Apr 4th, 12:40 PM

The More Extravagant a Master or Mistress is, the Better They Live

Jaclyn Tusing
Wright State University - Main Campus

Follow this and additional works at: http://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/celia_pride

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Repository Citation
http://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/celia_pride/preconference/blog/12

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the CELIA Events at CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pride and Prejudice: The Bicentennial by an authorized administrator of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact corescholar@www.libraries.wright.edu.
The More Extravagant a Master or Mistress is, the Better They Live

John Trusler's section on servants, in his books "The London Adviser and Guide" (1790) helps explain to readers the underlying insinuation and significance of a household that has servants in London to reflect positively and exemplify the economic status of the Bennet household in Pride and Prejudice (1813). Trusler's guide on servants warns housekeepers to not be too careful in their choosing of a servant. He explains that servants brought from the country will quickly become "infected with the dissolute manners of town-servants, and become equally bad with them" (48). This implies that even among servants there was some kind of hierarchy of class that determined which servant would be better to have than another. Trusler insists that a servant is only good as long as they do their duty, and are to be gotten rid of if they neglect their duties or masters. Trusler also mentions in response to an asterisk in his book that he has another book published called "Domestic Management" that explains to housekeepers how to properly care for and manage a home and also in regards to servants (48). Trusler also elaborates on the process of how to find a suitable servant and about how much this will cost depending on the quality, denomination, and origin of the servant (48-49). Trusler, in his detailed account of how to go about getting and keeping a servant is extravagant and presents an understanding of complexity and cost that a master would need to go through to obtain this economic symbol, that is a servant reflects positively on a household's ability to keep a servant. This would imply that the household was well off enough financially that having a servant would be easy. The image below is an example of a household that is well off and has a servant that reflects their class.

In Pride and Prejudice, the Mrs. Bennet is the character most concerned with the image of the household, and mostly in regards of being seen as a successful and wealthy family. She takes pride in the good aspects of her home and family and she seeks to parade them and for them to be noticed. In chapter thirteen of Pride and Prejudice, the Bennet family has Mr. Collins over to join the Bennets in a meal, Mr. Collins remarks on what a marvelous meal he was presented. When he asks Mrs. Bennet what daughter he thought thank for the meal. To this, Mrs. Bennet "assured him with some asperity that they were very well able to keep a good cook, and that her daughters had nothing to do with the kitchen." In this Mrs. Bennet is defending her family's economic status and image. Mr. Collins spends a quarter of an hour apologizing to Mrs. Bennet because he knows very well that he as insinuated that they were not able to keep a cook and in doing so has insulted their economic status.

http://prideandprejudice200.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-more-extravagant-master-or-mistress.html