

Q.How does Jane Austen explore the theme of love and marriage in the novel "Pride and Prejudice"

Ans: Jane Austen is one of the greatest novelists of the 19th century. She produced six full length novels. Among them "Pride and Prejudice" is the most popular novel. It is regarded as a fine piece of composition. It has an indelible place in history of English novels. In the words of an eminent writer "Pride & Prejudice" occupies the highest position amongst the novels of Jane Austen. It is indeed the most widely read and popular novel of the writer.

Love and marriage form an important element in Jane Austen's novels. Hers was a practical idealism. She was pre-occupied with the subject of love and marriage. In her novels a young woman falls in love with a rich and desirable man. She has to face a lot of difficulties in the way of her marriage, but everything ends well. Austen is against illicit love. According to her love must terminate in matrimony. For a successful marriage mutual harmony is essential. Husband and wife should be spiritual counterparts of each other. A perfect marriage is fundamentally a perfect friendship. "Pride & Prejudice" deals with the same theme.

The main theme of "Pride & Prejudice" deals with the theme of love and marriage. The main interest in the novel lies in the husband hunting campaign of Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Lucas for their daughters. The arrival of Bingley and Darcy provides the suitable atmosphere of husband hunting drive. In the end they get success in their enterprise. A little crisis is found in the struggle of pride and prejudice of Elizabeth and Darcy respectively. In the story the love affair of Jane with Bingley and Lydia's escape with Wickham provide complete fun and youthful vigour. The case of Collins and Miss Lucas is equally lovable. It displays a fact that life is a simple game of matrimony. In this way Jane Austen has never gone far from this circumference and surroundings of love affairs. In this novel the author has shown all these affairs in drawing rooms, balls and parties.

Jane Austen is of the view that mutual harmony is essential for a successful marriage. Mrs. Bennet measures the matrimonial game with wealth. Thus she thinks Bingley as a suitable match for her daughter Jane. But the novelist does not agree with the view of Mrs. Bennet. For Austen nature and temperament are the necessary conditions for a marriage. It is because the aim of marriage is higher than the household business. Marriage is both an intellectual and emotional companionship between a husband and a wife. Marriage without this is no marriage at all.

The main theme of the novel surrounds love. In the same way all the three sub-plots of the story are centred round love. In the main plot Elizabeth and Darcy come together in spite of their previous differences. Another story is the love story of Jane and Bingley who also are united in marriage after certain interruptions. The marriage of Lydia and Wickham also takes place with the help of Darcy. In this case love is one sided. Lydia loves Wickham while the latter does not. He simply runs away with Lydia to insult Bennets. He did so to enrage Elizabeth who refuses to marry him. The third sub-plot consists of the marriage of Mr. Collins with Charlotte. This marriage takes place all of a sudden without showing any inclination of love from either side. Thus here the novelist has presented various phases of love. Here love is neither aggressive nor passionate. It is the form of love found in the ordinary persons in the world.

Thus Jane Austen's "Pride & Prejudice" is a beautiful novel. It deals with the theme of love and marriage. This theme has a universal appeal and it had made this novel very popular.