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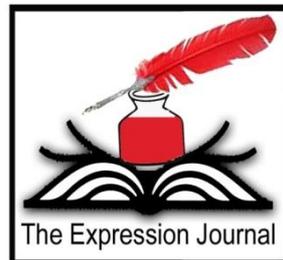
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THE THEME OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN THE NOVEL *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* BY JANE AUSTEN

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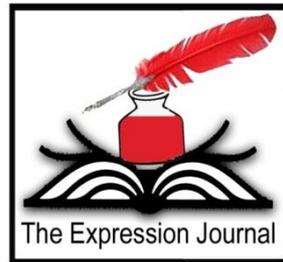
Abstract

Jane Austen is one of the supreme artists in the English fiction. She was a famous novelist of romantic age and was born on December 16, 1775 at Steventon in Hampshire. She is highly sophisticated artist with all the qualities of a good writer. She published four novels during her lifetime, namely *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1815). Her *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* were published together posthumously in (1817). No doubt, the ranges of Austen novels are limited within the four walls of the house but even with these limitations her work has its own strength and perfection. In almost all her novels she vividly depicts English middle class life during the 19th Century. Almost all her novels basically deals with the theme of love and marriage and which is also very much prominent in her novel *Pride and Prejudice*.

Keywords

Love, Marriage, Family, Society, Patriarchal Tradition, Relationships,
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*.

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Pride and Prejudice published in 1813 with having first title as *First Impression*, is one of the best novel written by Jane Austen in which love and marriage is the central theme revolving throughout the novel. In this novel, the important character is Mrs Bennet who has five daughters. In the very opening scene Mrs Bennet is scolding her husband and is giving one of the most important speeches. She says, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a man in possession of a good fortune must be in the need of wife" (Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*).

Here, in the above lines Mrs Bennet is talking to her husband that a new person is coming to their neighbourhood, whose name is Mr Bingley. She further says that he is very rich and that as we have five daughters so u must go to him as it would be good for us if he becomes ready to marry one of our daughters. Here Mr Bannet was not ready to go but lady Bennet having worldly wisdom says to him that Mr Bingley is rich, and is single so he must be in a need of good lady, a good wife and we have five daughters. So it shows Mrs Bennet is a lady with worldly wisdom and she is actually concern about the marriage of her daughters.

Pride and Prejudice also contains one of the most cherished love story in English literature, the smooth love of Mr Bingley and Jane Bennet who is the elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Bennet and is also very beautiful of the five Bannet sisters as well as the most beautiful women in the local Meryton neighbourhood. Once at an assembly in Meryton, she meets Charles Bingley, the new wealthy tenant of the nearby estate of Netherfield and thy immediately falls in love with each other and finally marries.

As love and marriage is the central theme in *Pride and Prejudice* here in an another plot in which Mr Bingley has a friend named Mr Darcy who finds Elizabeth attractive but as well as egoistic. So after some ego clashes Darcy got married to Elizabeth Bennet. Once at the Meryton ball, when Bingley suggests Darcy to dance with Elizabeth. Darcy looked for a moment and says, "she is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me, and I m in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slightly by other man. You had better return to your partner enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting time with me. (Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*).

These above lines were described by Darcy at seeing Elizabeth First at Meryton ball. Darcy, who saw the people of Meryton as his social inferiors, brutally refuses to dance with Elizabeth who according to him was not handsome enough "for him". But later on, slowly and steadily when he falls in love with her and said "you have bewitched me in body and soul, and I love, I love, I love you" (Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*) On this the prejudiced Elizabeth replied arrogantly. She said "from the first moment I met you, your arrogance and conceit, your selfish disdain for the feelings of others, made me realize that you were the last man in the world I could ever be prevailed upon to marry." (Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*)

The above lines show turbulent relationship between Elizabeth Bennet, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet and Darcy, a rich aristocratic landowner. Both of them had to shed their pride and prejudice to get united in love and marriage. At one place where Bingley, all of a sudden departed for London, Elizabeth held Darcy responsible for discouraging Bingleys relationship with Jane and her hatred for him rather more increases, But When Darcy wrote a letter to Elizabeth and made everything clear to her, then Elizabeth changed her view regarding Darcy and started looking at him in new light and finally when Darcy proposes again to Elizabeth, she accepted it wholeheartedly.

In an another plot , Lydia, the youngest Bennet sister also eloped with Wickham and when the both were not found anywhere, fearful of the disgrace such a situation would bring on her entire family, Elizabeth hastened to the home of Mr. Gardiner and Mr. Bennet go off to search for Lydia, but could not find them anywhere. Then one day suddenly a letter comes from Mr. Gardener, saying that the couple has been found and that Wickhem has agreed to marry Lydia in exchange for an annual income.

Thus, the story of love and marriage revolves throughout the novel of Jane Austen *Pride and Prejudice*. The novelist Jane Austen is basically concerned with the small incidents of everyday life, such as dinner, parties, dances, budding romance. These all reveal a great deal of human nature. She draws all her materials from the four walls of a house and also from her own experiences.

Characters of Jane Austen are lively and involved in witty dialogues, and also they reveal themselves through dialogues and action. Andrew H Wright aptly remarks: "very much of Jane Austen work is dialogue form, she is a master dramatist with a perfect ear, a perfect sense of timing, a shrewd Instinct for climax and anti-climax."

Austen characters are always in the process of development, that is they are both confident and confused, disillusionment and reconciliation in *Pride and Prejudice* as we see in the case of Elizabeth who does not know the situation as it really is. Elizabeth in *pride and prejudice* later on realizes that she was making mistakes in understanding Darcy, and also the world in which they live. Here, we are reminded of Emma Woodhouse, in the novel *Emma* by Jane Austen, who also undergoes same kind of situation. These characters speak something without understanding the real situation, something which was out of the context and also they are not able to control their sensibility. Thus, this creates a dramatic irony in the play which amuses the reader. The novel *Pride and prejudice* shows the character development of Elizabeth Bennet who because of her prejudice is not able to see the difference between the actual goodness and superficial judgement, which sometimes creates humour.

The novel revolves around the importance of marrying. Set primarily in the country of Herfordshire, the story centre on the Bennet family in which Mrs Bennet who is the mother of the five daughters, is primarily concerned about the happy and prosperous marriage of her daughters only, and lastly Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are very happy to see that their daughters have married and the two Jane and Elizabeth have married so happily.

Jane Austen lively and vivid description of family and family issues like marriage, love, and hatred forms an important content for her writings in *Pride and Prejudice*. Her use of irony, humour, sense of wit along with her realism earned her immense name, fame and popularity among the critics and scholars.

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