way. I had been here for several days, and there had some talk of this boy and that" (FMP 4). Anju gets another proposal, where the boy is in Dubai. Her father is very conscious about selecting his son-in-law. He enquires about the boy with his friend in Dubai. His friend informs him that the boy, Lalit, spent six months in jail for forging cheques. Her father is determined that he is not ready to accept a criminal as his son-in-law. But the mother says that Lalit does not murder any one, after marriage he will change. Anju's mother has a belief on her daughter, that after marriage she will change her husband's mind and lead a happy life.

From the advertisement in the newspaper, Anju's mother selects a proposal and contacts them. They exchange their photo. Anju sees the photo and admires it. Every proposal she faces with some expectations. Every time she decides this proposal will be ok, she prays to God for all proposals. She decorates herself and fills his mind with joy of dreaming marriage. Anju wants to marry with the blessings of her family. So she gives all in the hands of her parents. She wants to marry a man fit for her, but after marriage she wants to live his same life, enjoy the same thing what her husband enjoys. She is very stressful while thinking about her marriage. She meditates to come out from the stress; she finds inner peace through meditation.

Anju's cousin, Vikram's marriage is fixed within the first meeting. So she asks Vikram why he selects Mira as his life partner. He says that she is very cute and his parents are very happy about her. She is fit with the household, so he decides to marry her. Anju really hates this answer, though all men select their wives for their parent's wish and to fulfill their household works. They do not have real love towards their spouse. A woman is supposed to serve her father, serve her husband and his family, and finally serves her son.

Anju gets another proposal from Vikram's family, a boy named Raju, whom she meets in Vikram's engagement. Anju is ready to meet, Raju. She dresses in a nice manner, they decide to spend their time alone. Her mother wishes her to get a place in his heart. Raju really hates India, Indian traditions, and everything. But she is a traditional girl. At the end of their talk, Anju decides, Raju as her husband and starts to dream herself in a red and gold sari. The family is very happy about her decision. They are ready to do further arrangements for marriage

In their second meeting Anju expects that Raju will reveal his love frankly to her. She remembers how American people used to exchange the ring before expressing their love. Anju's father, Lal faxes to his friend to enquire about Raju. Anju's father says that he receives his friend's fax that Raju has an English girlfriend for a long time, and they are almost married. By hearing this, she stops breathing for a minute. She feels very sad; she thinks if she has attachment to anything, an idea, a person, a dream always leads her into sadness at last. Even though Anju and her mother have confidence in their inner heart, Mr.Jeevan gets it wrong.

In Vikram's engagement party, Anju's father informs Raju and his father that before finalizing the marriage proposal, both families should consult each other. So Anju's father enquires about Raju if he already has a girl in London. Raju shouts at Anju's father that who wants to marry her, that he never loves her, never loves her money, there is no reason except that he needs an Indian wife. He also adds that the rest of his life is private, and no one should interfere in his personal life. Both the family members are worried by the words of Raju.

Now Anju's father reveals that Raju has already lived with Lucy for three years. But his parents compel him to leave her and marry an Indian girl. Before leaving London there is a huge fight between them. Vikram says everyone hopes that Raju will drop Lucy and marry Anju. Vikram opines no one in Bombay is ready to give their daughter to Raju. So finally they think that Anju would not care about it. She cries a lot by hearing the words of Vikram and decides to start a new life. Anju's father says that there is nothing wrong with her, she is a pleasant girl but they are unable to find a good boy for her. Her mother opines that everyone tries to fix her marriage, but everything is in the hands of God.

Marriage is a much-flogged metaphor and its rejection is an expected expression of rebellion by erudite women. This evolution of thought is especially rooted within middle and upper middle-class educated in India, westernized and modern but standing at cross-roads. They confront the day to day dilemmas between the traditionally organized life and westernized modern life full of excitement and adventure.

Anju is very upset about the rejection of proposal. Now she is ready to express her wish to travel America for higher studies. But her father shouts at her. Again when Anju talks with her parents, she raises her voice, spitting out all her emotions that all her friends get married and she



still remains unmarried without doing anything useful. She gets permission from her parents to go to America “Over my dead body, my father said, his anger rising again. I will not permit it” (FMP 124).

At last, her brother supports her telling their parents to send her abroad. They understand her emotions and feelings regarding her marriage. Her aunt Jyoti says that it is too difficult to control girls. She explains Leela that people will talk badly about her as she is going to America to lead her life freely, thus spoiling her entire life. In future she can't adjust with family, so no one will come forward to marry her. In Bombay she lives under the control of her parents, but in America no one is there to watch her. Anju's mother's face racked with shame. Finally Anju reaches America. E.J. Hobsbawm captures this hyphenated status of the diasporic community, “Whenever we live in an urbanized society, we encounter strangers: uprooted men and women who remind us of the fragility or the drying up of our own families' root” (173).

Anju meets Jeff in the subway token. They become friends, their friendship goes up to coffee shop, next they have their lunch together. Finally their relation ends in love. He invites Anju to have a dinner together; she says it's very difficult because she needs the permission of her uncle. At last she lies her uncle and gets the permission for going to have a dinner with him. She really enjoys the American food. At the mean time, she thanks God for that day is non fasting day for her. It is not Monday and Thursday because it is the day of her fasting. Eventhough she is in America, she used to continue her fasting. She discusses her family and tradition to him. If anyone likes her, the boy should contact her parents. Jeff feels disappointed by hearing the traditions of India.

Jeff asks her, if they follow tradition, then what is the meaning of love in India? Anju begins to feel a longing and loneliness inside her. So she wants to touch his hand. Suddenly she thinks that she never touches a man's hand before, even her own father's. Anju already decides herself that a man whom she wants to touch his hand is only her husband. Here Daswani reveals the dream of Anju about her husband and the feeling of her ideas regarding marriage in India.

Anju, in her inner heart, decides Jeff as her husband, because he respects her feelings and thoughts. When he talks about love, she wants to hug him as she is ready to express her love, but she hides her feeling of love towards him. She is ready to express her dream about marriage to

Jeff. She says love is something miracle, it is magic. According to Anju, dating is not a love. If they love truly, the couple won't get divorce. According to her, falling in love is sharing, each one should be ready to sacrifice anything for each other, their hearts must be open, there must exist some sort of kindness between them. Both need to feel they are suitable for each other. Finally love happens between them. At last their family members are there to bless the couple. There is no other greater magic than the blessing in the world.

The main purpose of arranged marriages is to maintain social order and the parent's support over the entire family, to keep ancestral lineage, to give opportunity to strengthen familial relationship, to pave way to maintain confidentiality over family properties and acts as a legal license to preserve private relation between the couples. "Marriage is treated as alliance between two families rather than a union between two individuals" (Prakasa 15). McLeod states that:

"The nation is narrated in the novels of the diasporic writers by the repeated performance of the tradition and cultural customs. This feature of cultural nationalism is resonant of what Bhabha terms as the 'performative' aspect of nationalist discourse. The culture of a nation should be 'continually rehearsed' and 'endlessly performed' in order to keep secure the sense of 'deep, horizontal comradeship.'" (McLeod 118)

Anju expresses her dream and the desire about her marriage. She wants to marry a man who loves her whole heartedly and not to fulfill his household activities. She wants her husband to understand her feelings and emotions, more than that she feels marriage as a miracle. She wants to marry to lead her life happily. Once they are married, there is no place of divorce. She believes marriage is a holy thing. She wants to marry a person with the blessing of her parents. Here Daswani points that if one wants to succeed in life, he/she needs the blessings of the parents and elders in the family.

Anju really loves Jeff because he is the person whom she dreams as her husband. She is not ready to reveal her love towards him. She knows her parents are not ready to accept a white man as their son-in-law. Though she lives physically, she dies within herself by hiding her love, because she needs the blessing of her parents. She respects their blessings more than her love.

She wants to be a traditional Hindu wife. For Anju, marriage is her ultimate goal that would seal her happiness.

Anju consoles herself anyway, for she moves to India within a few months. She protects herself from others for she needs only Indian husband and she always dreams about her wedding day. While she spends her time with Jeff, she hears the voice of her mother in her mind asking what she is doing, how she spoils her reputation and the family's name. She feels very torn and confused for, she thinks that if she loves him how her parents react, she is afraid if she marries him, no one blesses her new life. So she is in a dilemma and curses her karma.

Once Jeff invites Anju for a lunch at Balthazar. She sees her aunt's close friend sitting inside the Balthazar. So she is very much afraid to enter the hotel. If she sees Anju, she will inform about Jeff to her uncle, Lal. She is not willing to go inside but he is not ready to spoil the good mood of lunch. As she is of the view that the relation will come to an end, Anju starts praying to God that he should hear her words but at last he angrily turns towards his car and goes away without saying anything to her. She cries a lot and wants to share this breakup with anyone but no one is there to share her sadness. She puts the blame on her karma.

Anju's course is over. But she is not ready to return to Bombay again, for "If there was one things I had learned from my year here, it was that I wasn't ready yet to return to Bombay" (FMP 162). She wants to live her life as her own, as well as freely. She says, "I would be going back to a dreariness comprised of married couples, their kids and critical, interfering relatives. May be I was becoming bitter. But New York was the place to be bitter in" (FMP 162).

Anju feels very upset to return to Bombay because she never wants to face her family members, for she thinks that they will again talk on the topic of marriage. Sometimes she wishes to have Jeff. She wants to meet Jeff again; at the same time she is not ready to face the same problem of fear, shame of dating with a white man, and guilt of disappointing her parents' trust.

Anju decides to stand on her own leg; she finds a job as one among the seven employees. Here Anju finds a new freedom in America, to prove her own identity. The job gives her new courage and confidence to face all her problems. She says "There, in that tiny seven-person office in a non-descript building, I actually was someone that people wanted to talk to"

(FMP196). They all are good friends, one among them Kris asks “Why don’t you have a boyfriend?” (FMP164). She answers that she searches for a nice Indian. She adds:

I tried to explain, nobody in my family has married outside the community. Nobody.Ever. In fact, they have almost all had arranged marriages. Even in the case where one or two of my cousins met their spouses on their own, they always asked for the blessings of their parents. (FMP165)

Anju says that she meets a lot of Indians but nothing fixes, while she sheds tears from her eyes, Kris consoles her. According to Eschle “Feminist globalization literature continues to extend debate on both of these interconnected political-economy issues, reaching complex conclusion about the context-specific combinations of exploitative and also sometimes empowering effects upon different women in different areas” (114). Daswani also focuses on issues of women beyond transnational borders. Women also face problems economically and socially. They work in different fields, do both skilled and unskilled labour, still the patriarchal society denies to recognize them. But in diaspora, women raise their voice against such activity.

Anju wants to make her career in America. Her parents also allow her to pursue her passion as she does not get a proper match. In America, the strangeness and the wildness of the host country disturb her. She has to balance between the strange behavior of her parents and the culture of the host nation. Anju chronicles, “But I rode the subway, ate cheaply and lived the life of any other twenty-something just starting out in this strange, wild city, while thousands of miles away from my parents fretted and fussed and fumed” (FMP 136). Here Anju experiences dislocation both in the homeland and in the host country. Psychologically she is much disturbed.

After one year, she returns to Bombay as a changed, confident, clear-skinned, happy, and a beautiful woman. She says herself “see yourself become more and more the woman you want to be. You are grounded. You are love. You are radiant. You are your own woman. You are You” (FMP 174). She wants to show herself as an independent and successful living happy for herself. There is no one to restrict her by rules. Here Anju shows her sense of pride that she lives independently and finds her own identity in the host land “Yes, I would show myself to be the independent one, the successful, happy, living-for-herself one. The one not constricted by rules and husbands and mean mother-in-law” (FMP 175).

Anju becomes a New Woman in the diasporic space. Her new identity constitutes independence, strength, and empowerment. KumKum Sangari says that in India, “notions of femaleness,, self or identity” are inseparable from forms of collectivity such as family, class, and religion, so much so that they cannot be framed in terms of “a single unified axis.” She believes that a concept of “multiple identities” should emerge “through several criss-crossing ideologies” rather than a single one, and that these identities should exist in close relation to each other, and not as “atomized entities” (Sangari 871). This kind of multi-layered understanding of gender identity is well captured by Daswani.

When Anju returns to Bombay, her mother looks at her with a questioning eye. She could read her mother’s thought that Anju looks different, thinner. Her hair is cut in a layered style. She wears modern dress, she has changed a lot. Her mother couldn’t recognize her. She prays to God to let her not to lost her virginity. Anju thinks that her parents would think that she would not return as a pregnant girl and not as a drug-addled and she won’t return by marrying a white man. Now they are very grateful to Anju because she is still single. She wants to reveal her parents and relatives that she returns as radiant and self-assured, but no one notices from her. Anju imagines that her mother thinks that:

*She looks different, thinner. Not eating properly. I have read how all these Umricans do this and that diet. But fairer, which is good. Maybe she has been using Promise of Fairness. Maybe you can buy it is in Umrica. But definitely looks smarter. Fancy fancy clothes. When did platform shoes come back into fashion? Small top, thin trousers. And her hair, cut in some layered style. And what are those beads around her neck? Doesn’t she have enough real jewellery that she has to wear some fake rubbish? And where is the coral ring that is supposed to bring her a husband, and the black thread we gave her to wear around her ankle to protect her from the Evil Eye, and the yellow sapphire to calm her nerves? My Daughter looks so different. More than one year in Umrica, and I don’t recognize her. Oh God, please let her not have lost her virginity. (FMP 176-177)*

Anju loves her life style in New York, because there is no one to point her as an unmarried girl. She is free from all the stress, mainly marriage. Every time while returning to Bombay, she has a hope that this time surely she is going to get married. But always she moves to New York as an unmarried girl.

All her aunties used to call her mother and talk about her brother, Anil. No one asks about her. They all are willing to select Anil as their son-in-law. Anju feels very disappointed by hearing such a talk. Her mother used to say her family members that Anil does not marry anyone when Anju is still unmarried. But her aunt, Jyoti advises her mother telling that it's the perfect time for him to get married. If the proposal is avoided, there will be no good girls left for him. They also add if they want to see him also unmarried and alone like Anju. Here the author portrays, in India marriage should take place at the particular ages. But Anju never wants him to marry before her, she is older, single, smiling outwardly but inside there is an emotional clash that gives her severe mental pain.

Anju's mother says to her sister, Jyoti, that Anju prays hard now a days. God will arrange a good proposal for her. If Anil gets married, everyone create some unwanted gossip and no one will come forward to marry her. Jyoti thinks that Anju got her last proposal some years back. If Anil gets married, it opens the door for destiny. Anju's mother asks about Lavina to Anil, but he avoids speaking about his marriage in front of Anju. Her mother tearlessly turns towards her and tells that they don't know when she is going to get married and how long they could wait. But Anju's mother is not ready to see Anju remaining unmarried at Anil's wedding. They should try hard to arrange her marriage as soon as possible.

Anil says Anju doesn't bother about others, what they all talk about her. Her parents are worried about her, but now as she returns from abroad they think everything is going to be fine. Anju thanks God for having such brothers they both do not think her as a burden to the family, then she says by seeing Anil, that she doesn't know how long he going to wait for her marriage. Anand says that already a proposal is fixed to him, Anil marries Lavina. He is very lovable towards his sister at the same time he gives respect and understands her feelings. So he tells his parents to wait for some more days because he never agrees to marry without seeing her sister getting married.

The sense of nostalgia for the home land and a feeling of alienation in the host country are also reflected through Anju. She talks about her home, when she returns from New York, this is the city where she was born, here she spent most of her life. "My parents and two brothers still lived here, in the same house that I knew as a child, a house conveniently located just minutes from major temples and hotels" (FMP 5). Marangoly says "The word "home" immediately

connotes the private sphere of patriarchal hierarchy, gendered self-identity, shelter, comfort, nurture and protection” (1).

Daswani intends that her protagonists want to lead their life in an independent manner. Anju too wants to be self-reliant. At the same time, she is very successful in her profession as a fashion reporter. On the one hand, Anju performs the cultural traditions and customs as a part of her nationalist consciousness and identity, while on the other hand they also create the much required ‘third-space of enunciation’, as Bhabha terms it, for themselves in the host country away from home. “In postcolonial times, in the contest between tradition and modernity, the woman is held to be the repository of all that is ‘good’ in the culture’s tradition, even as colonial/postcolonial modernity and traditional seek power over the familial and domestic space” (Nayar125). She faces a lot of troubles but overcomes everything by following their cultural values. Giddens defines tradition as “a means of handling time and space, which inserts any particular activity or experience within the continuity of past, present and future, these in turn being structured by recurrent social practices” (37).

Anju constantly compares the Indian culture and American culture. She doesn’t change herself according to the host culture. Anju used to sit alone in her class, but her classmates sit as pairs and talk about their relationship, vacation, dating, etc. But Anju really hates the word dating; she believes her culture in the name of marriage. Anju follows her fasting in America also, because she wishes to find a husband. In her friend’s birthday party, everyone tells her to enjoy the party by having alcohol. But she says that she has come to Paris for the Paris Fashion Week. She used to eat fish and chicken, but as that particular day is her day of fasting, she omits meat and alcohol.

The strangeness and the wilderness of the host country disturb her. She has to balance between the strange behavior of her parents and the culture of the host nation. Anju chronicles, “But I rode the subway, ate cheaply and lived the life of any other twenty-something just starting out in this strange, wild city, while thousands of miles away from my parents fretted and fumed and fumed” (EHR 136). Here Anju experiences the dislocation both in the homeland and in the host country. However, this performative aspect of culture and tradition does not keep her fossilized in a stereotypical identity, but “performativity keeps reminding us that the nation and the

people are always generating a non-identical excess over and above what we thought they were” (Huddart 109).

Finally Anju finds Rohan as her husband. He is a civil lawyer. Like Anju, he too is exiled from his family and resides in the diaspora. He says “It’s not pleasant to be alone at” (FMP39); a life partner is needed to create new opportunities, to create new places, both together and independently. Daswani showcases how the parents of a marriageable girl want to get rid of their daughter by marrying her off somehow. They are not bothered about the boy and his status. Their prime concern is their daughter’s marriage. Anju comments, “And because of some weird cultural osmosis that I had unwittingly succumbed to, I felt they weren’t right for me either...But most of the men I had met were gay, or white, and usually both” (EHR 20).

The growing awareness and education in contemporary modern society makes women demand their various rights equal to men in the society. It has also stopped various domestic violence and abusive patriarchal nature of people who consider women as others. The psychological trauma of the protagonist is the mirror experience of the writers. Kavita Daswani depicts Anju’s agony for seeking an acceptable marriage in her novel, *For Matrimonial Purposes*. Anju battles for her freedom while following the traditional stuff to get a husband. Her mother has complete faith in Anju. When she finds her a partner, community criticizes her, including her relatives. Daswani delineates women’s misery in the form of Anju for her own marriage. Finally, she eventually succeeds in finding a suitable partner. Daswani says that she expresses women in love, difficulties, and relationships through her writings. She wants the readers to relate her character’s joy and pain in their real life. At the same time she advises her readers to get the equal rights from men and never misuse the freedom, and make men to understand the feelings and circumstances to lead a healthy, happy, peaceful life in an adjustable manner.



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