

Arranged marriages 6 essay



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Serena Nanda fails to write an impartial argument for arranged marriages versus “love match” marriages like those in the United States. She neglects to present the positive aspects of choosing a partner for marriage opting instead to keep the focus on the negatives. Her argument for arranged marriages is weak and unfocused leaving the reader to doubt her logic. In her attempt to persuade the reader to supporting arranged marriages, she actually emphasizes the negative effects of them.

Reading *Arranging A Marriage in India*, strengthens the idealistic values of romantic love and exposes the flaws of arranged marriage including the extreme limitation of potential partners, inexperience and ignorance of the people, excessively traditional and sexist customs, and the risk of permanent negative consequences. The limitation of prospective marriage candidates emphasizes the unreasonable tendencies of arranged marriages. In India, “[it] is understood that matches would be arranged only within the same caste and general social class” (626). However in America and in the case of “love matches,” the possibility of a relationship is not limited to one’s social status and family reputation. Instead, relationships are built on love and trust regardless of wealth and reputation.

A person’s social class is not the only limitation to finding a partner in arranged marriages in India. A man who has a career in the military is not considered for marriage. A girl can be considered too educated or too independent for marriage. However, she can also be considered too dependent if she expresses an interest in visiting her family. One with too many siblings, pride in one-self, or unfortunate looks will be rejected for

marriage. Even Nanda expresses doubt for the tradition of arranging marriages.

She states that she “ began to believe that between my friend’s desire for a girl who was modest enough to fit into her joint family, yet attractive and educated enough to be an acceptable partner for her son, she would not find anyone suitable” (629). Nanda “ learned that young men and women in India do not date and have very little social life involving members of the opposite sex,” which results in years of inexperience and loneliness (624). In the example in the story, the process of finding a suitable bride takes several years and the man is over thirty years old before he is married. That is thirty years without knowing the thrill and excitement of intimacy, thirty years without emotional closeness to a female outside of his family.

It is argued that in America, too much focus is placed on romantic relationships and as a result, people are more anxious, worrying, and competitive than in India. However, anxieties and insecurities dissipate with experience. When the time comes for marriage, people are confident in their romantic abilities and have the emotional depth and maturity for a successful marriage. Additionally, relationships create anxiety and competition in India just as they do in America.

In India there is a perceived shortage of ‘ good boys’” available for the females to compete for and the constant scrutiny and observation of a new bride creates anxiety (626). The competition isn’t limited to other available women. If a girl is chosen to be a wife, she then becomes “ a source of competition for the affection, loyalty, and economic resources of a son or

brother” (631). Furthermore, despite the time and deliberation put into them, an arranged match may not result in love. Because divorce is considered a scandal, they are trapped in an unhealthy relationship for life.

The author notes that the bride may be harassed and, in extreme cases, murdered as a way to settle domestic disputes. She mentions that America has a higher divorce rate than India, but most would agree that divorce is preferable over death. Nanda presents an interesting look at an aspect of Indian culture. However, she fails to present a convincing argument for arranged marriages.

A marriage based on social connections is not preferable to a marriage based on love.