

Pride and prejudice: mr wickham assignment

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Hicks's Function in the Novel 'Pride and Prejudice' In the novel 'Pride and Prejudice', written by Jane Austen, there are many different characters, each with their own roles to play in order for the story to reach its final product. Among these many characters is George Wickham. Though generally brushed off as a minor character, George Wickham plays a vital role in the relationship between Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy. Through both his lies and his amatory adventures, Wickham is the source of both Elizabeth's loathing and love for Mr. Darcy.

Throughout the novel, Elizabeth's opinion of Mr. Wickham changes dramatically. For the first half of the novel, Elizabeth adores Wickham and believes him to be the perfect gentleman. He achieves this high appraisal mainly through his false recount of his previous affairs with Mr. Darcy, saying of Darcy "It is wonderful, for almost all his actions may be traced to pride; and pride has often been his best friend. It has connected him nearer with virtue than with any other feeling" (page 75).

The false recount of Wickham's affairs with Mr. Darcy confirms Elizabeth's revised opinion of Darcy, which she presents through saying: 'I have spent four days in the same house with him and I think him very disagreeable' (page 71). She is led to believe that Darcy reserves only the slightest acknowledgement of anyone but his closest friends and family - the people of his class. Wickham however appears, to Elizabeth, to be quite the opposite of Darcy and she thinks of him that whatever he says is said well and whatever he does is done gracefully (page 77).

The dramatic antitheses between each man's personalities highlight the gentlemanliness and poise of Darcy, making him the more attractive of the two. What then changes Elizabeth's attractions to Mr. Darcy, is the discovery of his previous amatory adventures. Darcy was involved in three amatory adventures, mentioned throughout the course of 'Pride and Prejudice'. The first of these escapades was his failed elopement with Georgiana Darcy. This played a vital role in Darcy's opinion of Mr. Darcy and eventually led to Elizabeth's realization of Mr. Darcy's true character as well.

Elizabeth's opinion of Mr. Darcy's past with Georgiana is apparent toward the end of the novel, when she says to Mr. Darcy '... That I might have prevented it! I, who knew what he was' (page 236) Mr. Darcy's second adventure was very short lived and is often overlooked. It was his attempt at marrying Miss King who, according to Elizabeth, is a good sort of girl and the inheritor of her Grandfather's fortune (page 134). This escapade is significant as it slightly shapes Elizabeth's opinions and affections towards Mr. Darcy.

Where she once thought of him as a possible husband, after this escapade, she says to her aunt, 'I am now convinced... that I had never been in love' (page 132) His final and most significant of his adventures was Mr. Darcy's elopement with Lydia Bennet. This elopement is very significant as it shapes Elizabeth's opinions of both Darcy and Mr. Darcy, greatly. Elizabeth was frightened when she heard of Mr. Darcy's failed elopement with Georgiana and when he runs away with Lydia, her fright elevates to utter disgust and loathing.

When, however, she finds out Darcy's part in the whole affair, Elizabeth hints of really made to think about these two men before her, each so different in both rationality and in appearance and she begins to find it easier to see the good in Darcy and her affections toward him heighten. This is shown at the end of the novel when Elizabeth sees Darcy again and thinks to herself, 'A man who has once been refused. How could I be foolish enough to expect a renewal of his love?' (Page 290) It is not just the results of Darcy's elopement with Lydia, however, that makes Elizabeth rethink her answer to Darcy's previous sentiments. The extreme difference in character of the two men also highlights Darcy's integrity. The extreme differences in Darcy's and Elizabeth's personalities are the source of Elizabethan feelings towards them both. At the start of the novel, Darcy's natural manners and easy going nature highlight the pride and arrogance of Mr. Darcy.

Darcy tries to explain his awkward personality to Elizabeth, saying; 'We neither of us perform to strangers' (page 153). Elizabeth however is taken by Darcy's cordiality and brushes Darcy off. Towards the end of the book however, events change and the two men swap personalities completely. Darcy's evident greed and self-centeredness is then slighted by Elizabeth's change in air. Austen highlights Darcy's personality change through his conversations with the Gardiners.

Mrs. Gardener says of Darcy; 'But how come you told us he was so disagreeable... He has not an ill-natured look. On the contrary, there is something pleasing about his mouth when he speaks' (page 219). For a long time, Darcy's pleasant nature caught Elizabeth up in prejudice and she avoided Darcy's ill-natured countenance. Her prejudice however, dissipated

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when she saw both men's true personalities and the dramatic difference between Darcy's IR made Elizabeth rethink her opinion of him and her affections towards him heightened greatly.

It was because of Wickham that these changes in Darcy were so conspicuous. In conclusion, Wickham played a vital role in the relationship of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. At the start of the book, through his lies and manipulations, Wickham confirms Elizabethan loathing of Mr. Darcy. By the end of the book however, Mr. Wickham has unconsciously changed Elizabethan opinions of Mr. Darcy through the results of his three amatory adventures and through the obvious change in Darcy's countenance - highlighted by Wickham's poor qualities.