

I am delighted that this piece will benefit SWVG.

The painting was basically a bit part player in episode 4 of the BBCs 1995 production of *Pride and Prejudice*. Looking at him now I would say he has weathered better than most of us. In fact, he is the only character you can meet in person who looks precisely as he did the day he was filmed.

Whatever you think of him today, you can consider yourselves fortunate to have been spared his earliest incarnation. He started life as a much less engaging approximation of an even less engaging photograph. If one were to conduct X rays they would reveal the tortuous and unseemly process of slimming down and redefinition. It took weeks; humiliations beyond the reach of the surgeon's knife. Crude painterly botox.

Mr. Darcy mark1 came across as a shabby, insubstantial, derelict looking actor. The likeness was supernatural. I disliked him intensely... as did everyone else. A very talented production designer managed to take him on a transformative journey into something bearable ... and eventually into someone who could actually pass the audition.

The result may not be a masterpiece, but he now has his moment in the popular imagination as a figment within a figment of a well-known literary figment. I wish him well in his new home.



March 2008