

Pride and prejudice narrative essay

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Judgment plays a major role in *Pride and Prejudice*, however, it functions differently in various circumstances. Prejudice can be defined as a preconceived notion with no basis in actual experience. Being judicious, on the other hand, is forming sound opinions that have their roots in actual interactions and observations. In the novel, it appears that most characters have stringent, unchanging views on others, whether stemming from experience or a pre-set mindset. Specifically, some characters display consistently prejudiced mindsets, some a mix of both sound and predetermined opinions.

The distinction between judicious and prejudice inclinations speak volumes on one's character, reflects their social aptitude, and often determines their social trajectory and success. By forming inflexible opinions prior to interactions, Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine repeatedly demonstrate their ignorance to social cues. Mr. Collins provides a prime example through his proposal to Elizabeth, fully expecting to be met with an enthusiastic acceptance.

When Elizabeth immediately, but politely, declines, Mr. Collins adheres to his original belief, interpreting her clearly genuine rejection through the microscope of a predetermined perspective, stating, "It is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept" (104). Mr. Collins proceeds to reiterate his belief surely for a quite a while, contributing more to his distaste in the eyes of Elizabeth and her father. Mr. Collins is also blinded by class, a form of prejudice.

While around Lady Catherine, or speaking of her, he immediately resorts to unchecked praise that she proves unworthy of when later introduced. In her presence, Mr. Collins loses all sensibility and judgment, “apologizing instead of attending,” and acting in a completely servile manner. Lady Catherine herself displays prejudice resulting from class divisions. With her superior rank, she constantly believes her input is desired in every conversation, and that her methods are right.

Her opinions were unalterable and pre-disposed, as she showed no awareness for the present tone of conversation. She “came in, delivering her opinion on every subject in so decisive a manner as proved that she was not used to have her judgment controverted” (160). Both Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine are perceived as socially awkward, although the latter is respected by rank, in large part due to their inability to adjust their preconceived beliefs to current situations. Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth both display different levels of prejudice and sound judgment, but their inclinations separate their characters on a fundamental basis.

At the ball, Mr. Darcy is perceived immediately in a disagreeable light, due to his tendency to initially resort to prejudice in uncomfortable situations. Upon seeing Elizabeth, he states loudly, “She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me” (12). A surface level, rash judgment like this that stems solely from a passive glance at Elizabeth demonstrates the degree of insult of his prejudiced views. However, after conversing with her and deeper observation, Mr.

Darcy displays his ability to be judicious as he becomes infatuated with Elizabeth based on actual aspects of her personality and figure. He becomes captivated by the “easy playfulness” of her manners, and observes the “beautiful expression of her dark eyes” (24). However, when his proposal is refused, he resorts back on his preconceived notion of her family based on class. Elizabeth is quite the opposite, as her natural inclination to judiciousness separates her from Mr. Darcy, to the contrast making her fairly successful in social realms.

Her views of Mr. Bingley as “agreeable” stem from interactions with him that clearly prove it an accurate perception. She forms accurate opinions from experience, stating of Mr. Darcy, “I spent four days in the same house as him, and I think him very disagreeable” (76). Not only does she properly and judiciously analyze characters, but she reads situations excellently, and does not act out of the ordinary with those of different class. In Lady Catherine’s presence, Elizabeth is the only character who maintains her usual behavior.

However, Elizabeth is not immune to prejudice, as her disdain towards Mr. Darcy spurs her to immediately accept Wickham’s word as the truth, and also causes her to intervene and misinterpret a friendly conversation between Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy to be antagonistic. Elizabeth’s judicious nature serves to amplify, and contribute to, her social success, while Mr. Darcy’s rash resort to prejudice serves as a social handicap he has trouble overcoming.

The lack of flexibility in character's opinions reflects their level of social ability.