

Character and personality of mr. collins of pride and prejudice essay sample

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In Chapter 13 of Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. William Collins is introduced as a cousin of the Bennet's and heir to their estate through a letter that he sends to Mr. Bennet. Mr. Collins writes the Bennet family to notify them that he is coming to visit them the next Saturday. Upon meeting the family, he seems to be a piteous man often humbling himself and expressing praise of others, while constantly referring to his patron, Lady Catherine de Bourgh. He believes her power and wealth give him value. He is dependant upon her to feel secure and he gains self-esteem through her honorable and powerful reputation. This dependence and his lack of self-respect attribute to others having little respect for him and thinking of him as a sycophantic character.

Though Mr. Collins tries hard to fit-in in society, his sycophantic behavior makes him stick out. In the letter he writes the Bennets, he over stresses his apology for neglecting to get in touch with them before; he "beg[s] leave to apologize" (p. 62) for his irresponsible behavior. While at the Bennet's estate, Mr. Collins often speaks of his patron Lady Catherine de Bourgh. His flattery of her is even more incessant than in his letter. He refers to her as the "British court[s]... brightest ornament" (p. 66) and her daughter as "the handsomest of her sex" (p. 66). He then explains to Mr. Bennet that he spends time "suggesting and arranging such little compliments" (p. 67), making him even more of a sycophant. Mr. Collins does not understand that though such behavior may earn favor with ladies, it is unusual and irritating for any intelligent and dignified person.

Mr. Collins' sycophantic behavior is just one of the signs of his dependency. Dependent people can not think for themselves and have little self-esteem and respect for themselves. Mr. Collins' obsessions with formality and conventionality prove that he does not think for himself. The reason he gives for finally writing the Bennets is that he "[felt] it [his] duty" as a clergyman. Thus he is acting out of duty, believing that it is what society would want a clergyman to do. He tries so hard to conform to society fit-in that he sticks out. In his letter, he spends much of the letter "apologis[ing]" (p. 62) and offering to make "every possible amends" (p. 62) for not having contact the Bennets sooner, which is excessive to the point of irritation. Also his constant references to the "patronage of the Right Honourable" (p. 61) Lady Catherine de Bourgh show a lack of self-esteem. He gains esteem from the reputation of his benefactor. He believes the people will think that he is important because he is under the patronage of such an honorable lady. He thinks that people think of him as a perfect citizen in their society; hence it is clear that Mr. Collins is oblivious to what people actually think of him.

Mr. Collins' sycophantism and dependence let him believe that he is being completely acceptable and proper, but others view him as a sycophant with limited social skills. He references to his patron feed this image of him and make him appear to have little faith in himself. Though he is a well-mannered man who earns a respectable living as a Clergyman, his extreme efforts to satisfy the conventions of English culture make him a ridiculous character.