

Predominant and Inveterate Notions and Themes in English Literature

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Abstract: English Literature refers to literature written in the English Language. William Shakespeare is regarded as one of the greatest writers in English because his works have been very influential to multiple generations. This paper studies the various themes have been inculcated into these works in order to capture the attention of the readers.

Keywords: English Literature, Shakespeare, Themes.

I. Introduction

English Literature refers to literature written in the English Language. William Shakespeare is regarded as one of the greatest writers in English because his works have been very influential to multiple generations. His works have also been translated into multiple languages. Due to Britain's colonial legacy, the English language has spread across several countries across the globe. English literature has seen the advent of the English Restoration Age, Romanticism, Victorian Literature, the modern and postmodern literature. The different genres include fiction, poetry novel, prose, drama, autobiography, essay, short story, historical fiction, fable, epic, poetry, tragedy, bildungsroman etc. Various themes have been inculcated into these works in order to capture the attention of the readers.

II. Love

Love is the most predominant theme in English literature. It is a pivotal theme and is often portrayed in literature. Love transcends age groups and countries. The usage of love as a theme makes stories memorable and heartfelt. Examples of literary works with love as a theme are *The Notebook* by Nicholas Sparks and *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte.

III. Religion

Religious ideas are often explored in literature. It is a crucial theme in literature. The relationship of man with God, the afterlife and the meaning of life are explored in literature. God/divine is also portrayed as giving justice in literary works. The examples of such literary works include John Bunyan's *The Pilgrims Progress* and Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*.

IV. Good Versus Evil

The theme of the good versus evil is a powerful theme. The clash between good versus evil is a universal theme. More often than not, good ultimately wins, as authors hope to produce a just world to the audience. Examples include JRR Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and CS Lewis's *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*.

V. Isolation

Isolation is another common theme in the history of literature. Isolation can have traumatic and devastating effects on an individual's health and psyche. Due to constant immigration and diasporic experiences, this theme recurs a lot in literary works. Usage of the same encourages empathy on part of the reader. Examples from literary works include JD Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

VI. Courage

Courage is a frequent theme in literature. Courage in the face of conflict and difficult circumstances serve to motivate the reader. This theme has the potential to influence the readers to be brave. Courage can be either physical or mental. Examples from literary works include Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*.

VII. Friendship

Friendship is a significant theme in literature. Hence the friendship between honest and authentic people is of immense value. It is absolutely invaluable and has powerful effects on one's well-being and health. Friends are a family we choose for ourselves. Some examples from literature include JK Rowling's *Harry Potter's Harry Potter* and Ronald Weasley and Sherlock and Watson from *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle.

VIII. Women's Issues

The plight of women is a significant theme in the history of literature. Women, since the history of mankind, have been treated as the lower sex. They are often seen as being inferior when compared to men. Stuck in a patriarchal world, women feel suffocated and devoid of autonomy. Some examples from literature include Margaret Atwood's *A Handmaid's Tale* and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*.

IX. Justice

Justice is a principal notion in literature. Seeking justice in the face of unfair circumstances is the responsibility of humans. As a human being, we hope to be treated impartially and fairly. Prejudice and discrimination can act as impediments to justice. Examples from literature which use justice as a theme include Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*.

X. Coming of age

The coming-of-age theme is another dominant theme in literature. The coming-of-age story charts the development of the protagonist from childhood to adulthood. The reader can see how the experiences of the person in turn cause them to grow up and mature during the course of the novel. Such stories also deal with identity crisis in relation to the protagonist. Some examples in literature include Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* and Mark Twain's *The adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

XI. Jealousy

Jealousy is a major theme in literature. Jealousy is a dark emotion and occurs when a character desires something they don't possess. Jealousy is an irrational emotion and is also known as the green-eyed monster. This theme is often portrayed in tragedies. Some examples from literature where jealousy is used as a theme include Shakespeare's *Othello* and *The Winter's Tale*.

XII. Revenge

Revenge is a recurring theme in literature. This theme is often portrayed in conjunction with power and violence. Revenge does not necessarily bring about desired results. Along with jealousy, revenge is often viewed as a pivotal theme in tragedies. Some examples in English literature with revenge as a theme include Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* and Alexander Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

XIII. War

War is a powerful theme in Literature. This theme is depicted in conjunction with sacrifice and survival. Numerous works have been waged since the advent of mankind for the purpose of land, wealth and power. The dramatic effects of war on the minds of the individuals can be studied. Some examples from literature include *War and Peace* from Tolstoy and *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller.

XIV. Motherhood

Motherhood is a significant theme in literature. The reverence for the self-sacrificing nature of motherboard have been explored in Literature. Before the advent of the multiple waves of feminism, motherhood was seen as the ultimate vocation for women, with the travails of motherhood occupying an important place in literature. Some examples include Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* and *Beloved* by Toni Morrison.

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