

The Men in Pride and Prejudice

Question

There is much to say about the women who populate Pride and Prejudice, but the male characters are also of particular interest. Analyze how Austen depicts either Mr. Bennet, or Wickham. Are they portrayed as either all positive or all negative? How do they function in the novel?

Introduction

One of most famous books in English literature also has one of the most famous openings in the history of literature, the acknowledgement of the universal fact not only sets up how women in the story are going to act, it also sets up how the men in the story are to perform their roles. Pride and Prejudice is a novel about society as much as it is about the characters contained therein and in each character we see reflections. These reflections are not only of other characters in the story but also of the writer and it can be shown with examples, descriptions, and interpretations that Mr. Bennet has both a positive and a negative reflection as described by Jane Austen.

A reflection is nothing more than an image and as readers that is all we can get of Mr. Bennet or even of the heroine of the novel who lives in his house. The opening of the novel as well as the social structure of the time certainly gives men more importance than women as far as the social order is concerned. In a manner of speaking, the female part of humanity acts as nothing more than a wife or a prospect for a wife. Other relations such as daughter or sister are hardly interesting enough to be given a lot of time since those relations are hardly a matter of choice for any of the players.

The Loving Father

Mr. Bennet is the owner of an estate in Hertfordshire where he lives with his wife and five daughters. Although he has been blessed with the love of his daughters it is also an unfortunate predicament for them since under the terms of Mr. his inheritance, he needs a male heir. Since he has no son, after he ceases to be all his property will be taken over by his closest male relative i.e. Mr. Collins. This means that Mr. Bennet will die without a legacy and this most certainly plays into his apparent lack of interest in his family (Jackson, 2000).

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