

# Jane Austen's Sharper Criticism of Pride in her Novel, Pride and Prejudice

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In my opinion, pride comes in for the sharper criticism by Austen. She has chosen to personify this trait in several characters in "Pride and Prejudice" although it is hard to find one character that portrays prejudice alone, throughout the novel. When prejudice does occur in this novel, Jane Austen has shown it in the hands of a notoriously proud character. Because prejudice is not personified (e.g. depicted as a major characteristic flaw) I believe that it was not to be the object of [Jane Austen's](#) sharper criticism.

Jane Austen has depicted pride in her minor (functional) characters as a means of demonstrating its importance as a theme of this [novel](#). Lady Catherine is one of the main offenders, her airs, arrogance and pride are fuelled by other characters like Mr. Collins who is put there to satire proud people and their followers. Another important character to note is Mr. Darcy. He is an extremely important character in this novel, a major character, and I think that the fact that he was perceived to have been 'proud' at the beginning of the novel by the reader, Elizabeth, and the community of the shire, and our perception, along with Elizabeth, of his character, has changed throughout the novel points to Jane Austen's criticism of pride and snobbery (insinuating that once pride is done away with (and along

with it, prejudice) a character becomes much more favourable. (Note that Lady Catherine does not sway from her proud arrogant position, from beginning to end of the novel, this partly to provide a contrast between the supposed arrogance of Mr. Darcy at the beginning of the novel, and his behaviour by the end.)

Throughout this novel we are shown the arrogant and haughty dispositions of the upper class of this society. (We are also shown the exceptions to the rule, namely Mr. Bingley and Miss Darcy.) These people are exceedingly proud of their great fortunes and estates and as a result of the emphasis at that time on monetary issues, they are prejudiced (and commit acts of prejudice) towards their financial, and social, "inferiors".

An example of this is the beginning of the novel, the ball, when Mr. Darcy snubs [Elizabeth Bennet](#) in an act of prejudice. He refuses to dance with her on account of her not being "handsome enough to tempt me."

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