

Connecting and Critiquing the Canon: Pairing *Pride* and *Pride and Prejudice*

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*This article discusses the intertextual connections between the young adult novel, *Pride* by Ibi Zoboi, and the canonical text, *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. Similarities between the plot and structure of the two texts are discussed along with the differences in themes between the novels. Critical Race Theory is used to help make sense of the differences between the novels and critique the overwhelming whiteness of the canon. Implications for educators who wish to pair the two novels are provided.*

Despite calls of educators and scholars to diversify reading lists and bring engaging texts into curricula, the Western canon of classic literature has remained static and unchanging (Applebee, 1989; Glaws, 2021; Wolk, 2010). Canonical texts are commonly found on required reading lists in schools across the country despite the lack of diversity and engagement the canon has to offer (Bissonette & Glazier, 2016; Daniels & Zemelman, 2004; Gallo, 2001). Meanwhile, the canon remains firmly entrenched in classrooms across the nation. Advocates of young adult literature (YAL) claim the genre is just as complex as the classics but offers opportunities for educators to engage with their students around stories centering nuanced and diverse portrayals of adolescents (Ginsberg & Glenn, 2020; Groenke & Scherff, 2010). By bringing YAL into the classroom with narratives centering BIPOC protagonists, written by BIPOC authors, educators can share stories that better reflect the identities of students in their classroom, in contrast to the majority-white stories told in the canon (Bissonette & Glazier, 2016; Borsheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019).

However, when teachers try to bring contemporary YAL into curricula to replace canonical texts they often encounter resistance from administrators, fellow educators, and parents (Glaws, 2021; Rybakova & Roccanti, 2016; Greathouse & Malo-Juvera &, 2021ab). Starting in grade 9, teachers and administrators cite concerns that YAL lacks sophistication, rigor, and merit (Buehler, 2016; Claiborne, 2004; Gibbons et al., 2006; Samuels, 1983) and feel that YAL is too easy for students in grades 11 and 12 (Krickeberg, 1995).

To mitigate the tension between teaching YAL *or* the classics, advocates of YAL suggest teaching both by pairing the two genres in the classroom (Bright, 2011; Glaus, 2014; Herz & Gallo, 2005; Kaywell, 1993; Reed, 1993). Bright's (2011) content analysis revealed that many YA novels published in the last twenty years provide opportunities for highlighting intertextual relationships between contemporary and canonical literature. Additionally, many YA authors often remix classic texts, creatively contaminating (Zipes, 2001) them with a modern twist in hopes of engaging adolescent readers. In stark contrast to the white authors and stories privileged in the canon, and perhaps most important for engaging adolescent readers while building an inclusive curriculum, some remixes of canonical texts are about and by BIPOC.

REMIXES OF CLASSIC TEXTS: DISRUPTING THE WHITENESS OF THE CANON

The whiteness of the Western literary canon can in part be explained by the “selective tradition” (Williams, 1997) in which white-Anglo male perspectives were emphasized while forming the Western literary canon. This tradition also purposefully excluded literature that told stories about BIPOC. The canon's lack of BIPOC characters reinforces racial exclusivity (Bissonette & Glazier, 2016; Brooks, 2009; Borsheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019; Dyches 2018a; Dyches 2018b; Johnson et al., 2017; Tyson, 2015) by privileging stories of upper-class white men while classrooms in the U.S become increasingly racially and ethnically diverse (Hussar & Bailey, 2013; deBrey et al., 2019). As ELA classes historically have been places that reinforce racism through the texts that we teach and the ways that we teach them (Ball & Lardner, 2005; Borsheim-Black et al., 2014; Borsheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019; Baker-Bell, 2020, 2017; Bissonette & Glazier, 2016; Johnson, 2018; Johnson et al., 2017; Kinloch, 2005; Sarigianides & Banack, 2021; Toliver, 2020, 2018), the canon functions as a tool to privilege stories of whiteness and perpetuate white supremacy in our schools.

The omission of BIPOC's experiences from the Western literary canon suggests to students that BIPOC stories are not worthy of being told in “classic literature.” Toliver (2018) draws on Bishops' (1990) metaphor of literature as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors to note how doors can be “locked, when there [a]re misrepresentations or omissions of specific groups” (p. 2). Through extending Toliver's (2018) analysis, this would mean the sliding glass door of the Western literary canon is “locked” for readers through the omission of non-white characters throughout. Through the “selective tradition” (Williams, 1997) and perpetuation of racist ideologies, the

literature in the canon has constructed a racist narrative of whiteness privileged in ELA curricula. By relying on tradition as a rationale to teach canonical texts, ELA teachers can reinforce “the status quo of centuries of racism” (Borsheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019, p. 56). The texts included in the Western literary canon only provide a white-authored perspective of the world therefore rendering stories of BIPOC invisible.

When BIPOC authors remix the Western literary canon, they are reconstructing the narrative of whiteness perpetuated by the canon and saying the canon does not just belong to white readers and writers. Canonical remixes written by BIPOC authors may “unlock” the doors (Toliver, 2018) that were previously locked by white authors. The critical comparative content analysis (CCCA) presented here seeks to better understand how remixes of canonical texts disrupt the whiteness and racism of the traditional Western literary canon.

Understanding the tensions that exist between teaching required canonical texts and bringing contemporary YAL into the classroom, coupled with the overwhelming whiteness of the Western literary canon privileged in secondary ELA classrooms, led me to develop the following guiding research questions:

- How do BIPOC authors remix the canon in their YA retellings?
- What are the differences between the texts and what do they mean?

METHOD

TEXT SELECTION

To select canonical texts for this analysis, I conducted a search to find studies reporting which texts are commonly taught in secondary ELA classrooms. I cross-referenced Applebee’s (1989) study, the last national study I could find, with smaller, more recent studies by Bushman (1997), Stallworth et al. (2006), Stotsky et al. (2010), and Glaws (2021) to find commonalities across lists. After cross-referencing all survey results, I created a preliminary list from which to search for YA adaptations.

To begin searching for YA adaptations of the canonical texts, I conducted a Google search using the title name and a variety of search terms including “YA adaptation, retelling, remix, inspired by.” I focused on results that were aimed at YA readers and explicitly designated as a retelling or remix written by BIPOC authors to counter the whiteness of the canon. Ultimately, I found four retellings explicitly inspired by *Romeo and Juliet* written by BIPOC authors and one

imitation text of *Pride and Prejudice*, Zoboi's *Pride*. For the sake of length and ability to provide rich analysis, this paper focuses on *Pride*. A short plot synopsis of both selected texts is provided below.

Pride

Pride is set in a present-day, rapidly gentrifying neighborhood in Bushwick, NY. The protagonist, Zuri Benitez, has pride in her neighborhood, family, and her roots. When the wealthy Darcy family with two teenage sons, Darius and Ainsley, moves in across the street, Zuri doesn't want to get to know them as they represent change in her neighborhood and life. Throughout the novel, Zuri and Darius are forced to find commonalities and their first impressions of each other shift into understanding and respect.

Pride and Prejudice

Set in England in the early 19th century, *Pride and Prejudice*, follows the Bennet family and their five daughters. Mr. Darcy, an eligible bachelor, and the second oldest daughter and protagonist, Elizabeth, repeatedly disagree as Elizabeth finds Darcy rude and prideful. Throughout the novel, the relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy develops as well as romance between the rest of the Bennet girls and men in their society.

CRITICAL COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

Critical comparative content analysis (CCCA) builds and extends the methodologies of a critical content analysis by highlighting the *differences* between two or more texts (Sulzer et al., 2018). CCCA, developed by Mark Sulzer, Amanda Thein, and Renita Schmidt (2018), emphasizes the *comparative* nature between texts and how these differences are presented to the intended reader and across different audiences. CCCA is a recursive process that builds on the interpretations of the *differences* between texts rather than analyzing a sole text or text set for specific concepts. While many canonical texts were written with adult characters as the protagonists, and as YA authors write and adapt these stories for youth, CCCA helps to understand the differences represented in the adaptation for an adolescent audience compared to an adult one. As I seek to analyze how BIPOC authors rewrote the Western literary canon, examining the differences written for an adolescent audience through a critical perspective is important. Layering the methodology of CCCA with an analytic framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT) will help identify how YA authors added critical context into their canonical adaptation and what the differences mean.

ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Critical Race Theory (CRT) can help educators think critically about how curricula, or the Western literary canon, can act as a “master script” of white supremacy in our classrooms and school systems (Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT informed the analysis of my second research question to help understand what the differences between the canonical text, *Pride and Prejudice*, and the remix, *Pride*, mean. When Zoboi (2018) added themes or addressed social justice throughout *Pride* in ways *Pride and Prejudice* did not, CRT helped make sense of what those differences mean for the reader in terms of racial discussion. While there are many tenets of CRT, three are specifically relevant to analyzing the YA text, *Pride*, and were used to conduct this analysis: the endemic nature of racism, whiteness as property, and counter-storytelling (Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn & Adams, 2002).

Racism Is Endemic

Delgado wrote, “racism is normal” (1995, p. xiv). This tenet of CRT highlights the systemic and institutionalized racism pervasive in the United States. The consequences of racism are widespread and ingrained in society, maintaining whiteness as the norm (Milner 2007). Racism is accepted as a part of everyday life instead of being viewed as abnormal, and this acceptance reinforces white supremacy. *Pride* serves to highlight the ways racism is ingrained in contemporary society in ways that *Pride and Prejudice* does not.

Whiteness as Property

Historically, “Only white possession and occupation of land was validated and therefore privileged as a basis for property rights. These distinct forms of exploitation each contributed in various ways to the construction of whiteness as property” (Harris, 1993, p. 1716). As Harris (1993) explains, there are privileges associated with being born white, materializing in owning property, and creating long-lasting inequities and perpetuating systemic racism in the U.S. This tenet is particularly applicable to *Pride* as Zoboi addresses the ability to own property versus rent, and the effects of gentrification on neighborhoods and the people who live in those neighborhoods.

Counter-storytelling

As a tenet of CRT, counter-stories are “a kind of medicine to heal the wounds of pain caused by racial oppression” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 53). In this sense, counter-stories critique the systemic racism that persists in the daily fabric of life in the United States. Counter-stories also give

voice to stories that are otherwise ignored, untold, or dismissed as not fitting the dominant ideology of whiteness. Counter-stories share the life experiences of marginalized groups either through oral storytelling or stories shared through a written text. Counter-storytelling is particularly relevant to *Pride* as Zoboi shares the life experiences of Black families juxtaposed with the overwhelming whiteness of the canon and the stories privileged in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Positionality

As a white woman I acknowledge that I bring multiple privileges to this study. As I worked through my analysis of *Pride*, I used racialized reader response questions (Borsheim-Black & Sariginanides, 2019) as a form of journaling to help me be cognizant and aware of how my racial identity and status as a cultural outsider (Emdin, 2016) could affect my analysis. To account for my positionality as a white woman, I read interviews where Zoboi discussed writing *Pride* and also read scholarship by scholars of color (e.g. Brooks, 2009) who used CRT to guide literary analysis. This helped add to my limited perspective of understanding as a white woman analyzing race in canonical and YA texts. I acknowledge that, as a white woman, I will only have partial understanding of racism in the texts I am analyzing. Thus, I relied on the words of Zoboi and CRT scholars to help guide my analysis.

ANALYSIS

Guided by CCCA, I first read *Pride and Prejudice* as my cornerstone text and then *Pride* focusing on differences that appeared in the YA edition from the canonical text. My initial round of reading focused on plot and character development, as I read both texts I wrote chapter summaries, using both direct quotations and my own notes. After I finished reading both texts, I compared the summaries and highlighted plot and character references that differed in each text pairing, creating a table of differences between each pairing. In this table, I included plot points and characters that were included in each text, but that the YA author altered (e.g., changing the race of the main characters), as well as noting omissions or additions by the YA author.

At the end of my first round of reading, I generated a list of literary themes that were addressed in both novels. I re-read the books a second time and created a chart with page numbers for direct quotations that correlated with each theme. I repeated the same process of creating a table of differences between each text for themes as I did for plot, characters, and setting to determine what was changed between each novel.

I then re-read the YA text a third time, looking specifically at the differences through using an analytic framework of CRT (Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn & Adams, 2002)

within the text. I identified places in the text where the differences corresponded to tenets of CRT, highlighting wherever each tenet appeared and annotating in the margins. I created a table with page numbers corresponding to each tenet.

FINDINGS: REWRITING A CLASSIC AND CRITICAL DISCUSSIONS OF RACE IN *PRIDE*

The findings of this analysis are separated into two major categories: identifying what differences exist between the text and analyzing what the differences mean through critical discussions of race in *Pride*. The analysis first compares the two titles to determine differences and then uses three tenets of CRT (whiteness as property, counter-story, and racism is endemic) to identify what the differences in *Pride* mean, racially, for readers. Throughout the analysis, I use a capital letter B in Black when writing as to not perpetuate the inequities white supremacy has enacted upon Black people; however, Zoboi uses a lowercase b so readers will note Black written both ways throughout. While Zoboi remixes *Pride and Prejudice* in *Pride* to include Black characters, gentrification, and modern technology, she explicitly draws on Austen's text to re-envision main characters and integral plot points from the classic.

DIFFERENCES: REWRITING CHARACTERS, PLOT, AND THEME

Zoboi rewrites the characters in *Pride* as a way to change the race and age of the characters to speak to an adolescent audience, while keeping them similar enough so the reader can easily identify their counterpart from Austen's novel. In *Pride*, Zoboi includes many of the secondary characters that are integral to the plot of *Pride and Prejudice* while making smaller changes like combining less pertinent characters (for example, Carrie in *Pride* can be interpreted to be either Caroline Bingley or the daughter of Lady Catherine). Zoboi also speeds up the plot of *Pride* with everything occurring in one summer while *Pride and Prejudice* stretches out over seasons. Many of Zoboi's major plot changes are those of modernization for an adolescent audience: think subway stations instead of carriage rides, text messages instead of letters, dates instead of marriage proposals.

An example of this modernization can be seen in a turning point in both Zuri's and Elizabeth's relationships with Darius and Mr. Darcy. This occurs when they find out Warren (*Pride*) and Mr. Wickham (*Pride and Prejudice*) has lied to them and is a predatory opportunist. Darius's text messages to Zuri, "Gigi is in boarding school because Warren took sexy pictures of her / He sent

them to his friends” (Zoboi, 2018, p. 204), allude to Mr. Darcy’s letter to Elizabeth where he explains Mr. Wickham “recommended himself to Georgiana, whose affectionate heart retained a strong impression of his kindness to her as a child, that she was persuaded to believe herself in love, and to consent to an elopement” (Austen, 1813, p. 196). While Zoboi makes this change of modernization an intertextual link is still clear between the two storylines allowing adolescent readers to make text-to-text connections. Zoboi continually draws on Austen’s text to include central characters and plot points that are integral to each character’s arc and development while changing them to make sense for a contemporary setting and adolescent reader. Table 1, below, shows examples from the table I created using CCCA when comparing plot and characters from *Pride* and *Pride and Prejudice*.

TABLE 1

Plot and Characters Differences Between Pride and Pride and Prejudice

Differences	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	<i>Pride</i>
<i>Pride</i> changes the last name from Bennett to Benitez signaling to readers <i>Pride</i> does not center a white family.	Main family characters: Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia BENNETT	Main family characters: Janae, Zuri, Marisol, Kayla, and Layla BENITEZ
Ages of characters in <i>Pride</i> reflect adolescence rather than the more adult characters in <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	Jane 22, Elizabeth 20, Mary 18, Kitty 17, Lydia 15	Zuri is a senior in high school, Janae is a freshman in college, and Marisol, Kayla, and Layla are all in middle/high school.
Setting/ time period	Rural England 19th century	Present day Bushwick
The difference here is one of modernization. Changing for a YA audience. Sexy pictures → elopement.	Mr. Wickham “recommended himself to Georgiana, whose affectionate heart retained a strong impression of his kindness to her as a child, that she was persuaded to believe herself in love, and to consent to an elopement” (Austen, 1813, p. 196).	“Gigi is in boarding school because Warren took sexy pictures of her / He sent them to his friends” (Zoboi, 2018, p. 204).
<i>Pride</i> adds a scene on police brutality	N/A no parallel plot point	Page 246 in <i>Pride</i> includes a party scene where cops are called. Zoboi adds this scene when comparing to <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> as there are no parties where policemen are called or anyone is worried about policemen.
Modernization for an adolescent audience	Major plot point: Mr. Darcy proposes.	Zoboi alters this plot point by having Darius and Zuri kiss. It would be unrealistic to have Darius propose to Zuri if Zoboi stayed true to the Austen text. Zoboi adapted this plot point for

her adolescent audience as kissing between adolescents is more realistic than marriage.

Where *Pride* truly begins to diverge from *Pride and Prejudice* in important ways is when considering literary themes. While Zoboï's update adds new literary themes to her text (see Table 2), both texts provide strong commentary on social class and socioeconomic status (SES) in different ways. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the class lines are strictly drawn between middle and upper-class families with the characters often vying to gain an advantage to elevate their social status. Austen satirizes this extreme classism through the three characters of Mr. Collins, who dotes on his upper-class patron, Lady Catherine, who looks down upon anyone not in her social class; Mr. Wickham, who tries to get more money to elevate his status; and Mr. Darcy, who believes in the importance of lineage. Elizabeth confronts Mr. Darcy about his classist views, "why with it so evident a design of offending and insulting me, you chose to tell me that you liked me against your will, against your reason, and even against your character?" (Austen, 1813, p. 186). The desire to advance one's socioeconomic status, and consequently class status, is a constant throughout the Austen text. Ultimately, Austen provides commentary that love can supersede the importance of class with Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy "marrying down" with the middle-class Bennet girls. However, her critique of strict class lines falls short as Austen does not feature any characters from working-class society besides housekeepers, who express being happy with their positions.

Zoboï (2018) reverses the theme of trying to climb the social ladder as Zuri feels disdain towards the wealthy Darcy family, "Those boys don't belong here" (p. 58), and expresses her desire to return "back to [her] hood to help [her] people out" (p. 176) after college. Zuri does not wish to leave her neighborhood in pursuit of "bigger and better" things as all the characters in *Pride and Prejudice* aspire to. Throughout the novel, it is Zuri who passes judgement on the Darcy boys for their wealth and perceived superiority telling her mother, "They're arrogant" (Zoboï, 2018, p. 57). This is the opposite of Austen's novel where upper-class society passes judgement on those considered "below" them. While Elizabeth doesn't display an outright desire to advance her social status, she doesn't criticize those from upper-class society like Zuri does. Zuri consistently critiques Darius for not fitting into her Bushwick neighborhood because of his wealth, "I know guys who come out here to play ball and chill, and they look exactly like you... My deal is they don't talk or dress like you. And they definitely don't live in a house like yours" (Zoboï, 2018, p. 65). Throughout

the novel, Darius consistently tells her he is not “from the hood,” while Zuri points out Darius is out of place. Initially, Zuri likes a boy named Warren because he is “from the hood” and she believes she will be able to relate to him more. She makes this judgement based on class and SES, without first getting to know Warren as a person. Zuri uses SES as an indicator of judgment throughout the novel, oftentimes resenting those with wealth, which is a reversal from Austen’s novel.

Zoboi (2018) complicates things further when Darius pushes back against Zuri’s prejudice, asking her, “According to you, I should be doing all these things that’ll make me more... what? Black?” (Zoboi, 2018, p. 182). Zoboi nuances the idea that having money and coming from an upper-class family makes life easy. Zuri has preconceived notions that the Darcys’ life is extremely easy because of their wealth. However, Darius reveals his family had to move from Manhattan because their neighbors were being racist towards Ainsley and him, demonstrating how racism is endemic. Darius feels like he doesn’t belong in Bushwick and notes “I don’t fit in anywhere” (Zoboi, 2018, p. 258). Zoboi (2018) has both Darius and Zuri reflect on their initial judgments of one another, demonstrating how judging a person based on class and SES is misguided. Zoboi draws attention to how SES can cause judgment on both sides of the spectrum, an issue that is only addressed from upper to middle classes in Austen’s text. While Zoboi (2018) and Austen (1813) both satirize the divide between people with different socioeconomic statuses, Zoboi (2018) presents multiple perspectives on how divisive social class can be. Below Table 2, below, includes examples from the table I created using CCCA to compare themes in *Pride* and *Pride and Prejudice*.

TABLE 2

Theme Differences between Pride and Pride and Prejudice

Differences	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	<i>Pride</i>
Zoboi adds the theme of gentrification.	N/A to <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> as the novel only revolves around middle-upper class families not upper class families gentrifying lower income neighborhoods.	“bet a whole twenty dollars that it’s a young white family moving in, because that’s what’s been happening all over Bushwick” (Zoboi, 2018, p. 3).
Zoboi adds a theme of critiquing racism in the novel. This can be seen in the scene where she addresses police brutality in society.	N/A to <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> as it only includes white characters, white privilege, and there are no scenes with police.	“My stomach sinks when I hear sirens coming down the block” (Zoboi, 2018, p. 246) → look at the whole scene

Theme of social class is addressed in both novels, but differently.	Characters in <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> often look to advance their social status. Mr. Darcy acknowledges he looked down upon the Bennet family for wanting to advance their social status through marriage saying, “The situation of your mother’s family, though objectionable, was nothing in comparison of that total want of propriety so frequently, so almost uniformly betrayed by herself, by your three younger sisters, and occasionally even by your father” (Austen, 1813, p. 193).	Zoboi (2018) reverses the theme of trying to climb the social ladder. Zuri has pride in her culture and her roots and doesn’t want things in her life to change as a result of money, whiteness, and gentrification.
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WHY DO THE DIFFERENCES MATTER?: WHAT *PRIDE* DOES THAT *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* DOESN’T *CULTURAL PRIDE AS COUNTERSTORY*

Counter-stories give voice to experiences that are otherwise ignored, untold, or dismissed as not fitting the dominant ideology of whiteness. Additionally, counter-stories often critique the systemic racism that persists in the daily fabric of life in the United States. When Zoboi updates and remixes Austen’s text, she adds a modern take on the story by including a theme of cultural pride that does not appear in *Pride and Prejudice*. This theme acts as a counterstory to the overwhelming whiteness of the canon by emphasizing the pride Zuri feels in her Blackness and her neighborhood. As there are no Black characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, Zoboi’s choice to comprise *Pride* with a majority Black group of characters and with all Black protagonists, is a starting point as a counterstory to the whiteness in *Pride and Prejudice* and the canon as a whole (Bissonette & Glazier, 2016; Borhsheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019). As scholarship infers, Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley, in *Pride and Prejudice*, are wealthy because of their involvement in the slave trade and profit margins from plantations (Menand, 2020; Said, 1994; Tomalin, 1999). Black characters are removed from the plot of *Pride and Prejudice* despite the importance of their role in the SES of the rich characters. Black characters being omitted from *Pride and Prejudice* was a purposeful choice; therefore, centering Black voices in *Pride* works as a counter-story to the erasure of Black existence in Austen’s text.

The stories of Black joy Zuri tells about her life and neighborhood work not only in opposition to the omission of Black lives in *Pride and Prejudice*, but work as a counter-story to the

traumatic portrayals of Blackness seen in literature today (Stone, 2020). When Zuri describes the block party her family helps host as a joyous event. The passage below represents a scene that creates a counter-story of Black joy:

Then the block party and the music will move in, and everyone will eat and dance late into the night. It's one of my favorite days of the year. And it's like a smaller version of my other favorite days: going to the Dominican Day parade with Papi and Puerto Rican Day parade with Madrina and repping the Haitian flag at the West Indian Day parade with Mama. Our block parties bring everybody in our hood together though— the Dominicans, Haitians, Jamaicans, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Panamanians, African Americans, and white couples too. (p. 33)

The block party is described as one of Zuri's favorite days of the year and details about the music, food, and games played into the night portray a sense of peace and happiness that serve as a counter-story to the racial oppression found in *Pride and Prejudice* through the purposeful omission of Black people and Black stories. As counter-stories can be thought of as “a kind of medicine to heal the wounds of pain caused by racial oppression” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 53), Zuri's pride and joy in her culture work as a counter-story to the racial oppression found in the erasure of Black lives in *Pride and Prejudice*. The positive representation of Zuri and her happiness with her family, culture, and neighborhood is imperative to note as a counter-story when coupled with an interview with Zoboi from 2018 where she discusses the female characters in her novels:

My daughters are brown skinned with natural hair and they wear it out with an afro everyday to school. I need them, when they are reading these books with black girls, to see positive representations. (Turner, 2018, para. 16)

Zoboi intentionally writes Black female characters in a positive light, which can be seen throughout the entirety of *Pride* with Zuri and her sisters. This intentional portrayal of Zuri as a positive representation of a Black girl for Black girl readers helps explain how Zoboi changed *Pride* to act as a counter-story to the omission of Black lives in *Pride and Prejudice*. Zoboi continued to emphasize how she wanted *Pride* to be more of a happy story for her readers in another interview where she stated, “I want to give them a moment to breathe—especially teens of color—and some moments to be able to dream, shut out the world, and dive into something sweet” (Muaghan, 2018, para. 5). Zoboi intentionally creates happy moments for her readers, like the Benitez family block party, as a counter-story to the whiteness of the Western literary canon and oftentimes stereotypical

portrayals of Black characters in the canon. Examples of other scenes that created counter-stories can be found in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3
Scenes of Counter-story

Quote	Analysis	Difference
“all the things that make me up: Haitian, Dominican, and all black” (Zoboi, 2018, p. 32).	Black characters being omitted from <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> was a purposeful choice; therefore, centering Black voices in <i>Pride</i> works as a counter-story to the erasure of Black existence in Austen’s text. Zuri’s pride in her culture works to further her counter-story as she is proud of “all the things that make [her] up.”	Zoboi changes the race of the main characters in <i>Pride</i> .
“We are back to being the Fierce and Fabulous Five Benitez Sisters... All About the Benjamins Benitez sisters... or the Five Heartbeats” (Zoboi, 2018, p. 12)	Counter-storytelling as Zoboi shares the life experiences of Black families juxtaposed with the overwhelming whiteness of the canon and the stories privileged in <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> . Joyous family scenes highlight daily instances of Black life. Even their last name is counter-story as Benitez signals to readers the main characters are not white-Anglo characters.	Zoboi changes the race of the main characters in <i>Pride</i> .
[Zuri is at Howard in this scene] “Most important, without the new white people. There’s just people like me as far as my eyes can see. And it already feels like home... Two girls are seated behind it wearing big smiles and the cutest outfits I’ve ever seen. Their hair is done in long braids...” (p. 140-141).	Counter-story to whiteness being the norm. At Howard this norm is flipped and Zuri feels at home and expresses feeling extremely happy. The positive portrayal of the two girls on Howard’s campus supports Zoboi’s intentions to write positive portrayals of Black girls for her readers as counter-story.	Added scene in <i>Pride</i> ’s plot— no college visit scenes in <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> . Also, there are no scenes without majority white characters which Zoboi flips here.
Zuri expresses her desire to be at a school where “even though the people come from different parts of the country and the world, they speak the same language— and that’s black, and African, and Caribbean, and Afro-Latinx” (p. 32)... “I’d like to go to Howard because of its cultural legacy as a historically black college” (Zoboi, 2018, p. 176, lowercase b in original)	Zuri’s insistence on attending Howard and emphasis on the ways Blackness is embraced at Howard serve as a counterstory to whiteness as the norm (Milner, 2007) and in opposition to the emphasis on the all-white society found in <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> .	Zoboi’s adaptation of <i>Pride</i> for an adolescent audience centers a lot around Zuri’s college decisions. This tension is not seen in <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> as college is not a factor. With this change, Zoboi is able to continually have Zuri mention Howard as a way to highlight a historically Black college.

Zuri consistently discusses her cultural pride throughout the novel and demonstrates all the ways Black joy can be found in her life and neighborhood.

WHITENESS AS PROPERTY: CONTEMPORARY GENTRIFICATION

White people have long benefitted from unearned privileges of whiteness and actively maintain whiteness through policies, practices, silences, and inactions (Harris, 1993; Leonardo, 2004; McIntosh, 1998). White characters dominate the Western literary canon, leaving stories from BIPOC untold and maintaining whiteness as valuable property (Bissonette & Glazier, 2016; Dyches 2018a, 2018b; Fox & Short, 2003; Larrick, 1995; McNair, 2008). Zoboi's text addresses the tenet of whiteness as property through highlighting gentrification in *Pride*. Zoboi adds this theme to *Pride*, purposefully diverging from *Pride and Prejudice*. Zoboi consistently critiques gentrification through Zuri's character in *Pride* and the ways it can harm communities of color. This is an important difference between the two novels as it is an entirely new theme Zoboi added to her remix. There are no opportunities to address gentrification in *Pride and Prejudice* as there are no Black characters, and the white characters in the novel clamor for more power and status through societal conventions like marriage.

The first sentence in Zoboi's (2018) novel addresses gentrification, and the CRT tenet of whiteness as property, noting, "It's a truth universally acknowledged that when rich people move into the hood, where it's a little bit broken and a little bit forgotten, the first thing they want to do is clean it up" (Zoboi, 2018, p. 1). Zuri makes the connection between "rich people" and whiteness as she assumes that the family moving into a newly renovated home across the street is white. Zuri says she would "bet a whole twenty dollars that it's a young white family moving in, because that's what's been happening all over Bushwick" (p. 3) and that white couples "are buying up a lot of the brownstones down the block" (p. 33). Ultimately, Zuri is shocked as the Darcy family who moves in are an upper class Black family and her sister asks her, "you do know there are black people who have money out there in the world, Z, right?" (p. 25). This exchange and Zuri's assumption about the Darcy family's race highlights the consistent link between whiteness and wealth in our society. Zuri's initial assumption that a white family would move in also demonstrates how whiteness contributes to gentrification and continues to perpetuate whiteness as property through white home ownership. This assumption echoes Harris (1993), "Only white possession and occupation of land was validated and therefore privileged as a basis for property rights" (p. 1716). The

historical link between whiteness and property is borne out through Zuri's continual acknowledgement of the effects of gentrification throughout *Pride*.

Zuri also acknowledges that the rich people who move into neighborhoods to gentrify them and clean them up don't realize "that broken and forgotten neighborhoods were first built out of love" (p. 1). In Zuri's college essay she reflects on the changing landscape of her neighborhood and the systemic ways gentrification pushes people out:

Sometimes I wonder... if my neighborhood ever floods or breaks in half, and someone throws me, only me, a lifeboat or a lifeline, will I take it and leave everyone and everything behind?... But my neighborhood is not flooding or splitting in half. It's being cleaned up and wiped out. It's being polished and erased.... Sometimes love is not enough to keep a community together. There needs to be something more tangible, like fair housing, opportunities, and access to resources. Lifeboats and lifelines are not supposed to just be a way for us to get out. They should be ways to let us stay in and survive. And thrive. (p. 273, emphasis in original)

This reflection by Zuri reinforces whiteness as property ownership (Harris, 1993) by Zuri recognizing that fair housing, opportunities, and resources are needed by the POC living in her neighborhood. However, the people in her neighborhood *aren't* provided those opportunities, and instead are pushed out of the neighborhood by rich, white people as they "polish and erase" the neighborhood Zuri grew up in. As Zuri worries about the gentrification, she witnesses rents being raised, buildings being renovated, and "Organic" signs being put up in the local bodega. Zuri acknowledges as buildings get renovated throughout her neighborhood her "Papi says the property values will go up, and the taxes too" (p. 58) and "rent is going up all over the place and people are not getting paid more" (p. 257). This acknowledgement of one of the ways systemic racism is perpetuated through gentrification connects to whiteness as property as more white people move into Zuri's neighborhood. Zuri makes this racial distinction between white families moving in and Black families moving out when wondering why the Darcy family would move to Bushwick. She asks her sister, "Why come into the hood? I thought everybody was trying to kick us *out*" (p. 25, emphasis in original). In *Pride*, whiteness is property through the changing racial makeup of Zuri's neighborhood and the consistent worry Zuri expresses about possibly having to leave her home.

Brooks (2009) used the tenet "whiteness as property" to analyze *The Land* by Mildred Taylor noting how "representations of land and how it is tied to economic stability, voting and democracy as well and nourishment and health" are often included in literature. The same idea Brooks (2009) found in *The Land* can be seen in *Pride* as property ownership is tied to the economic stability of the

rich, white people moving into Brooklyn. Throughout the entirety of the novel Zuri expresses concern about how gentrification will affect the stability of rent prices, taxes, and local businesses in her neighborhood. The influx of “young white” (p. 3) families moving in throughout Zuri’s neighborhood and buying property from the BIPOC people who originally lived there works to demonstrate how whiteness functions as property through taking away the property of BIPOC people in Zuri’s neighborhood.

The consistent references to gentrification throughout *Pride* was an intentional choice by Zoboï as she was writing the novel. In an interview, Zoboï was asked which aspects of Brooklyn felt imperative to capture in her remix, she said, “The changes, rapid gentrification, how the landscape is changing right before our eyes” (Turner, 2018, para. 2). The intentionality behind Zoboï’s decision to include gentrification as a main theme in the novel strengthens the analysis of whiteness as property throughout *Pride*. As Austen’s canonical text centers on middle and upper-class white society in early 19th century England, the theme of gentrification and the tenet of whiteness as property, which are major driving factors in *Pride*, do not appear in *Pride and Prejudice*. As Zoboï explicitly mentioned gentrification in her interview about *Pride*, it is imperative to notice how she *added* this theme into her remix. Other examples demonstrating the tenet of “whiteness as property” are included in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4

Quotes about Gentrification Showing Whiteness as Property

Quote	Analysis	Difference
“It’s a truth universally acknowledged that when rich people move into the hood, where it’s a little bit broken and a little bit forgotten, the first thing they want to do is clean it up. But it’s not the junky stuff they’ll get rid of. People can be thrown away too, like last night’s trash” (p. 1).	Zoboï conflates “richness” with “whiteness” here because Zuri assumes the rich people moving into her neighborhood are a white family (see quote from pg. 3). White people are assumed to have wealth and also want to “clean up” the physical spaces Black people live shown in Zuri’s quote.	All the quotes in this table are different from <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> as the theme of gentrification does not appear in the canonical text.
“bet a whole twenty dollars that it’s a young white family moving in, because that’s what’s been happening all over Bushwick” (p. 3)	Whiteness associated with property rights echoing Harris (1993) about white possession and occupation of land. Gentrification and white possession of land is being seen in Zuri’s neighborhood.	
“Maria Hernandez Park should probably be called <i>Mary Hernan</i> Park now... all these white people don’t	A comment on whiteness as property as white people have moved into Bushwick and started to	

<p>even know who Maria Hernandez was... there's nothing 'Maria or 'ez' about this park anymore" (64).</p>	<p>take over the public spaces Zuri and her friends hang out. Zuri says she doesn't even recognize this part of her neighborhood anymore as a result of all the changes gentrification by white people have brought to it.</p>
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RACISM IS ENDEMIC: CRITIQUING DAILY RACISM IN PRIDE

As Delgado wrote, “racism is normal, not aberrant in American society” (1995, p. xiv), and this tenet of CRT highlights the systemic and institutionalized racism in the United States. The consequences of racism are widespread and ingrained in society, maintaining whiteness as the norm (Milner 2007). Zoboï (2018) highlights the ways racism is woven into the daily lives of Black Americans through emphasizing how common and ordinary racism is (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001); a critique that cannot be found in *Pride and Prejudice* as Black lives are omitted from the text. While *Pride and Prejudice* does not include any Black characters to demonstrate the ways microaggressions are part of society, a macro-aggression and indicator that racism is endemic throughout the whole classic text is the erasure of Black stories all together. The erasure of Black existence works as a macro-aggression as Blackness was purposefully omitted from *Pride and Prejudice* despite the ways Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley profited from Black bodies and labor through the slave trade and plantation profits. The below analysis of a scene from *Pride* differs from *Pride and Prejudice* in Zoboï's inclusion of this scene at all. There are no similar scenes in *Pride and Prejudice* and no plot point that aligns with Austen's original text. Zoboï intentionally added this scene and plot point into *Pride*, diverging from *Pride and Prejudice*, to point to the racism in policing.

Zoboï (2018) calls into question large societal ways that racism is endemic through having Zuri attend a party at a character's house, Carrie, who is described as a “light-skinned, straight haired girl” (p. 52). While she is at the party, someone calls the cops and Zuri worries:

My stomach sinks when I hear sirens coming down the block. It's not the same as hearing sirens in my hood. In this part of Brooklyn, with its giant oak trees and multimillion dollar brownstones, police and ambulance sirens mean that something really did go down. A police car pulls up to the curb outside Carrie's house. I just hope no one tells the police that two black boys at this party started all this mess and it ended in a fight.

As the cops come towards the house, Zuri instructs Darius to go hide in the bathroom from the cops so they wouldn't see his face with blood on it from the fight. When the cops reach the front

door, Carrie answers the door “But Carrie doesn’t let them in. She insists that everything’s okay and the party’s over. The cops mumble something, and in seconds they’re gone” (p. 246). Zuri expresses her shock at the nature of this exchange:

“Wow. That’s it?” I say as Carrie walks back into the living room.

“What do you mean, that’s it?” Darius says.

I sigh and shake my head at Darius. “You don’t get it,” I whisper.

“Yes, I do.” he says. “That’s it. And that’s all that *should* happen.”

I shake my head. “Different planet, I say. What you think *should* happen is actually what happens.” (p. 246)

As the policing of Black bodies is racist, inequitable, and unjust (Johnson et al., 2017), Zoboi (2018) makes a point to include this critique of endemic racism in *Pride* through the party scene. Zuri’s fear at the beginning of the scene of the “black boys” being blamed for the cops getting called points to the ways Black youth live with dehumanizing views of them in society (Johnson et al., 2017), which often leads to their senseless murder. Zuri’s fear demonstrates her awareness of this dehumanizing view of Black youth held in society (Johnson et al., 2017), which in turn demonstrates the ways racism is normalized. Zuri’s shock at the cops leaving and telling Darius he lives on a different planet when she says, “What you think *should* happen is actually what happens” (p. 246), demonstrates the way racism in policing is normalized because Zuri doesn’t expect the police to do what they are supposed to. While Zoboi has discussed intentionally writing *Pride* to leave out much of the trauma Black youth face in their lives and have *Pride* be an escape, she also admits that she couldn’t ignore the political climate of our world today. In an interview Zoboi explains her thought process behind writing *Pride*:

there was so much going on in the world at the time. It was really hard to focus on the gooey mushy feelings of a 17-year-old falling in love, and I needed to ground the story in something a little more political. (Turner, 2018, para. 4)

Zoboi’s critiques of normalized and systemic racism throughout *Pride* help ground her story in “something a little more political,” while still leaving room for Black youth to find joy in the love story of Zuri and Darius. Other examples in which the tenet of “racism is endemic” was identified in the text are included in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Scenes Demonstrating Racism is Endemic

Quote	Analysis	Difference
“schools are shitty because teachers think we’re a lost cause. I’m trying to get into college, but I need financial aid and scholarship ‘cause I have three more sisters who want to go to college too, and my parents have always been broke” (p. 257)	Zoboi includes this comment on the ways systemic racism affects education through referencing the negative perceptions teachers hold of the students in her neighborhood AND the way colleges exclude BIPOC through creating barriers to attending college like needing scholarships. Zoboi highlights how colleges are not affordable for low-income youth.	Zoboi changes the ages of the characters and has them attending school, which doesn’t happen in <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> . Through this change, Zoboi is able to provide commentary on the endemic ways racism is woven into the educational system in ways that Austen cannot.
At Charlize’s work: a farm to table restaurant] “The people who come here to eat are white, mostly rich, and mostly ignore us as if we’re ghosts. That’s how they treat Charlize as they come into the restaurant. She’s supposed to check to see if they have a reservation, seat them, and hand them their menus. But most of them just walk past her as if she’s not even there” (p. 210).	Microaggression highlights the ways Black girls are dehumanized and ignored. The two girls get treated as if they’re invisible and not human through the white people not acknowledging their physical presence in the restaurant.	Zoboi added a scene where Charlize is working. In <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> the women do not work, nor is there a scene like this.
“We left our old apartment on the Upper East side because the neighbors had concerns about me and Ainsley... Everybody thought we were cute when we were in the third grade. But once we got taller and got some bass in our voices, they decided that they didn’t recognize us anymore” (Zoboi, 2018, p. 258).	As the Darcy brothers aged, their Blackness was seen as a threat to their white neighbors, consequently making the Darcy parents feel they should move their family. Racism equates Black adolescents, like the Darcy brothers, with danger (Johnson et al., 2017) as the boys were no longer considered cute once they began to look more adult. The uprooting of the Darcy family through the daily racism the boys faced in “not being recognized” is rooted in racism being normalized and endemic. This passage could also be coded as whiteness as property.	Zoboi added this plot point, there is no parallel in Austen’s text of Mr. Darcy having to leave his home for any reasons— especially reasons connected to race.

Zoboi (2018) consistently critiques systemic racism and bias through the addition of scenes (e.g. the police scene) or short comments the characters make. Zoboi (2018) does not always have Zuri expand these comments (e.g. Zuri does not expand on the “shitty schooling” she references), but

Zoboi (2018) makes it a point to include both short commentaries and more extensive plot points demonstrating how racism is woven into the fabric of American society.

IMPLICATIONS

By writing *Pride* Zoboi demonstrates how to remix a classic text that centers whiteness to create a contemporary novel centering Black lives and stories. The differences between *Pride and Prejudice* and *Pride* become clear through the method of CCCA and readers can easily identify how Zoboi alters the text to reach an adolescent audience in important ways that address social justice topics like gentrification. Through analyzing *Pride* through a CRT lens, Zoboi's critique of the pervasive nature of systemic racism becomes apparent through her authorial choices.

Another tenet of CRT, interest convergence, may be helpful in understanding the implications of this analysis. Interest convergence theorizes that progress towards equity only occurs when changes benefit the racial majority (Bell, 1980, 1992; Guinier, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Supplementing the Western literary canon with remixes by BIPOC authors may be a form of interest convergence if educators position “the YA adaptation of canonical literature as a ladder upwards” and as a way to bring students “into a space that privileges the canonical (adult) text” (Miskec, 2013, p. 76). It's imperative to consider when pairing the texts, are the BIPOC remixes being used to lead students towards the whiteness of the canon? If the goal of pairing a YA and canonical text is to have students appreciate and understand the canonical text, rather than critique the Western literary canon, this could be an example of interest convergence.

However, it's important to acknowledge that many educators are bound by required reading lists, scripted curricula, and restrictive legislation. Legislation banning the teaching of CRT in schools (Aldrich, 2021; Ridler, 2021) reinforces white supremacy in our societal and educational systems. As a result, it is more important than ever to find ways to provide students with texts that challenge the status quo of white supremacy and racism. Pairing canonical texts with remixes by BIPOC authors may provide educators with a way to work within the constraints of the system to teach both a required text and a critical pairing. *Pride* can serve as a tool to launch critical discussions that ask our students to challenge their own thinking about race and racism, not only in *Pride and Prejudice*, but in society as a whole.

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