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**Beyond the boundaries of social chains:
Gender roles and social classes'
representation in Jane Austen's *Pride and
Prejudice***

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Abstract: This paper analyses social classes and gender roles in the Georgian Era in one of the most important novels by Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). The aim of this dissertation is to see how the author depicts the gender roles and social classes of her social context throughout the representation of the characters. Moreover, it is aimed at analysing how there is an imaginary wall created between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet by this division, and how the gender norms are connected to the social propriety of the period. In order to analyse these aspects in the novel, Georgian period's social context and Jane Austen's life has been studied. Finally, results show that most characters mirror the social conventions of the time, although some of them do not behave as they should. However, Darcy and Elizabeth are capable of contravene the rules of society and end up together.

Keywords: social classes; gender roles; Jane Austen; Georgian Era; *Pride and Prejudice*; “wall”

Resumen: Esta investigación analiza las clases sociales y los roles de género en la Época Georgiana en una de las novelas más importantes de Jane Austen: *Orgullo y Prejuicio*. El objetivo de esta investigación es observar cómo la autora retrata los roles de género y las clases sociales de su contexto social a través de la representación de los personajes. Además, también se busca analizar cómo la existencia de una “pared” creada entre Mr. Darcy y Elizabeth Bennet por esta división, y como las normas sociales están conectadas al decoro de la época. Para poder analizar estos aspectos en la novela, el contexto social y la vida de Jane Austen han sido estudiados. Finalmente, los resultados muestran que la mayoría de los personajes reflejan las convenciones sociales de la época, aunque algunos de ellos se comportan de forma inadecuada. Sin embargo, Darcy y Elizabeth son capaces de contravenir las normas.

Palabras clave: clases sociales; roles de género; Jane Austen; Época Georgiana; *Orgullo y Prejuicio*; “pared”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	6
2. The Georgian Era: the inequalities of social classes and gender roles and how Jane Austen fits in	9
2.1. Social classes	9
2.2. Gender roles	11
2.3. Jane Austen's life as an inspiration for her novels.....	13
3. Analysis of the representation of society by means of the characters and how wealth and gender influence Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship	17
4. Conclusions	31
5. Works cited	33

1. Introduction

Considered one of the greatest literary figures of the nineteenth century English literature, Jane Austen will be the subject under analysis through this dissertation. Austen's writings outshine for the realism and exhaustive depiction of the characters and the relationships that exist between them. In particular, she focuses on the social classes and gender roles of men and women in one of her novels, *Pride and Prejudice*, which will be explored in the following paper, as well as how these social circumstances make Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet be divided by an imaginary wall that makes them reject each other because of the prejudices among the other's social status and fortune.

Through this novel Jane Austen makes a social criticism of her time in an ironic way with the description and behaviour of all of her characters. According to Alex Woloch, "Austen was really ahead of her time" (Shashkevich) and this is because she does not emulate the novels of her time and follow their canon, but she writes her novels centring the topic on her contemporary society. Nonetheless, in that period for women to gain popularity and progress in their career as female writers was complicated because women were commonly ignored and excluded from the public life. There was a social inequality towards women, and they did not enjoy the privileges of men; they were criticised for being writers and for having sometimes a greater success than men. Women were not recognized as writers (Kirkham 161). Moreover, according to Hannah Eberle, Jane Austen found some difficulties when trying to publish her works because of her gender, so it was her brother Henry Austen who handled the communication with the publishers (2). Nonetheless, when Austen's father attempted to place *Pride and Prejudice* under the title of *First Impressions* with a publisher in London in 1796, it was rejected. Furthermore, after the publishing of Jane Austen's novels, the numbers of English female writers boosted (Fergus 41).

The Georgian and Regency eras were a period of time in which the core of everything was the hierarchy of society which was dominated by the rich classes. According to the social class, men and women know their place and how they must behave (Badinjki 43). Women were expected to have certain knowledge in dancing, singing and playing

instruments and to search through marriage an economic stability. Marriage was considered a necessity and a goal in life for women. Additionally, there was also a domestic hierarchy in which the man of the house is the one who has the power and makes the decisions.

Because of Jane Austen's concerns and criticism about the social and political situation of the Georgian period she has been considered by several writers and critics a feminist writer. Austen was deemed by Margaret Kirkham as a "feminist moralist, who shared the common line of feminist concern and interest..." (11). Via her works, she sought to deal with the social issues of her society.

In order to understand the criticism Jane Austen gives in *Pride and Prejudice* about the social standards of her time, the methodology followed is the one that corresponds on the one hand to the description of the social situation of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, of Jane Austen's life and on the other hand, the study of the novel by the aforementioned aspects.

Firstly, section number 2 has been titled "The Georgian Era: social classes, gender roles and Jane Austen". Therefore, a brief summary of the Georgian Era and the account of how society was structured, and the roles of men and women will be presented as to make the readers comprehend the topic under study. This would be accompanied by giving a complete explanation of what will be presented in the analysis of the novel, a detailed and profound biography of Jane Austen in terms of her situation as a woman in society and her condition in relation to the social class she belonged to.

Secondly, section number 3 will be dealing with the analysis of the novel through a deep summary of the plot considering each of the families that appear in the novel and how they represent gender roles and social classes. Furthermore, how Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy are separated by the conventions and rules of the time and end up transgressing these social chains would be presented in the analysis. It is also relevant to

indicate that to utterly understand the analysis of the novel, particular examples from the text will be provided and commented.

Finally, in the conclusion it is presented what the study wants to prove how Jane Austen writes about the social classes and gender roles, embodied by the principal characters, of her contemporary time to make a criticism of it and which are the reasons why Elizabeth and Darcy remain separated until the end of the novel till they trespass the social norms. This will be presented taking into consideration the social context of the Georgian Era.

2. The Georgian Era: the inequalities of social classes and gender roles and how Jane Austen fits in

The Georgian Era is the historical period that goes from 1714 to 1830. It has received this name because of the four kings who ruled over England during this time: George I, George II, George III and George IV. However, the years that were ruled by George IV (1811-1820) are known as the Regency Era because his father, George III was considered disabled because he suffered porphyria that result in him having delirium and problems with the nervous system (Steven Watson).

2.1. Social classes

The English society was divided in three main classes: upper class, middle class and lower class. But, since Jane Austen and the characters of *Pride and Prejudice* belong to the upper-middle and upper class, I consider that it is only relevant to describe how was structured this social class.

In the upper class there were the aristocracy, wealthy landowners and the gentry. The gentry is where Jane Austen and the Bennet family in *Pride and Prejudice* belong to. However, the gentry could be considered as the upper-middle class, but in the Bennet family case, it can be observed that they are not considered of that status because, although the father is a gentleman, Mrs. Bennet birth origin is not wealthy, nevertheless, the father has the necessary income to remain without working.

Now, I deem incumbent to comment about the aspects of the upper class; how the upper class represents society. Were people to born in the upper class, they would receive the status of gentleman or lady (*Georgian Era Society*). One example of this in the novel is Lady Catherine of Borough, an extremely wealthy member from the aristocracy. Besides, when the father dies, the financial assets are inherited by the eldest son. But if there were not male progenitors, the property and wealth would pass to the closest male progenitor, and this caused that the female members of the family would not receive anything, and they would need to marry to secure their future. This is the case of the

Bennet sisters. Mrs. Bennet is so obsessed in marrying them because they do not have a male brother that can protect them, so the property would pass to their cousin Mr. Collins.

Another aspect of the upper class is that the youngest sons' professions that enable them to preserve their social rank were law, clergy, medicine and the military (*Georgian Era Society*). An example of this could be observed in the novel when Mr. Wickham is supposed to be a clergyman, but he resigned this and wrote to Mr. Darcy saying that he pretended to study law: "My excellent father died about five years ago; and his attachment to Mr. Wickham was to the last so steady, that in his will he particularly recommended it to me, to promote his advancement in the best manner that his profession might allow—and if he took orders, desired that a valuable family living might be his as soon as it became vacant." (Austen 187). Mr. Darcy tried to help him to maintain his position in society by taking orders, but Wickham chose to study law, though he finally found it worthless.

Regarding women, their education was based on preparing them to be suitable for a future husband and to manage the household. The vast majority of the marriages were arranged by the patriarch and girls were not able to speak and decide whether they wanted to be married to that man or no. Moreover, women were not allowed to work because of their status, their roles were restrained to the private sphere, the domestic work. According to Eliza Haywood, "[w]omen [are] excluded from all public offices and employments," (21). She also argues that the duty of a married woman is "to center her whole studies within the compass of her own walls... and not attempt to extend her speculations among her family, and those things which are entrusted to her management" (201). Women were only physically and mentally enclosed inside the walls of the house and they are required to center all their duties to be connected to the household.

It is essential to understand that women's place in society goes hand in hand with the gender roles that prevailed during the whole Georgian Era. There was a code of conduct that men and women had to follow. People needed to have knowledge of politeness, education and gentility; there was an established social norm of behaviour (Badinjki 43). So, it can be stated that gender was an imperative aspect since it stipulated not only the public roles, but also the private ones (Roulston 35).

2.2. Gender roles

Gender roles were connected to the social division of the period. On the one hand, depending on which social class they belonged to, they could do some activities or others. As I have mentioned above, women from the gentry and the aristocracy were not allowed to have a job because of their status; they had to remain at home. Notwithstanding, regarding the public role they had, they were able to attend to the social conventions, such as balls. This is represented in *Pride and Prejudice* when all the Bennet family attends to a ball in chapter 3. Nonetheless, women from the middle class could work. In order to be acceptable for a man, women had to know how to read and write, to dance, sing and play music, and to sew (Badinjki 43). On the other hand, as society placed men as superior to women, when the male figure of the house died, the wealth could not be inherited by the daughters, but only by the sons. So, it can be said that this social structure created a male-dominated society. According to Young, women's fate and identity "were defined and controlled by men – fathers, husbands, or seducers" (119). A woman always had to obey what men said, so in the first part of her life, it is her "father that controls her fate until she gets married and then it is her husband that controls her fate until she dies" (Muji 13).

Because of the aforementioned issues, marriage was the principal goal for women because it was the only possible path they could take to survive and to maintain their social position (Valentinova Georgieva 13). According to Jennifer Kloester "A woman of the Regency period had no other occupation than to find a husband" (72). Marriage was commonly arranged between families or members of the same social rank and to be in love was not a factor to take into consideration. A woman's dowry was the key factor that wealthy men took into account when they ought to marry a young woman. Nevertheless, Jane Austen had an apathetic view of these rules and believed that apart from the financial aspect, a man and a woman should marry if they love each other. And this is what she describes in *Pride and Prejudice*: two types of marriages: the economical arrangement, for example Mr. Collins and Charlotte and the one powered by love, such as Mr. Bingley and Miss Bennet. At the end of the novel, when Elizabeth talks to her parents about how she ardently loves Darcy, they seem to be blissful not only because her dear daughter has found a man who makes her thrilled, but also because Mr. Darcy has a behemoth amount of money. It can be appreciated how Mr. Bennet is interested in how Elizabeth feels about this marriage and how he wants her to have a great life, so he says her: "Or, in other

words, you are determined to have him. He is rich, to be sure, and you may have more fine clothes and fine carriages than Jane. But will they make you happy?" (340) "I have no more to say. If this be the case, he deserves you. I could not have parted with you, my Lizzy, to anyone less worthy." (Austen 341). Moreover, in Mrs. Bennet case, it could be understood that she is most likely excited about the wealth she would have and about marrying three of her five daughters:

Good gracious! Lord bless me! only think! dear me! Mr. Darcy! Who would have thought it! And is it really true? Oh! my sweetest Lizzy! how rich and how great you will be! What pin-money, what jewels, what carriages you will have! [...] A house in town! Every thing that is charming! Three daughters married! Ten thousand a year! [...] (Austen 342).

In this case, Mrs. Bennet is only thanking God for having her daughter marrying a man with such wealth.

There were also manuals and conduct books for unmarried young girls to teach them what they had to do to get a man. "James S. Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (1809) stressed the accepted feminine manner of speech, action, and appearance, and Thomas Gisborne's *Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* (1801), elucidated the specific notions of female identity and provided deeper insights into the ideological concept of womanhood (9-38)." (Badinjki 44). So, it can be stated that girls' upbringing was dedicated to securing their future by marrying a wealthy man that will procure them an adequate home and a jolly life.

2.3. Jane Austen's life as an inspiration for her novels

Jane Austen is one of the most known and important female author of the Romanticism in Britain. She wrote novels of manners, which deal with the customs, language and behaviour of people in a particular historical context. Maybe this is why various critics consider her work as a realistic one because she describes the historical social context in which she was living through her novels. For instance, Harry Saw said that Jane Austen's novel is "historicist realism, because it placed human beings in their full social and historical settings" as she set her characters in the 18th and 19th century's society (206). Moreover, Kathryn Sutherland says that Jane Austen is so honest in her writings that this is a perfect way of making the reader see how things really were at the time (Sutherland). Although Jane Austen is not giving an autobiography in her novels, some similarities between *Pride and Prejudice* and Austen's life can be observed. She certainly writes about how her society was organized and some aspects connected to her private sphere. For instance, the representation of a resembling relation between Austen and her sister Cassandra could be observed between Elizabeth and Jane, and also how her family was not rich, but the father could maintain the family without working, as Mr. Bennet

Jane Austen was born on December 16, 1775, in Hampshire, United Kingdom, at the Parsonage House of Steventon.

Jane Austen's social status and her place in society allowed her to write about and criticise the society of her period in *Pride and Prejudice*. Jane Austen was the daughter of a clergyman, Rev. George Austen and of Cassandra, the youngest daughter of another clergyman, Rev. Thomas Leigh. The Austen's belong to the English gentry as they were landowners, back in time clothiers. On the one hand, Austen's father received a good education at Tunbridge School because of his uncle Mr. Francis Austen. As a consequence, he got a scholarship and a fellowship in Oxford, at St. John's College. Besides, in the year 1764, he became the owner of two rectories: Rectory of Deane and Rectory of Steventon in Hampshire. On the other hand, Cassandra's father was a fellow of All Souls and held the College living of Harpsden, so she was part of an Educated family as her husband (Leigh 5-7). The Austen family was not rich, however, the teaching power of the head of the family aided them to have enough money to provide a good

education to their children and to mix with the best part of society of the neighbourhood (Austen-Leigh 19).

It is significant to discuss Austen's parents and siblings since they were the ones who influenced her in her future literary production.

The fact that Mr. Austen was a great scholar, was essential for his children as he was capable of teaching and preparing two of his sons to go to university. The studies of the rest of his children were also directed by him. Regarding Mrs. Austen, she was highly influential to Jane since she had both a powerful common sense and a spirited imagination and used them in writing to express herself (Leigh 18).

Jane Austen's family was mainly the most valued element of her life. For this reason, it is highly relevant briefly mentioning her brothers and sisters and observe how their personalities and professions influenced her writings. This "is necessary in order to give any idea of the objects which principally occupied her thoughts, and filled her heart" (Leigh 19). Her eldest brother James might have directed Jane in her reading, because he was proficient in English literature and wrote in verse and prose (Leigh 20). Furthermore, through her second brother Edward, Jane was able to gain a broad and new view of the English society by observing. When Edward married and settled in East Kent, Jane started to visit him and, in those journeys, it was when she had the possibility either to take part and mix in the society of this neighbourhood or to compare this county life with the one she perfectly knew from Hampshire (Austen-Leigh 18). This is represented in the novel because since Jane Austen spent most of her life at home, these journeys gave her a wide knowledge of society and she was able to transcribe this as she writes about the country and the town. She saw how people from a higher status behave and compared these from the aristocracy to the ones from the gentry. Furthermore, in *Pride and Prejudice* this travelling from the country to the town is appreciated when Elizabeth decides to make a trip with her uncle and aunt in order to pursue some amusement in chapter 42. Nevertheless, the dearest of Jane's siblings was Cassandra. She spoke of her as if she was better, more beautiful and wiser than herself. This sisterly love is reflected in *Pride and Prejudice* and the relation Elizabeth and Jane have. Lizzy, who is not much younger than Jane is always praising her beauty and the good person she is. Elizabeth is always with her and wants her to be happy.

Jane, as most of the girls of that period from her same social class, enjoyed the activities of her surroundings, such as dancing, at which she was keen as "her brother

Henry says: ‘She was fond of dancing and excelled in it.’ It may be remembered that nearly all her heroines shared in this taste—even the timid Fanny feeling that a ball ‘was indeed delightful’” (Austen-Leigh 20). This is a clear example of the social rank Austen belongs to. During that period the middle class, the one she is a member of, and the high class continually attended balls as a way of amusement and to meet new people.

During the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century, the education of the daughters of the house was in the hands of a governess, they had one who taught them how to behave. This is the case of Jane Austen and her sister Cassandra; they were under the control and care of Mrs. Cawley at Oxford. This aspect of the time could be observed in the novel, as there is a moment in which Lady Catherine asks Elizabeth if she and her sisters have had a governess who taught them to sing, dance, draw and play instruments: “Has your governess left you?” “We never had any governess.” “No governess! How was that possible? Five daughters brought up at home without a governess! I never heard of such a thing. Your mother must have been quite a slave to your education.” (Austen 156). Here, the stereotypes of women in the 18th and 19th centuries are typified. They were supposed to be prepared by the governess to act the way girls were supposed to according to the social standards of the time. For instance, singing and playing instruments was a requirement in order to be the perfect wives for their future husbands and to be able to entertain them. This practice of playing instruments is depicted in the novel. It can be observed that Elizabeth knows a little bit how to play the pianoforte, but she is not so well at it, and she is criticized by Lady Catherine because of it and because of her wealth, as her parents have not the resources to hire a master: “Miss Bennet would not play at all amiss if she practised more, and could have the advantage of a London master. She has a very good notion of fingering, though her taste is not equal to Anne’s.” (Austen 166). Jane received little instruction to play the pianoforte and it was in Chawton where she practiced every day (Leigh 107).

In relation to the aforementioned aspects of Austen’s life as a woman, it can be added that during this epoch girls had to share the same bedroom, such as Jane and Cassandra, and there was not a private room for them to do whatever they wanted in silence and with any interruption. This is the case of Jane Austen; she wrote all of her novels in the general sitting-room and there she was exposed to any kind of interruptions by the members of her family or guests (Leigh 128-129). This aspect of the household’s life of middle-class people is present in the story of *Pride and Prejudice*. Here, it can be

appreciated how Jane and Elizabeth share the same bedroom and bed and all the daughters and spouse of Mr. Bennet make their living in the general sitting-room, while the man of the house has his own room with the library and he stays there alone, with no interruptions.

It may seem interesting how Jane Austen does break with the stereotype of women in that period as she was never interested in marriage, she was not forced to marry any man. So, it can be said that in this feature of her life she could decide what to do. Notwithstanding, in the novel marriage, as well as the obsession of most of the young women and her mother to find a husband, are always present.

Considering all of the above, it can be said that Jane Austen demonstrates with her novels that she was concerned with her domestic sphere, the characteristics of that private sphere and the relationships of the people of her surroundings. For instance, *Pride and Prejudice* is based on sisterly love, the life in the family house, visiting relatives, the representation of the clergy (Mr. Collins) and the social conventions of the middle-class. According to David Cecil in *A Portrait of Jane Austen*,

Her view of human nature was limited in the first place by her circumstances: she wrote about men and women as she herself had known them. Her view was further limited by her sex, by the fact that she only saw as much of humanity as was visible to a lady, and this when a lady's view was narrowly confined by convention, so that the only people she ever knew well belonged to her class and lived in her neighborhood (44).

With this quote, it can be seen that Jane Austen was interested in the description of the domestic sphere because she merely had a social life. Her writing was constrained by her sex. Consequently, she wrote about the peculiarities and relationships of the people that surrounded her, not only her family, but also the people belonging to her class and the ones living in her neighbourhood.

Jane Austen died on July 18, 1817, caused by a malady.

3. Analysis of the representation of society by means of the characters and how wealth and gender influence Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship

Pride and Prejudice is a novel written by Jane Austen in the late 18th century, but it was first published in 1813. The story is set in rural England, and it focuses on the life of the Bennet family. This family lives in Longbourn, their state, which is near Meryton, and they belong to the gentry: landowners of gentle birth who may not have a nobility title or without noble rank, as Mrs. Bennet, who were in an inferior position from the nobility. The novel revolves around the love story between Elizabeth Bennet, the protagonist, and Mr. Darcy, the other protagonist of the story, a wealthy man from the aristocracy.

The novel is composed of a wide variety of diverse characters that through them, Austen explores and illustrates the themes of gender roles, marriage, love, social classes and personal growth by describing the atmosphere and environment she was familiar with. According to Lauren Ann, her characters are represented from Austen's personal point of view and perception of human behaviour and characteristics. *Pride and Prejudice's* characters are portrayed with both flaws and strengths that are common and present all over history and that deal with the life and social traditions of the 18th and 19th centuries (7). Therefore, it can be stated that the name of the novel is perfect to reflect on the idea of social status. These pride and prejudices are primarily embodied by Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy as they are separated by this "wall" created by the different social classes they belong to. This causes a complete misunderstanding between both characters since through the whole novel they show the prejudices they have for each other and their respective families and how proud they are to try not to change their view of each of them until the last part of the story.

Gender roles and social classes can go hand in hand because depending on the social class you are from, you must behave in one way or another, regardless of if you are a man or a woman. The two predominant classes in *Pride and Prejudice* are the middle and high classes. In relation to what is worldwide known about society and its conventions and how Jane Austen lived as a middle-class woman in the 18th and 19th centuries, here it

can be found how men and women are expected to act through the characterization of the Bennets, the Bingleys, Mr. Darcy's family, Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine.

The Bennets' place in the social hierarchy of England has special importance from the beginning till the end of the novel. They belong to the gentry, just as Jane Austen's family, but they are not wealthy. They live in their state called Longbourn. Nevertheless, the family lack property as they are not able to claim their house as their own (Lauren Ann 10) because of the social tradition of the reign of George III that if the head of the house has not any male progenitor, the state will be inherited by the closest male relative, in this case, their cousin Mr. William Collins. This is the reason why Mrs. Bennet wishes with all her forces to marry her five daughters with the aim of securing their future. Since the Bennets are from the gentry, they need proper husbands for their daughters, men who have the necessary power and capital to sustain their children.

It is in the very first lines of the novel where the concept of marriage is presented by the words of the narrator: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." (Austen 9). With these lines, Austen is introducing in a sarcastic tone the main prevalent topic in *Pride and Prejudice*: marriage and how it comes with some social and gender inequalities.

So, in the first page of the story, Mrs. Bennet is overexcited by the arrival to Netherfield Park of a rich bachelor called Charles Bingley. She believes in the possibility of Mr. Bingley becoming a suitable husband for one of her daughters: "What is his name?" "Bingley." "Is he married or single?" "Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!" (Austen 9). In this first chapter it can be seen how Mrs. Bennet is only concerned with marrying her daughters with a rich man without thinking about their feelings.

In this first scene Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are presented. As the head of the Bennet family there is Mr. Bennet. He is the father of five unmarried daughters. He can be considered to be reasonable, and he has a sarcastic sense of humour that he uses to irritate his wife, Mrs. Bennet. Throughout the novel, Mr. Bennet prefers rather not be involved in her daughter's love and marriage concerns. He could be described as an indolent person. While Mrs. Bennet only goal and ambition in life is to marry her daughters with a wealthy man and whenever things are not going her way, she suffers attacks of tremors as she says in the novel, her "poor nerves". Mr. Bennet does not seem to be worried about the future

of his state and his daughters. Nonetheless, there could be an exception with her lovely daughter Lizzy. He has preference for her because she “has something more of quickness than her sisters.” (Austen 10) For example, there is a moment in the story when Mr. Collins wants to visit the Bennets in order to marry one of their daughters. When he proposes to Elizabeth and she rejects his offer, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet react in two completely different ways. Mrs. Bennet gets extremely angry by her daughter’s denial and thinks that she is selfish and ungrateful for not accepting the hand of Mr. Collins who would be a great husband for her. But maybe, the one who is being selfish in this context is Mrs. Bennet as she is not paying attention to his daughter’s feelings for Mr. Collins. She is trying to force Elizabeth into an undesirable marriage. What concerns Mrs Bennet is to marry Elizabeth with Collins to keep their state when Mr. Bennet dies. Whereas Mr. Bennet says to her “An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you do.” (Austen 107) In this exact moment, it can be appreciated how Mr. Bennet loves Elizabeth and wants her to marry the man she wants, a man that is as good as she is. Hence, it could be said that Jane Austen is breaking with the gender roles of her time and the patriarchal society since her father does not decide who is going to marry her daughters, he gives them the possibility to choose.

Nevertheless, in the end, Mr. Bennet, as the patriarchal figure, has to accept the men that want to marry their daughters, such as Wickham, Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy. If the father does not accept this, they cannot marry. One example of this is in chapter 59 when Mr. Bennet accepts Mr. Darcy as Elizabeth’s future husband: “Well, my dear,” said he, when she ceased speaking, “I have no more to say. If this be the case, he deserves you. I could not have parted with you, my Lizzy, to anyone less worthy.” (Austen 341) Here, Mr. Bennet is glad because her lovely Lizzy has found a man who is equal to her regarding their talents and the fact that they would respect each other. In addition, he is so excited that he is open to accept suitors for Kitty and Mary: “If any young men come for Mary and Kitty, send them in, for I am quite at leisure” (Austen 341).

Regarding Mrs. Bennet, it is meaningful to mention that she does not behave properly according to her status and the social conventions. When she is with other people, more specifically, with people from higher rank, such as the Bingleys and Mr.

Darcy, she interrupts, she is a noisy woman and foolish. She has not any social graces and her way of acting is what provokes the possible suitors of her daughters to not desire to marry them. This is the dilemma that causes so much trouble between Jane and Mr. Bingley and between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. This could be appreciated with the following lines:

“The country,” said Darcy, “can in general supply but a few subjects for such a study. In a country neighbourhood you move in a very confined and unvarying society.”

“But people themselves alter so much, that there is something new to be observed in them for ever.”

“Yes, indeed,” cried Mrs. Bennet, offended by his manner of mentioning a country neighbourhood. “I assure you there is quite as much of that going on in the country as in town.”

Everybody was surprised, and Darcy, after looking at her for a moment, turned silently away. Mrs. Bennet [...] continued her triumph.

“I cannot see that London has any great advantage over the country, for my part, except the shops and public places. The country is a vast deal pleasanter, is it not, Mr. Bingley?”

[...] But that gentleman,” looking at Darcy, “seemed to think the country was nothing at all.”

“Indeed, Mamma, you are mistaken,” said Elizabeth, blushing for her mother. “You quite mistook Mr. Darcy [...]” (Austen 29-30)

Here, Mrs. Bennet is making her daughter Elizabeth blush because she is not a smart woman and she speaks without thinking first, saying the first thing that comes to her mind. With this mini dialogue, it can be observed how Mrs. Bennet does not understand what Mr. Darcy is trying to express about the country. According to how women were supposed to behave during this era, Mrs. Bennet does not have the decorum associated with her class and with how she has to behave in front of people of a higher social status:

No, she would go home. I fancy she was wanted about the mince-pies. For my part, Mr. Bingley, I always keep servants that can do their own work; my daughters are brought up very differently. But everybody is to judge for themselves, and the Lucases are a very good sort of girls, I assure you. It is a pity they are not handsome! Not that I think Charlotte so very plain—but then she is our particular friend. (Austen 46).

I think that she considers herself and her family better than other members of the neighbourhood and she does not have any problem in giving unfavourable commentaries about other people in front of other characters, such as Charlotte Lucas. This does not speak well of her behaviour. As she has mean understanding I believe that she does not acknowledge that she embarrasses her daughters when they are with other people and that she is not acting according to the social standards. I might say that people should behave in a different way as they do in their homes when they are in front of other people, but I would say that people need to be free to speak when they want, but this needs to be done with certain respect, no matter if the other person is richer, equal or poorer than you.

Mrs. Bennet does not see that she has an incorrect behaviour and that she encourages her youngest daughters Kitty and Lydia to act as she does. For instance, Lydia is obsessed with the militia officers, she wants to be with one of them and she has easy manners. She has no qualms in abruptly address people, as well as her mother. This could be appreciated in chapter 9: “She was very equal, therefore, to address Mr. Bingley on the subject of the ball, and abruptly reminded him of his promise; adding, that it would be the most shameful thing in the world if he did not keep it. His answer to this sudden attack was delightful to their mother’s ear” (Austen 47-48). Lydia is not afraid of speaking to people in a tone and at a time when she should not do so. It is clear that she has a wild spirit.

Elizabeth is the protagonist of the novel. She is the second-eldest daughter. Elizabeth is attractive and the most intelligent, witty and sensitive of the five daughters. She has praiseworthy qualities, for instance, she is a brilliant conversationalist, as it can be observed in her intense dialogues with Mr. Darcy and Lady Catherine. She is lovely and she also has a strong character; she has no fear to say what she feels and wants to say. However, she has a harsh tongue and her predisposition of making judgments leads her to create prejudiced ideas of other people, such as Mr. Darcy. At the end of the novel, Elizabeth finally sees how really Mr. Darcy is and all of what he has done for her. Elizabeth’s character breaks with the female gender role stereotypes of the period because at the beginning she is not interested in getting a husband because of her age and the thinking that if young women do not marry early, they will become unworthy. As she is very direct when talking and believes in her own ideas and principles, she declines Mr. Collins proposal to marry him because she does not love him, and she will never do. She

considers that a woman must marry a man not because of his wealthiness, his fortune, but because she really is in love with him:

“Upon my word, sir,” cried Elizabeth, “your hope is a rather extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make me happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who could make you so (Austen 103).

When Elizabeth rejects Mr. Collins, he recalls her of her rank:

My situation in life, my connections with the family of de Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favour; and you should take it into further consideration, that in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you [...] you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females (Austen 104).

Mr. Collins is trying to make Elizabeth know that this is her best option to marry someone, that she probably would not have any other offer of marriage. He thinks that she must accept because of her class, because if she marries him the Bennets would lose little when Mr. Bennet dies. Mr. Collins is an arrogant man who considers himself to be better than the Bennets because he has a patron, Lady Catherine of Bourgh and because of her he now is a wealthy man with a property of his own. Furthermore, with the last lines, he is making a generalization of women thinking that every gentle women decide to reject men at first to create tension and suspense to make men desire them more. According to Mary Waldron, the conduct-books of this era, usually followed Rousseau’s ideas, presume that every male in the pursue of a woman would have the satisfaction in suppressing woman’s reluctance (44). With Elizabeth’s response, Austen’s contumely towards the inequalities of her society is mirrored with Elizabeth’s answers:

I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretensions whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere [...], but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak

plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female, intending to plague you, but as a rational creature, speaking the truth from her heart (Austen 105).

Notwithstanding, even if Mr. Collins is pompous and not a man of wisdom, his reasoning about Elizabeth's place in society is quite accurate. Her social class makes her not desirable to whom she may desire to marry because for an aristocratic man a marriage with her would encompass marrying below his class, and this would be criticized by the people. Also, for a man of the gentry to marry her does not provide any chance for prosperity and advancement in society (Lauren Ann 11). In addition, the sense of superiority of Mr. Collins can be seen when he first arrives to the Bennet house. When the dinner is served and they are all eating, he wanted to know whom of his cousins has cooked that excellent dinner. Here, Mr. Collins believes that as they are not wealthy, they cannot have a cook for their own. However, Mrs. Bennet assured him with a bitterness tone that they are capable of having a cook: "The dinner too in its turn was highly admired; and he begged to know to which of his fair cousins the excellency of its cooking was owing. But he was set right there by Mrs. Bennet, who assured him with some asperity that they were very well able to keep a good cook [...]" (Austen 66).

With Collin's proposal to Elizabeth and the near marriage between Collins and Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth's dearest friend, Austen illustrates through Elizabeth her opinions about a marriage without love. It can be appreciated that the reason why Elizabeth decides to deny Collin's proposal is because she does not love him, and she will never do, although in the financial aspect it is an alluring proposal to accept. Consequently, when she finds out that Charlotte has agreed to marry this man, she is shocked and angry because she does not want to believe in marrying someone if there is no affection. She knows that Charlotte is doing this because it would be a successful agreement for her family and herself. Charlotte is taking the safe path to end up in a beneficial marriage Here, Charlotte is following the customs of society, accepting a marriage for convenience, while Elizabeth considers that marriage is more than a match of wealth.

Along the novel, she is criticized by some characters from the aristocracy, such as Lady Catherine and Miss Bingley. In these cases, these women despise Elizabeth and her family in general because of their low breeding. As they belong to the middle class, they

consider them inferior and think that they must not have the possibility to have a relationship with someone of their high status.

Lady Catherine is a noblewoman, Mr. Darcy's aunt and patron of Mr. Collins. She is very representative of her social status; she is deeply rich and undervalue everybody who is inferior to her class. This is the reason why she insults Elizabeth and her family and cannot allow her to marry her nephew. Lady Catherine believes that every young woman must know how to sing, play and draw and that a governess is needed to educate the girls. She considers that as Elizabeth and her sisters have never had a governess, they had been neglected. In this same scene, where Lady Catherine is indirectly saying that her mother should have paid more attention to the education of her daughters, she also asks Elizabeth if any of her sisters is out: "Are any of your younger sisters out, Miss Bennet?" "Yes, ma'am, all." "All! What, all five out at once? Very odd! And you only the second. The younger ones out before the elder ones are married! Your younger sisters must be very young?" (Austen 156). In this little dialogue it can be seen how, according to the role women had in society, they had to come out so as to find future husbands. In this scene, Lady Catherine cannot believe how without Jane and Elizabeth being married their younger sisters are out. Moreover, I consider that 'out' may be an irony here. It is possible that what Lizzy means is that her sisters are young, and they have to be out amusing society. While for Lady Catherine 'out' means that they have been presented in society in order to find a husband. Additionally, nearly at the end of the story, Lady Catherine appears at the Bennets house to ask Elizabeth if she is going to marry her nephew Mr. Darcy. She could not accept the idea of someone with such a low breeding marrying his own nephew since he is engaged with her daughter:

While in their cradles, we planned the union: and now, at the moment when the wishes of both sisters would be accomplished in their marriage, to be prevented by a young woman of inferior birth, of no importance in the world, and wholly unallied to the family! Do you pay no regard to the wishes of his friends? To his tacit engagement with Miss de Bourgh? Are you lost to every feeling of propriety and delicacy? Have you not heard me say that from his earliest hours he was destined for his cousin? (Austen 320).

During this dialogue, Lady Catherine insults Elizabeth in every possible method. Elizabeth tries to defend herself by specifying that they are the same because “He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman’s daughter: so far we are equal” (Austen 321). However,

Lady Catherine says that she is daughter of a gentleman but that her mother is nothing, as well as her aunts and uncles. Elizabeth cannot end with the dishonour and disgrace connected to her and her fortune. All of what Lady Catherine says to Elizabeth does not dissuade her from feeling what she feels for Mr. Darcy, and she gives not the pleasure to Lady Catherine of promising that she will never marry Mr. Darcy.

Apart from Lady Catherine, there are Mr. Bingley’s sisters. Miss Bingley is envious of Elizabeth because of the attention that inspires in Mr. Darcy. Every time they meet her, she is always commenting her dirty and horrible clothes:

When dinner was over, she returned directly to Jane, and Miss Bingley began abusing her as soon as she was out of the room. Her manners were pronounced to be very bad indeed, a mixture of pride and impertinence; she had no conversation, no style, no beauty. Mrs. Hurst thought the same, and added: “She has nothing, in short, to recommend her, but being an excellent walker. I shall never forget her appearance this morning. She really looked almost wild.” (Austen 38)

Along this quote and the dialogue that follows it, both sisters are criticizing Elizabeth. They are stating that she has a detachment of decorum because she walks completely alone, and this signifies that she has a detestable independence. She does not follow the gender role of the period as women were supposed to be always with someone, it was not common to see a young woman walking alone through the fields.

As Lady Catherine, Mrs Hurst considers that a good woman must know how to sing and play: “A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half-deserved.” (Austen 42). In this scene, the characters from the aristocracy, that is to say Mr. Bingley, her sisters and Mr. Darcy consider that a woman is accomplished if she has the abilities mentioned above. I believe that this is a deeply superficial reflection about women accomplishments. They are not

thinking about the real abilities of a person, such as to be intelligent with words, to have a personal opinion and to be kind. Moreover, in relation to the eldest sister Jane, the Bingleys could not accept that her brother loves Jane because of his social status: “I have an excessive regard for Miss Jane Bennet, she is really a very sweet girl, and I wish with all my heart she were well settled. But with such a father and mother, and such low connections, I am afraid there is no chance of it.” (Austen 39). Both sisters consider vulgar to have a relation with the Bennet family and they laugh at their family connections. Together with Mr. Darcy, they dissuade Mr. Bingley to go away from Netherfield Park and never return.

Now, it is meaningful to mention some other characters who also participate in there being an alienation between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy because of gender roles and money. These are Wickham and Lydia Bennet.

Regarding Wickham, he is a militia officer that has a past life connected to Mr. Darcy. He is the son of “the late Mr. Darcy’s steward.” (Austen 92).

He is a handsome man and charming, so when it appears in the novel Elizabeth is enchanted by him. When Wickham tells a lie to Elizabeth about what unites him to Mr. Darcy, she completely believes him because of his appealing character. He tells her that Mr Darcy has not given him what he was promised by Darcy’s father before his death:

There was just such an informality in the terms of the bequest as to give me no hope from law. A man of honour could not have doubted the intention, but Mr. Darcy chose to doubt it—or to treat it as a merely conditional recommendation, and to assert that I had forfeited all claim to it by extravagance, imprudence—in short anything or nothing. Certain it is, that the living became vacant two years ago, exactly as I was of an age to hold it, and that it was given to another man; and no less certain is it, that I cannot accuse myself of having really done anything to deserve to lose it [...]. (Austen 79)

In this chapter (16), Wickham is trying to convince Elizabeth about Darcy’s lack of honouring his father wishes by saying that he was jealous about that his father loved Wickham more than himself and that he is a proud man and dishonest. Hence, Elizabeth does not have Darcy in great steam, so this story makes her hate him more, and consider him because of his rank and wealthy an absolute proud person, without any empathy who does not want to help someone inferior to him.

Nonetheless, as the story advances, it can be acknowledged that all this is made up by Wickham. In reality, he is a selfish and immoral man who has spent all of the money given to him after Darcy's father death. He made a deal with Mr. Darcy to study law, so he gave him three thousand pounds. But when Wickham wrote him to ask for more money because he has numerous debts and Mr. Darcy denied, he tried to seduce his sister, Georgiana Darcy, and run away with her because he wanted her fortune (thirty thousand pounds).

Related to Wickham is Lydia Bennet, the youngest sister. She is like her mother, a fool girl who is only interested in men, such as soldiers and in gossiping. As Mrs. Bennet, she embarrasses her father and oldest sisters because of her behaviour. She is impulsive and does not think about the consequences of her acts, she has not any restraint. Elizabeth believes that if Lydia continues to behave in this way, she is going to ridicule the family:

Her character will be fixed, and she will, at sixteen, be the most determined flirt that ever made herself or her family ridiculous; a flirt, too, in the worst and meanest degree of flirtation; without any attraction beyond youth and a tolerable person; and, from the ignorance and emptiness of her mind, wholly unable to ward off any portion of that universal contempt which her rage for admiration will excite (Austen 213).

As she is ignorant, vain and idle, she runs away with Wickham when she is in Brighton. This causes a real damage to the Bennet family; it is humiliating, and Elizabeth thinks that this is bringing misery on all of them. Throughout the whole novel Lydia does not learn any awareness of propriety. For example, in page 286, Lydia seems totally proud and victorious because she is married and said Jane "Ah! Jane, I take your place now, and you must go lower, because I am a married woman." (Austen 286). It was not usual to see a younger sister marrying before the elder ones. And throughout this page Lydia considers herself superior to her sisters, that she has been able to find a husband before them, who are elder, and she is rejoicing in their face about her "success". She even proposes herself to find fine partners for her sisters because she now rates herself to be in the position of Jane because she is married, and she can comment about possible husbands for the rest of her sisters. This could be considered ironic because had she been able to find a good suitor, she would not be married to Mr. Wickham.

The humiliation Lydia provokes on the family could be also observed when Mr. Collins writes Mr. Bennet saying that:

The death of your daughter would have been a blessing in comparison of this. And it is the more to be lamented, because there is reason to suppose as my dear Charlotte informs me, that this licentiousness of behaviour in your daughter has proceeded from a faulty degree of indulgence; though, at the same time, for the consolation of yourself and Mrs. Bennet, I am inclined to think that her own disposition must be naturally bad, or she could not be guilty of such an enormity, at so early an age (Austen 269).

In this letter, Mr. Collins is lamenting Lydia's behaviour, but he is also saying that her actions may not only be her fault, but that her father was greatly indulged.

Up to here, what has been discussed is how the different characters that appear in the novel mirror and in some cases break the gender roles and social classes of Jane Austen's historical context and how some of these characters and the social conventions they have to follow have contributed to maintain Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy divided by a "wall" that make them to have certain harshness towards each other. Nevertheless, as the story progresses, the fact that Darcy and Elizabeth start to transgress the boundaries of social chains is noticeable. However, it is beyond the scope of this study the reason why these characters change their behaviour since this study is centred on the class and gender barriers and not on the personalities of the characters, so this transgression is not detailed.

Finally, together with Elizabeth Bennet as a protagonist is Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy. As mentioned above, he belongs to the aristocracy, and he is the wealthy owner of the family estate of Pemberley in Derbyshire. Though Darcy is handsome and intelligent, Darcy lacks ease and social skills, and this is why others frequently mistake his initial reserve as if he is excessively proud.

Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth first met at a ball at the beginning of the novel, and she initially detests Mr. Darcy because of his snobbery and arrogance. There is a scene in the ball when Elizabeth hears Mr. Darcy talking to his friend Mr. Bingley and saying that "She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me; I am in no humour at present to give

consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men.” (Austen 17). In these lines, it can be observed how Mr. Darcy is too proud to show interest for someone inferior to him. Darcy judges Elizabeth to not be attractive enough to find a male partner to dance with, so he is not willing to notice her. Nevertheless, throughout the novel there are various instances in which they both met, and it can be seen how Mr. Darcy more and more starts to feel some affection towards Elizabeth. However, the Bennet’s social class and the behaviour of most of the family, except Miss Bennet and Elizabeth, is what drives Darcy to constrain his feelings towards Elizabeth, because of the expectations of his society of him marrying someone of his same class. Notwithstanding, in chapter 34 Darcy declares his love to Elizabeth: “In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you.” (Austen 177).

He spoke well; but there were feelings besides those of the heart to be detailed; and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride. His sense of her inferiority [...] the family obstacles which had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit (Austen 177).

In this novel’s scene, Elizabeth is analysing what Darcy has just expressed her. She knows that she should not be heartless to the fact that such a gentleman is in love with her. However, she could not only forget how he dislikes her family because of their propriety and class and how he sees her as someone inferior, but also how he has fought against his feelings to not love a young woman from the gentry.

Another issue that separates Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth is the fact that Mr. Darcy does not want Bingley to marry Jane is because of his family’s behaviour:

But there were other causes of repugnance; causes which, though still existing, and existing to an equal degree in both instances, I had myself endeavoured to forget, because they were not immediately before me. These causes must be stated, though briefly. The situation of your mother’s family, though objectionable, was nothing in comparison to that total want of propriety so frequently, so almost uniformly betrayed by herself, by your three younger sisters, and occasionally even by your father. Pardon me. It pains me to offend you (Austen 184).

In this letter Darcy comments about what I have been analysing along this paper. He is trying to make Elizabeth understand that her family position and the behaviour of mostly every member of it are negative factors to take into consideration when marrying a woman. In the eyes of society, they have a poor sense of decency.

In addition, he also explains Elizabeth how together with Bingley's sisters they managed to convince Mr. Bingley to never return to Hertfordshire. He says that the three of them expose him the "certain evils of such a choice" (Austen 185), and as he is much more dependent on Darcy's judgement than his own, it was easy to convince him to stay and understand that this marriage would be a completely error.

Besides, although Elizabeth believes that money is what makes Darcy a proud person and who only cares about decency and class, this is what allows him to pay Wickham all of what he wants when he escaped with Lydia, and Elizabeth is so grateful for this act, which Darcy has only done because of how she appreciates and loves her. Mr. Wickham is only interested in the money; he does not love her. Therefore, in order to not end the reputation of the Bennets because of the foolishness of Lydia, Darcy intervenes and pays him and their wedding.

At the end of *Pride and Prejudice* Darcy convinces Bingley to return to Longbourn and propose to Jane because he wants his friend to be happy as well as Elizabeth. He does all of this for her, for her happiness. All of the prejudices in relation to social classes disappear because what is important is love, to be with the person you ardently love.

4. Conclusions

Jane Austen is undoubtedly one of the most meaningful and influential authors of her time and English literature. *Pride and Prejudice* is a faithful representation of inequalities of the societal structure and the gender roles of the late eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. What makes this novel so successful in its critique towards society is the large number of characters that Jane Austen brings to scene and how each of them adapts to the Georgian Era society. It can be stated that Jane Austen had an apathetic view towards how the Georgian society was framed and how she mirrored her point of view with the creation of characters belonging to the social classes she was connected to and had a relation with.

In order to reach to the analysis of the novel, the elements that bring out the representation of society and carry out the development of the novel are no other than the Georgian Era social classes and gender roles and the life of the proper author, Jane Austen. Due to this explanation of how society was established and how was Austen's life influential according to which class she belonged to and how she was constrained by her gender, the reader can have a clear idea of the reality of her times and how society was structured.

It is thanks to this displaying of Jane Austen's context that we get to see all of the characters that she explores in the novel to be figures who comprise different societal aspects and these chains imposed by society have a highly relevance in their relationships. *Pride and Prejudice* shows how in relation to their status, some characters, such as the Bennets, are criticized by members of a higher rank, for instance Lady Catherine, the Bingley sisters and Mr. Darcy. These latter characters remain faithful to their social standards because they believe themselves to be superior to the rest only because of having more money, prettier clothes and an impeccable propriety.

In addition, the characters from the gentry also remain faithful to the social conventions since the female characters such as Mrs. Bennet and her youngest daughters only regard to the financial status of men and not on their inside beauty or intelligence. All of them embody the fact that during the Georgian Era women needed to marry in order to maintain or elevate their status and to have a future. Nevertheless, other characters, such as Jane and Elizabeth prefer to marry someone because of their feelings towards him, not only

because of his wealth. Besides, there is Mr. Bennet, who does not strictly follow the social and gender standards of the time since he does not show any interest in marrying her daughters, or in taking care of them as he does not care about his youngest daughters being wild and ill-mannered. But in the end, he has to behave like a man of the time and play the role of the patriarch of the family and accept her daughter's suitors and be interested in how these marriages would be beneficial for them all.

Nevertheless, Elizabeth breaks with the gender roles she has to follow because, as aforementioned, although she is interested in marrying a man with a proper wealth, she seeks for a man equally intelligent as her, someone amiable and who takes care of the people he loves. As she has a strong personality and the power to decide what she wants, she is able to deny Collins offer to marry him because she will never have any feelings towards his persona. Furthermore, she is not afraid to confront Lady Catherine when she comes to her house to insult her and her family because of their low status. Additionally, she is not afraid to stand up to Mr. Darcy; she denies him because of trying to not love her because of the social rules, because of her family poor sense of decorum.

Notwithstanding, at the end of the novel Darcy and Elizabeth end up together because they are both able to go beyond the boundaries of social chains and understand that the only thing that matters is love.

This novel helps the readers not only to understand how people lived during the Georgian Era and how difficult it was for them to breaking the mould, but also to inspire the readers do what they really want to do, not what society imposes, and to follow their feelings.

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