

What is pride: elizabeth's pride and prejudice

Business



Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* often provokes strong initial opinions and thoughts in the reader.

The title elicits curiosity as to which characters the two adjectives could apply. Many believe that either Darcy or Elizabeth possess one of these traits. However, in retrospect, both of these adjectives apply to one Miss Elizabeth Bennet. Another opinion that is evoked is that Elizabeth is prevented from her happiness because her environment is not ideal. Her parents and family are imprudent, Wickham lies to her, Darcy waits too long to make his love known: these are all examples of how her situation makes her a victim of circumstance. However, Elizabeth Bennet demonstrates character traits of pride and prejudice, which causes her unhappiness to extend.

That she remains unhappy for so long is really her own fault. The last potential impression is that Elizabeth is a smart heroine that is not easily affected by others. It is easy to believe at first that she is nearly perfect and that she has no faults. Though, the reality is that she is easily influenced. She is deceived by Wickham for most of the book due to her own pride and prejudice.

Pride, in *Pride and Prejudice*, refers to Elizabeth's impossibly high standards for herself. One aspect of this is that she will not admit to being wrong in a prejudiced opinion. The term prejudice can also be interpreted in different ways. In addition to meaning that she has judged without knowing someone, prejudice refers to Elizabeth being stuck in a mindset once she forms her opinion. After analyzing Elizabeth's pride and prejudice with relevance to Mr.

Darcy, Mr. Wickham and Jane, it can be concluded that Elizabeth herself was responsible for her prolonged unhappiness because these traits allowed Wickham to play a more prominent role in her life than he should have. Elizabeth's blind, unreasonable and irrational prejudice against Mr. Darcy causes her to reject him without hesitation or conscience. Part of her response to his proposal is: " Long before [the separation of Jane and Bingley] had taken place, my opinion of you was decided.

Your character was unfolded in the recital which I received many months ago from Mr. Wickham," (212). She rejects him rather cruelly based on a claim made by Mr. Wickham. Her refusal does not have a sound basis, which is why it was so hurtful to Darcy.

Her pride would not allow her to show any compassion or even hesitation in accusing him. Had she hesitated or deigned to show a little compassion for the man, she may have received more civility on his part as well. This could have led to a brief and more affable explanation and they would have been on better terms, thus expediting their courtship. However, her pride got in the way and prolonged her wait for happiness. Furthermore, the situation and uncivil rejection is made more ridiculous by the fact that she is warned against it.

Jane asks Bingley about Darcy's relationship with Wickham and gives this response to Elizabeth: " He will vouch for the good conduct, the probity and honor of his friend... by his account as well as his sister's, Mr. Wickham is by no means a respectable young man" (128). Her unreasonable prejudice led her to disregard the testimony of a well-respected individual; this is

exceptionally irrational because she has no recommendation, in fact there is word against Wickham, for the character of the one that steered her into this prejudice, Mr. Wickham. What is worse, Elizabeth has been spouting awful things about Mr.

Darcy so for her to turn around and contradict them would be a severe blow to her pride. Her prejudice, contradicted by viable sources, is completely irrational and blind and it leads her to reject Mr. Darcy most cruelly.

Elizabeth accepts the first thing she hears from Wickham and this becomes her image. If Elizabeth had not been so hasty in believing the information about Darcy she would have gotten together with Darcy much sooner. At Rosings Park Elizabeth says, " You mean to frighten me, Mr.

Darcy, by coming in all this state to hear me? But I will not be alarmed though your sister does play so well" (198). When she says this she is masking her fear by trying to indirectly share knowledge and her opinion of him. When she says, " I will not be alarmed..." she is basically telling him that ' I won't be frightened of you because you are nothing to me'. His witty response to this is, "...you find great enjoyment in occasionally professing opinions which in fact are not your own" (198). He knows that she has been acquainted with Wickham and suspects that she has received ill opinions of himself from the Colonel.

Elizabeth laughs at this response because she thinks that it is false. She fails to see that her opinion of Darcy is completely derived from the drivel that Wickham spews. She gets stuck in these opinions that Wickham feeds to her and will not let them go. Miss Bingley even warns her about Wickham's

enmity toward Mr. Darcy, "...As for Mr. Darcy's using him ill, it is perfectly false; for, on the contrary, he has always been remarkably kind to him, though George Wickham has treated Mr.

Darcy in a most infamous manner" (127). This should be a major clue that he is not a trustworthy person. Miss Bingley wants Darcy to marry her. She would not disparage a potential candidate for her competition, Elizabeth, unless it was absolutely necessary. Elizabeth disregards this because she cannot bear the thought of being wrong and having someone like Miss Bingley tell her that she is wrong.

That she should be less knowledgeable and sensible to this information than a superficial and, in her mind, cruel person would be the epitome of hurt pride. Her pride also causes her to think it completely false because it is Miss Bingley. Because of her prejudice she is stuck in the opinion that Wickham is the one to be trusted. She is hasty and does not want to hear something contradictory to her "own" opinion. Judging by her response she only hears one part of the testimony: "I have heard you accuse him of nothing worse than being the son of Mr. Darcy's steward" (127).

This of course is false but she doesn't even listen to her- the rest of the statement is silenced in her mind by her pride and prejudice. If Elizabeth had taken into consideration the opinions of viable sources she may have had a better clue as to Wickham's character and she could have had Darcy on page 211, the first time he proposes. If Elizabeth had been more thoughtful in forming her opinions and had considered Jane's propositions she would not have had to wait so long for happiness. When Elizabeth tells Jane of what she

has heard of Darcy from Wickham, Jane is hesitant to believe it: " Do but consider in what a disgraceful light it places Mr. Darcy, to be treating his father's favourite in such a manner, -one, whom his father had promised to provide for.

-It is impossible. No man of common humanity, no man who had any value for his character, could be capable of it. Can his most intimate friends be so excessively deceived in him?"(119). Jane has an inkling that this image of Darcy could be wrong and she does not want to just believe it. Elizabeth is perfectly willing to believe it because she thinks that it is just Jane, she thinks well of everyone.

But Jane is the sensible one. She will not simply swallow something bad about others. In some cases this can be construed as bad and can be detrimental to one's hopes; however, in Elizabeth's case she should have taken a page from Jane's book and done some digging before simply believing Darcy to be the most terrible and unforgiving man. Jane is very gracious to Elizabeth once they do find out the truth about Wickham. She says, " Wickham so very bad! It is almost past belief.

And poor Mr. Darcy! Dear Lizzy, only consider what he must have suffered. Such a disappointment! And with the knowledge of your ill opinion too!"(240). She sympathizes with Elizabeth, but she does not say anything along the lines of " I told you so". She does however chastise her a little bit when she says, " and with the knowledge of your ill opinion too". She implies that it would have been less of a blow to Darcy if he had known that she thought well of him.

Elizabeth's pride prevented her from taking advice from Jane. Jane is her sensible sister and confidante. She does not even trust her in this matter yet she trusts Wickham whom she knows very little about other than that other respectable people do not like him. If she had listened to Jane or even initiated these ideas on her own she would have been able to see that Wickham was really the culprit and she could have married Darcy the first time he proposed. Elizabeth's prejudice also leads her to be set in the opinion that Darcy is bad for a long time. Only in hindsight of the explanatory letter he gives her does Elizabeth begin to even begin to understand his position.

She revisits her relationship with Wickham: " she saw the indelicacy of putting himself forward as he had done, and the inconsistency of his professions with his conduct... How differently did everything appear now in which he was concerned" (226). We start to see a major change in Elizabeth at this point because this is the first time that she admits to herself that she is wrong. She puts her pride aside long enough to realize that she was wrong about Wickham. Initially the reader thinks that Elizabeth is the ideal and faultless heroine, that she is only a victim of circumstance. By the end of the novel we discover that her excessive pride and prejudice make her unable to think clearly and rationally about her circumstances.

Because of her pride and prejudice, Elizabeth wastes a lot of time thinking about Wickham. She gets stuck in the opinion that Darcy is a person of terrible character in spite of the fact that she is led to this impression by Wickham. Once she believes that Wickham is benevolent, she is much too proud to consider that she might be wrong about Wickham and Darcy. Her <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-pride-and-prejudice/>

pride allows Wickham's planted seed of terrible thoughts about Darcy to linger and control her life for a longer time than necessary. Once she puts her pride aside she realizes that she was wrong and she begins to find happiness.

Often the only way to fix a mistake is to admit that wrong has been done; sometimes, that is the hardest part.