CHAPTER 3

Beyond *The Tempest*: Language, Legitimacy, and *La Frontera*

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Speaking to a group of students during a 2007 assembly at Tucson High Magnet School, civil rights activist Dolores Huerta sparked a chain of events that would ultimately land William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* on a list of books deemed to have the potential to incite hostile feelings toward the US government. At this assembly, Huerta spoke about the value of active involvement in the democratic process, especially given the anti-immigration bills that had recently been sponsored by Republicans (the most infamous of which is Arizona SB 1070). With remarkable candor, Huerta declared, "Republicans hate Latinos."[1]

When Tom Horne, the Republican superintendent of Tucson Unified School District at the time, learned of Huerta's comments, he immedi- ately sought to combat what he saw as politically motivated hate speech by sending his top aide, Margaret Garcia Dugan, to offer an alternative view to these Tucson students. However, Margaret Garcia Dugan is no Dolores Huerta, and as she began to speak at that follow-up assembly, "some students turned their backs and raised their fists in the air."[2] With this poetic throwback to American Olympians Tommie Smith

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and John Carlos raising their fists on the championship podium at the 1968 Mexico City these Tucson students confidently under- scored their own resistance to empty political the face of real- world racial injustices. In the process, they unleashed a political storm confident this oppositional stance might have been, some administrators interpreted t threatening. Horne honed in on this incident, and he took direct aim at Tucson's American Studies program.

Janet Brewer signed Arizona State House Bill 2281 into law in 2010, and this measure fore some ethnic studies programs on the grounds that they not only promoted the overthrow gov- ernment but also fostered resentment to a race or class of people. The lawma advocated for this measure argued that the Mexican- American Studies program kinc against the US government, but the truth is that the program instilled an important sense these high school Latinxs by allowing them to explore such a sig- nificant aspect of their and this, in turn, influenced the way they approached their general studies. Indeec University of Arizona published report confirmed the efficacy of this program by finc offering Mexican-American studies increased graduation rates, grades, and college enro Latinxs.[3] Perhaps Latinx success was the underlying threat. One man's confident, educa is another man's radical, it seems.

Of particular prominence in this controversy was *The Tempest*, a play taught in the American Studies program in Tucson, and one that found its way into the infamous list books that this bill brought about. As one might expect, Shakespeare loomed large thr this episode, as critics of the law clung to the Bard's iconic status to criticize the misguic of the legislation. Instead of lingering on the ill-conceived thinking behind this bill, howe attention to what ethnic studies and the singling out of *The Tempest* among an Shakespeare's plays can teach us about the contact point—the border- lands, if between Shakespeare and Latinxs in America.

This chapter considers the unique nature of borderland epistemolo- gies as a means n mining the cultural relevance of Shakespeare on the US–Mexico border, but also as a wa attention to per- spectives from Latinxs that, to date, have gone largely ignored in Sha studies.[4] I draw on ethnic and cultural studies that attend to the cultural divide of the bo to contextualize experiences

that stand to color approaches to Shakespeare, and I also consider the nature of Latinx within the realm of Shakespeare in popular culture—that is, the not-so-subtle coding of ' productions of Shakespeare as white. This circumscribed view of Shakespeare's cultura brings to mind Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the "automatic uni- versalization" of lang originates in a specified field and is then diffused along a broader social landscape a with it an assumed value.[5] In the area of Shakespeare, assumptions about the value of and linguistic legacy determine his perceived universality, but not all uses and Shakespeare are deemed legitimate, and thus the structures that delineate perceptic value merit scrutiny. Such scrutiny opens a space to have candid discussio Shakespeare's cultural currency for Latinxs, and this ultimately leads me to examine h technologies, and the incredibly popular and accessible venue of YouTube in particu Latinxs to use Shakespeare to explore and negotiate linguistic and ethnic differen affording a novel and diverse view of Shakespeare for us all.

To consider Latinx *users* of Shakespeare as opposed to readers, specta- tors, or produc works is to cast light on the manifold possibili- ties behind the act of using—that is, it al examine the potential payoff or profit that engagement of his works affords. For Latin argue, linguistic and cultural identity are at the heart of both appre- hensions about Shakespeare and the confidence underpinning approaches that remake Shakespeare a latter, of course, holds undeniable capital. However, as Bourdieu argues, "grammari indeed, the academy often delineate the parameters of what is deemed valuable in literature and, in the process, "determine the value which the linguistic products of th users of the language will receive in the different markets—particularly those most direc to their control, such as the educational market—by delimiting the uni- verse of a pronunciations, words, or expressions, and fixing a language censored and purged of a usages."[6] It is critical that one concurrently scrutinizes these particular delineations and locate the value behind "different" uses of the language. In so doing, we can consider B sharp challenge to our scholarly practices: "What would become of the literary world if c to argue, not about the value of this or that author's style, but about the value of argu- me style? The game is over when people start wondering if the cake is worth the ca engaging this question, we can begin to

interrogate if—within the defined borders of Shakespeare studies and, more germa study, within the borderlands of the USA—the cake is indeed worth the candle.

Borderlands

In the opening short story of Benjamin Alire Sáenz's Pen/Faulkner award-winning *Everything Begins and Ends at the Kentucky Club*, Juan Carlos, the narrator, po pressures of identity politics for Mexican Americans in the border city of El Paso, Tex Javier, a man from Ciudad Juárez, asks him if he is one "of those Mexicans who ha Mexicans." Juan Carlos responds, "No, I don't suffer from that disease." Pressing a Javier says to him, "You're not really Mexican." Registering his apprehensions about American identity, Juan Carlos finally says, "Not Mexican. Not American. Fucked. T disease I suffer from."[8]

For Sáenz, a native of El Paso and the only Latino ever to win the Pen/Faulkner award, the border identity for Mexican Americans unmistakably informs his writing and thinking. In interview, Sáenz describes hybrid identity on the border, or *la frontera*, as a "constan negotiating between all these spaces. Sometimes, I feel that those of us who reside Paso, Texas/Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México metroplex are hated by all sides."[9] The identity politics on the border is one fraught with insecurities about legitimacy and belong

What Sáenz captures in his work and through his interview is pre- cisely the type of tens border identity that Gloria Anzaldúa so thoughtfully theorizes in her seminal work, *Borde Frontera*. "It's not a comfortable territory to live in," she writes of the border, "this contradictions."[10] And while both writers recognize the inherent struggle of straddling a identity, they both search for value therein. For her part, Anzaldúa lingers on language the dignity of Chicana identity:

> Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity – I am my language. Until I can take prid language, I cannot take pride in myself. Until I can accept as legitimate Chicano Texas S Tex-Mex and all the other lan- guages I speak I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself. Un free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate,

> while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as l
> have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my
> will be illegitimate.[11]

Language serves to legitimate one's voice, and thus one's value. "I will no longer be ma ashamed of existing," Anzaldúa ultimately writes.[12] In so many ways, the perception deemed legitimate and illegitimate is entirely the point.

Views of legitimacy and the access to English are where significant tensions arise for America. Given Shakespeare's immense influ- ence on the English language, and understood parameters that delineate how Shakespeare should sound, Shakespeare's these linguistic borderlands offers a compelling view of his value to Latinxs where assimilation, cultural integrity, and—perhaps most importantly—where confidence in or identity are concerned. Because of Shakespeare's deep interconnection with English, Englishness, he is often perceived to be less accessible to certain users, such as Latin apprehension surrounding the knotty nature of Shakespearean verse might partially gu perceptions, attitudes about Shakespeare's place in the establishment of English ling cultural identity certainly drive these views.

Across the Atlantic divide, for example, former London Mayor Boris Johnson recently penne in *The Telegraph* to explain how he found himself seeing "red" upon learning t immigrants in London have satellite access to television programs in their respective l because these programs constitute "social needs."[13] He imagi- nes these outliers "Bangladeshi soaps or Turkish cookery shows or Blind Date in Serbo-Croat."[14] He g write, "The question is: what sort of society do we want—a society that is integrated, or balkanized? Do we let people live and work in mutually segre- gated sub-cultures? Or do on the primacy of the English lan- guage?" He advocates for the latter, and explains why reason why I think we should insist on English is unashamedly emotional, ata- vistic, and conservative. This is our language, the language of Shakespeare, the King James language that has been spoken in London for centuries; and in the face of the vast migra we have seen, we must insist on English if we are to have any hope of eupeptic abso assimilation."[15] And there it is: Speak like Shakespeare. Be like me. It feels good.

The language of Shakespeare, of course, is our language, too, in America, even for La

issue of assimilation, though—linguistic and otherwise—is a complicated one. En initiatives in America are meant to alienate Latinxs not because Latinxs refuse to lea (they do not, as Leo Chavez has demonstrated in *The Latino Threat*[16]) but because, as argues, language is "twin skin" to ethnic iden- tity. While Bill Ashcroft, in his relatively re *Caliban's Voice*,[17] seeks to disconnect the link between language and cultural identity i to locate the value of English as an optimistically driven tool in postcolonial settings, th exists a political residue surrounding the issue of language for Latinxs in America, a specifically—for those on the border. The politics of linguistic identity run deep.

To arrive at the intersection of Shakespeare and Latinxs, I glimpse at two distinct ide borderland identity. The first comes from Ana Maria Alonso, who writes that the cycles o in the borderlands "have also been cycles of ethno-racial formation" which, she arg historical product of structural inequality ... Categories such as 'Anglo' and 'Mexica foundational; instead they are the product of pro- cesses of colonialism buttresse ideologies of Anglo superiority."[18] Alonso ultimately challenges the notion that the c culture is more progressive than the concept of race. "'Race,'" she writes, "natural- i differences, rendering them immutable, while 'culture' prom- ises change. Yet change s be valued uncritically, nor should 'culture' be let off the hook."[19] Looking specifica neocon- servative culturalist arguments, Alonso finds that they often contend that "cultu ... account for the success of some nations and ethnic groups and the failure of others Latinos"[20]; thus, the promise of change that culture offers is directly correlated with assi is imagined as a one-directional adaptation.

In the realm of Shakespeare, this calls to mind certain attitudes about the sometimes im often explicit, expectations about the way Shakespeare should sound, and—by implic way he should look. As Ayanna Thompson has shown, when acting compa- nies co actors of color, the critical response to these actors is often guided by the perception cannot deliver "Shakespearean verse" in an "authentic" manner. In this way, attentio func- tions "as a type of code that reveals the racial makeup of the act- ing company."[21] has to point explicitly to the actor's skin color when critiquing his/her shortcomi Shakespearean actor:

"The actors cannot pass for white characters in [the critic's] eyes, ears, or mind," writes, "they cannot pass for white actors; and, there- fore, they cannot pass aesthe

Shakespearean."[22] Assimilation is always the endgame but is never truly accessible actors of color, and not for Latinxs in America.

Offering an insider's perspective, Colombian-born actor Antonio Ocampo-Guzman d experiences directing and teaching at pro- fessional conservatories, and describes hov of diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds are expected to adhere to "a certain sta pronunciation" because they are "trained to speak Shakespeare in a uniformly heightene This "oppressive" practice, Ocampo- Guzman argues, sends the message that the people sound is simply "not good enough."[24] Ocampo-Guzman has found wide-ranging s the theatre, thick Columbian accent and all. However, despite the fact that he believes one of us has "a right to access [Shakespeare] from our own identity," he is quick to rec road- blocks that arise where expectations of what Shakespeare should look and sour concerned.[25] The way Shakespeare's language is used, and the notion of who uses it " is a recurrent issue.

This, then, brings me to the second idea about borderland identity, which I take from María la Piedra and Juan Guerra. They examine the role of border epistemologies, and spec multi- lingual energies located within the US–Mexico borderlands in El Paso, Texas. " few places," de la Piedra and Guerra write of *la fron- tera*, "where one can speak both E Spanish and expect to be understood ... Bilingualism is the norm, although, in the officia the schools and universities of the USA, English is the dominant lan- guage, and practices and policies are often contradictory."[26] These "tensions surrounding linguisti and biliteracy come to the fore"[27] on the border because the value of linguistic diversi overshadowed by the imagined superiority of one language (English) over the other (S Borderland epistemologies, then, are unde- niably informed by these linguistic an inequities, and thus the valuable nature of the borderland experience often translates to deficiencies for Mexican Americans.

Before offering examples of specific epistemological standpoints that the border affords, I fi consider the concurrent promise and limitations of multilingual practices where Shake concerned. By drawing, once again, on the experiences of Ocampo-Guzman, we can

better understand the difficulty of negotiating identity politics within the Shakespeare ac discussing his bilingual production of *Romeo and Juliet*, Ocampo-Guzman is candid

feeling that the produc- tion failed. “To my great disappointment,” he writes, “playi languages simultaneously was not the big deal I hoped it would be.”[29] The surface fail thing, but his narrative grows increasingly pro- vocative when he describes the “prec adult and predominantly white” audience reaction to his production: “Generally spea writes, “the adult audiences were very resistant to the untraditional deliv- ery of the text bilingual experiment.”[30] He goes on:

> And overall, they did not respond to the bilingual nature of the play; some even felt alienate Spanish. The worst possible comment I received was from one of the board members, who me that she thought the use of Spanish was “cute.” With a broad smile she said how much i our “minority” students. Her words cut through me. “Cute” spoke of my experiment being sup and possibly even arrogant. It made me cringe that this board member infantilized my experir if the explo- ration of the “sacred cow” by the ever-present Latino theatre artist was a necess but a silly one at best. Her words suggested that my attempt to make Shakespeare my own even worthy of attention; instead, she viewed it as a futile exercise and a misguided interpre the Bard of Avon. I learned that even in the theatre, even at an academic institution, linguistic as well as racial discrimination.[31]

As I endeavor into this particular terrain of bringing Latinx engage- ment into Sha studies, I have to admit that I often feel a simi- lar unease. Will our academy—one tha frankly, severely lacking in diversity—find significance in this largely ignored readershi other side of the aisle, what will these future, Latinx users and makers of Shakespeare they look toward our Shakespeare academy?

As I have argued elsewhere, the venue of YouTube holds particu- lar promise when it scrutinizing how marginalized users of Shakespeare see and understand the Bard.[32] Fol lead of Thompson, who has made a strong case for the value of utilizing YouTube Shake our teaching and research,[33] and bearing in mind the thoughtful attention to this v Stephen O’Neill’s work has offered,[34] I turn to YouTube and popular media to examine h of these issues surrounding access and legitimacy translate when Latinx users engage of Shakespeare.

Similitude: “What’s Hecuba to Him or He to Her?”

In the YouTube production, *hamlet mexican style*[35]—a video that, in all likelihood, was for a high school English project—a young, all Latino cast reinvents *Hamlet* to imagin elder Hamlet's death is brought about because someone has stolen his tacos. With n scheme, Hamlet first learns of his father's death and the stolen tacos, and later finds tha is actually his father's ghost. This discov- ery leads to a celebration where the chara tacos while listen- ing to mariachi music and breaking into a corruption of the traditiona *folklorico* dance. Interestingly, this production initially employs Des'ree's "Kissing You," t love song from Baz Luhrmann's 1996 *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, before mariachi music at the end. In other words, the Shakespearean frame of reference for the actors is anchored in cinema from US popular culture; however, the inadequacy they appropriating Shakespeare (or US popular culture, for that matter) as their own is all too their production.

On some level, their light treatment of *Hamlet* is reminiscent of nineteenth-century Sha burlesque where "satirists and come- dians subject [Shakespeare's] dramas to soliloquies, linguistic puns, revamped characters, and topsy-turvy story lines."[36] These could be mocking both Shakespeare and their teacher—perhaps turning to self-ridicule t their lack of investment in the play and/or assignment. From my vantage point, however, about Mexican identity permeates this adaptation, as the young Latino actor uncomfortable throughout, and their comical deployment of cul- tural stereotypes to fr adaptation lacks a satirical edge. In fact, it is outright regrettable.

I draw attention to this video so as to open the door to examine the weight of Shakespeare capital, and also to scrutinize how apprehension about accessing Shakespeare—how th of cultural difference for Latinxs, laden with insecurities, anxieties, insularity, ethno- cen all—can be fostered to uncover a different, culturally rel- evant Shakespeare. My attent marginal YouTube production as a springboard allows for a snapshot of sorts to con young, marginalized Latinx users and makers of Shakespeare see and understand him the particular standpoints from which they approach him influence those understandings.

Through *hamlet mexican style*, we bear witness to manifold issues of identity politics for Latinxs. The tension between the com- pulsion to assimilate and the desire to retain a Mexican cultural identity is evident, and the young Latino actors illustrate the di negotiating that tension.[37] Again, the use of Des'ree's song speaks to the influential

Luhrmann's film on contemporary US culture, but it also unveils potential fissures students seeking to portray Shakespeare's characters. Even as they look to cinematic from popular culture to connect with Shakespeare, who can young Latinx stu- dents emu it comes to Shakespeare? Lead roles are given pre- dominantly to white actors, and th fail to see themselves within these popular, cinematic adaptations.[38] This dynamic is applica- ble to Shakespeare adaptations, of course, but to US popular cinema and te general.

To see Shakespeare within the domain of popular culture, then, is often to see Shakespear the eyes of the white beholder. By now, Toni Morrison's important view of this paradig readers have been "positioned as white"[39]—is familiar in critical responses to Shakespe is worth pointing out again because the far-reaching effects of this concept are certainly to this particular group of users.[40] There is no doubt that the casting of teenage actors for their roles in such television shows as *My So-Called Life* (Danes) and *Grow* (DiCaprio) in Luhrmann's film was both intentional and well devised. These actors, newly imagined play set in a contemporary city akin to Los Angeles or Miami, reson young Americans.[41] They were familiar, friendly, television drama/sitcom faces. But the Latinxs. Although it embraces the multicultural demo- graphic of American society by su these two recognizable leading actors with actors of various ethnicities, the film—th act—also posits its own binaries.[42] The Capulet gang is made up of dark- haired, dark- of an inexact Latino background. The Montague gang, on the other hand, is made u skinned, light-haired men. Of more significance is the fact that Tybalt, portrayed by C American actor John Leguizamo, and his gang exist as an ominous pres- ence in the a In the opening scene, their gun-slinging skills are impressive, and the very real threat th juxtaposed against the bumbling, frightened, Hawaiian-shirt wearing white kids that ma Montague gang. One is fearsome, and the other benign. The point I aim to make i popular film itself gestures at attitudes regarding

the ethnic divide in US society, but it also plays into stereotypes sur- rounding that di keep things honest, Tybalt is a forceful pres- ence in the movie, as he is in the play dangerous essence is underwritten by his self-confidence. However, the same self-cor not in place for the young actors in the YouTube adaptation of *Hamlet*.

In *hamlet mexican style*, the weight of identity politics is almost pal- pable. The young stude

want to insert themselves into con- temporary perspectives of Shakespeare via deliber music from Luhrmann's film, but they simply cannot. And rather than attempt to adaptation of *Hamlet* that could speak to their own, unique cultural identity, they inste frivolous plot to laugh at them- selves. Unfortunately, that laughter also registers the w Mexican Americans are often laughed at: taco-eating, mariachi-listening, folkloric Mexicans. Des'ree gives way to mariachi music, and—without a doubt—this could provocative dynamic in this adaptation, but there is no indication that the students are a to subvert ste- reotypes, nor parodying them with a sense of self. Had they done adaptation might then offer an interesting cultural critique of the popular perspectives Mexican Americans. However, the truth is that the students seem to have given up outset. They are not trying to tender a thoughtful adaptation, and they are not trying to u Shakespeare. Perhaps it is their way of saying, "we just don't care." Given the endless p behind *Hamlet*, I admit that I, for one, *want* them to care because their perspective woul result in a unique view of Shakespeare but it would also, I firmly believe, bol- ster their c in having legitimate and meaningful access to litera- ture and language that is an import their own legacy. It would give them the confidence to make Shakespeare their own.

The negotiation of cultural identity in this video ostensibly registers apprehensions about as during a period when the immigration debate evoked strong, and often hostile, sentime the place of Latinxs in America, but these apprehensions could also serve to influ- understanding of Shakespeare. Indeed, the video should lead us to scrutinize Shak enduring relevance and to consider why there is a cultural disconnect from Shakespeare Latinxs. The idea is to tap into culturally relevant energies. I am reminded, here, of disbelief when it comes to the ability of the visiting actor at Elsinore to move himsel audience, to tears when he arrives at Hecuba's reaction to the murder of Priam. After depart,

Hamlet asks, "What's Hecuba to him or he to her?" (2.2.559). Herein is the openi audience to recognize, on a fundamental level, the affective power of the theatre, both without the play itself. Like Hecuba to the actor, Shakespeare—however strange or might be to these Latinx students—could, in fact, matter. For those who designed a within the Mexican-American Studies program in Tucson, this was not only evident b influential that Shakespeare found himself in the company of, amid many others, James Martín Espada, Gabriel García Márquez, Junot Diaz, Rudolfo Anaya, Luís Alberto Urrea,

Alexie, Rodolfo Acuña, Dagoberto Gilb, and—yes—Gloria Anzaldúa on the banned l
Without doubt, his cultural relevance for Latinxs is in place, and it also stretches far be
Tempest.

Users and Makers

On the surface, we can recognize why, as the quintessential postco- lonial play in Shak
canon, *The Tempest* holds currency where race and ethnic studies are concerned. Whe
says to Prospero, "You taught me language, and my profit on't/Is I know how to curse" (1
he draws not only on the colonizing energies of language and power, but he also un
what this access means to him. He can use the language how he finds fit. However, as
argues, integration "into a single 'linguistic community' ... is the condition for the establi
relations of linguistic domination."[43] The linguis- tic hierarchy holds steady. In many
issue of linguistic assimila- tion in *The Tempest* likely resonates with young La
Shakespeare himself—and the language he helped shape—are also markers of th
burden of assimilation. As I have explored in this chapter, percep- tions of how Sha
should *sound*, and what Shakespeare should *look like* certainly situate Latinxs on the ma

When it comes to the banning of *The Tempest*, we find that the play itself really is not the
real issue is Shakespeare's place within our imagined conception of a collective, English
identity. Without a doubt, Shakespeare has left us—all of us—a rich literary and linguis-
Indeed, while *The Tempest* fits in rather neatly when exploring postcolonial energies, it i
of Shakespeare's status that mat- ters most. Take for example, a *CSUN Today* article
documen- tary *Outlawing Shakespeare*, which addresses the Arizona book banning

controversy. The article reads, "The title of the documentary comes from the Arizona St
Bill's banning of William Shakespeare's 'The Tempest,' on the grounds that what many
negative portrayal of Shylock, a Jewish character."[44] Shylock, of course, is not a charac
Tempest, and this is precisely the point: Shylock, Caliban; Aaron, Othello; Barbary, Cleo
the details matter? Is it that otherness is otherness is otherness? Clearly, Shak
influential stature, and not the content of his works, is deemed most important when c
his value to the Arizona controversy. However, this should draw attention not to why h
used but to what Latinx students bring to the table when they use him. It is the view fr

that is most significant.

In both a surprising and refreshingly candid approach, Martin Orkin deliberately questi established modes of critical inquiry in Shakespeare studies. Orkin's recogn Shakespeare's plays "travel far beyond" the "geographical and scholarly constit institutions like the Folger Shakespeare Library and British Library allows him to interr local knowledges matter in the making of Shakespeare.[45] He writes of otherwise traditi of critical inquiry:

> While users of the Shakespeare text situated elsewhere—not least, the thousands of youn who as undergraduates themselves become for a while students of Shakespeare—will g receive and draw upon impeccable and indispensable scholarship and criticism of this kin itself travels to them among other routes via *Shakespeare Quarterly*, are there as well ar more active roles possible for them as students, per- formers, or audiences of the texts?[46]

I gesture at Orkin's pointed question, here, because the mere move- ment toward re *users* of Shakespeare outside of the academy as potential *makers* of Shakespeare is seemingly obvious, often undervalued, and yet fecund with possibility.

I turn to borderland adaptations of Shakespeare, then, to explore how borderland epistemol articulated by Guerra and de la Piedra, Alonso, and Anzaldúa—afford us a unique persp under- standings of Shakespeare. Following the lead of Orkin, I look to "more active Shakespeare users—local adaptations of Shakespeare from the perspective of the bo briefly discuss two videos pro- duced by my students at the University of Texas a (UTEP)—a Hispanic Serving Institution with a student demographic of roughly 8(students—for a project I often assign in my Shakespeare classes.

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Lest you think I am deliberately leading my students to produce videos relevant to my r want to make clear that the parameters for this assignment are sufficiently vague students sufficiently uncom- fortable: Students collaborate to perform and film an adapt any of the Shakespeare plays we cover during the semester. Videos can- not exceed fiv should employ some of Shakespeare's original dialogue, and should find a way to contemporary social issues. Beyond these guidelines, students are given complete license.[47] The results, as you might imagine, have been mixed.

Not surprisingly, when students engage local energies of the border- lands, the issue of

frequently comes up—often to varied suc- cess. I draw, here, on two of these student v
Muerte de Ofelia[48] and *Foul and Fair*,[49] to trace these unique perspectives from the bor
first video adapts Ophelia's suicide in *Hamlet*, and imagines her feeling of alienation as
not from the pressures of patriarchal expectations and/or a disengaged lover, but instea
absence of knowledge of the Spanish language. The video opens with Ofelia floating f
over clear water, and, as the title is revealed, the shot shifts to a striking visual perspect
the viewpoint is that of jarring move- ment down a concrete canal, as if the perspective i
water that begins to fill it. A narrator speaks in Spanish, and the students translate the
the viewer: "Ofelia is concerned about 3 things/Death, when they tell her that the do
tortilla/is pronounced like a 'y' and not a mute 'h'/and newspaper articles that repeat ir
sition what already has been said in the quote./Today, Ofelia woke up with the desire to
first concern. /Today, Ofelia woke up with the desire to die." Obviously, these stuc
creative license in this adaptation—they present what Peter Holland identifies as s
"parasitic" in nature, which is common in YouTube productions[50]—but what they offe
actuality, revealing about experiences that shape these encounters with Shakespea
things bother the Ofelia of these students' imaginations: death, deficiency of the
language, and redundancy. The role of language—both in its knowledge and in its use–
par with the desire to die.

The role that race and ethnicity play in this video is also of signifi- cance, as the student play
is the sole white actor. Her estrange- ment not only stems from being a monolingu
speaker living in the borderland but also from her view of journalistic inadequacies wher
to use of language. Language is central. After the video offers

shots of students with voiceovers that give us passages from *Hamlet* regarding Ophelia
draws to a close and reintroduces the issue of language.[51] The narrator speaks in Span
and the translation reads:

> If she was to choose to drown, Ofelia thought, her parents would be the first to see her ur
> water with a blue face and flowered dress. A real tragedy thought Ofelia, because her paren
> little about Shakespeare. Just like she knew just about nothing about drowning ... She thoug
> the press. In the headline they would give her story. "Suicidal teen dies again". And the pho
> would take of her corpse, while she held in a laugh with her eyes shut, as she heard the polic

in broken English.

Shakespeare's relevance is explicitly engaged in these closing moments, as is the per language in these borderlands. Ofelia's parents are imagined to lack an underst Shakespeare, and people in the borderland community—the police officers o imagination— have incomplete command of English. She is isolated in her English identity, but it is hardly seen as a deficit, as she—even in suicide—gets the last laugl who do not know nor completely understand Shakespeare or his English language.

The second production, *Foul and Fair*, employs material from *Macbeth*, and was produced end of the worst period of car- tel violence in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico (for a period of aver- age was eight murders per day). These students—two Latino, bilingual actors Latina actor who spoke only English—drew on an actual incident in Juárez where sixte (mostly teenagers) were gunned down at a house party. Because some of our students are what de la Piedra and Guerra define as *transfronterizos*, or border crossers, "who families in and are residents of both nations,"[52] the exposure to this type of consisten often resulted in post- traumatic stress disorder.[53] This video, then, utilizes the haunting of *Macbeth* and its ghosts, and the language of inhumanity, to explore the almo experience of traversing from the violence in Juárez to attending school at UTEP.

As in the first video, though, the issue of language also enters the equation in this produc means to explore just how alienated Mexican nationals might feel in the USA, even in a primarily

Mexican American. The video opens with a Mexican-American student standing on campus and looking out at the *colonias* of Juárez in the near distance, speaking the Shakespeare in Spanish (which are translated for the viewer on the screen): "So foul day I have not seen." The shot then is of the newspaper headlines detailing the atroci murders that transpired at the Juárez house party. Words of Macbeth's haunted conscie video in Spanish spoken word and English translations, and the image of the studer toward class is broken by memories of the house party of which the video imagi- nes hi part. As he walks deeper into campus, ghosts in the form of corpses covered in wh begin to appear to him, and the sound of a single gunshot is heard each time a corpse He arrives in class, and a young, female student asks him, "Did you get the book?" He

"Que paso?" ("What happened?"). Registering her annoyance with the rolling of her responds, "Of course." A third, male student tells him, "No le hagas caso" ("Don't pay a her"). He then strikes up a conversation with the student, but again the ghosts appea haunted student runs out of the classroom.

Rather significantly, when the students converse in Spanish, there is no translation offer viewer. We are left to experience this episode as viewers who either do or do not u Spanish. The students offer translations only for the lines that come from *Macbeth*. Inde student runs out of the classroom and down seemingly unend- ing sets of stairs, th reads Macbeth's "Tomorrow, and tomor- row, and tomorrow" speech in Spanish, translations on screen for the viewer. For me, the use of Spanish throughout is provo Shakespeare's poetic voice is not lost in the Spanish words but instead carries a distin for this borderland perspective. More impor- tantly, the deliberate decision to tran Shakespeare and to keep distinct the classroom experience for English-only/Sp speakers is keen, for the issue of language carries with it an alienating perspective weigh on so many students who reside in *la frontera*.

Independent of each other, and years apart, these students on the border locate in Shakes plays that stem beyond *The Tempest*— culturally relevant energies. What strikes me compelling is that they use the Bard—engaging with the literature and translating the lan Shakespeare, of the King James Bible, no less—to address their experiences with the and cultural divide within their own bor- derlands. They are confident users and r Shakespeare.

The proverbial rub, though, is in mitigating apprehensions about their legitimate a Shakespeare. Like Katherine's answer to Henry in *Henry V* when he asks, "Do you Kate?"—and she keenly replies, "I cannot tell vat is 'like me'" (5.2.108)—perhaps we, t admit that the linguistic and cultural divide presents real apprehensions. But it also immense opportunities, for in Katherine's statement we understand not only the deficit of (she lacks English proficiency) but also the sentiment that, in being absorbed into the society (the English in that play), she stands to lose herself: "I don't know what is Perhaps, as we look at Shakespeare across the cultural divide, we should recognize Latinxs likely look to Shakespeare and cannot find themselves therein. Often, that is pressures of assimilation hold for Latinxs. As Anzaldúa writes, "Chicanos and other peop suffer economically for not acculturating. This voluntary (yet forced) alienation r

psychological conflict, a kind of dual identity—we don't identify with the Anglo-America values and we don't totally identify with the Mexican cultural values ... I have so interna borderland conflict that sometimes I feel like one cancels out the other and we are zero no one."[54] Such insecurities are in place for Latinxs on the border, even for a Per winning author.[55] But something can, indeed, come from nothing. A large part of the str making visible this sector of Shakespeare users and in convincing the academy t perspectives, too, have something to offer.

To look beyond *The Tempest* so as to see how contemporary, current issues and understa immigration, assimilation, hybridity, and ethnicity open up Shakespeare in provocative means of inviting Latinx users of Shakespeare to make him their own. In his recent work, *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates lingers on the impli- cations of Sau question, "Who is the Tolstoy of the Zulus?"[56] Given the exclusionary and dispossessing the question, Coates explores his internalization of attitudes like Bellow's. But influenced Wiley's confident response to Bellow, "Tolstoy is the Tolstoy of the Zulus," Coates recognizes that "Bellow is no closer to Tolstoy than I was to Nzinga."[57] The sentiment is material to Shakespeare. No one, and this doubtless includes Boris Johnson, is Shakespeare than anyone else, and it is this particular issue of legacy— the legacy Sha leaves, and the legacy being made—that infuses Latinx engagement with Shakespea much value. In the ever- changing demographic of America, one where Latinxs are quick

to become the majority, the face of Shakespeare, too, will undoubtedly change. T Shakespeare situated on this border of change is to behold both intimidating and ex possibilities. If we consider the many ways Latinxs stand to use and make Shakespear recognize that the cake will indeed be worth the candle for some time to come.

Notes

1. Marc Lacy, "Rift in Arizona as Latino Class is Found Illegal," *New York Times*, January 7, This chapter takes to heart Ayanna Thompson's call in *Passing Strange* where she writes, "t con- temporary notions of Shakespeare, race, and universalism, one must be attuned to a w variety of sources: one must be willing to engage in cultural studies in the broadest sense" (4 Ayanna Thompson, *Passing Strange: Shakespeare, Race, and Contemporary America* (Oxf

Oxford University Press, 2011). 2. Ibid. 3. J. Weston Phippen, “How One Law Banning Ethni Led to Its Rise,” *The Atlantic*, July 19, 2015. https://www.theatlantic.com/ education/archive/2015/07/how-one-law-banning-ethnic-studies-led- to-rise/398885/. 4. For attention to the absence of attention to Latinx perspec- tives on Shakespeare, see Ruben Es “Stranger Shakespeare,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 67.1 (2016): 62. 5. Pierre Bourdieu, *Langu Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

University Press, 1982), 41. 6. Ibid., 59. 7. Ibid., 58. 8. Benjamin A. Saenz, *Everything Begins and E Kentucky Club* (El

Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press, 2015), 13. 9. Joseph Rodriguez, “‘A Riot in the Heart’: A Conversatic Author Benjamin Alire Sáenz,” *Study and Scrutiny: Research on Young Adult Literature* 1.1 (2 10. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands /La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 2nd ed.

(San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books, 1999), 19. 11. Ibid., 81. 12. Ibid. 13. Boris Johnson, “For Th Immigrants Must Speak the Language of Shakespeare,” *The Telegraph*, March 8, 2015. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/ news/uknews/immigration/11457877/For-their-sake-immigrants-m speak-the-language-of-Shakespeare.html.

14. Ibid. 15. Ibid. 16. Leo R. Chavez, *The Latino Threat: Constructing Citizens, Immigrants, a Nation*, 2nd ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008). 17. Bill Ashcroft, *Caliban’s V Transformation of English in Post-*

Colonial Literatures (New York: Routledge, 2009). 18. Ana M. Alonso, “Borders, Sovereignty, and Racialization” in Deborah Poole (ed.), *Companion to Latin American Anthropology* (New York Blackwell, 2008), 232. 19. Ibid., 249. 20. Ibid. 21. Thompson, here, is discussing audience an reaction to Peter Seller’s 2008 production of *Othello*. Thompson, *Passing Strange*, 174. 22. Ib Antonio Ocampo-Guzman, “My Own Private Shakespeare; or, Am I Deluding Myself?,” in Aya Thompson (ed.), *Colorblind Shakespeare: New Perspectives on Race and Performance* (New Routledge, 2006), 132. 24. Ibid. 25. Ibid. 26. Lani Guinier, and Gerald Torres, *The Miner’s Ca Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univers 2002), 629. 27. Ibid., 628. 28. For the issue of tensions surrounding English versus Spanish, attention to social and economic inequities connected to this, see Carola and Marcelo Suarez attend to their view of this issue in “Stranger Shakespeare” (2016). Carola Suárez-Orozco, ar M. Suárez-Orozco, *Children of Immigration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001) Ocampo-Guzman, 134. 30. Ibid., 135. 31. Ibid. 32. Espinosa, 62. 33. Ayanna Thompson, “Un the Moor: Researching and Teaching

on YouTube,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61.3 (2010): 337–356. 34. Stephen O’Neill, *Shakesp*

(New York: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2014). 35. kebano, *hamlet mexican style*. YouTube v Posted December 22,

2008. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fo3HHrIRrY. 36. Alden T. Vaughan, and Virginia Mason *Shakespeare in America*

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 90.

37. For attention to the pressures of assimilation and the internal racial poli- tics behind the La experience, see Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres, 224–232. 38. For the influence of Shakespe American popular culture, see Douglas Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* (Ox Oxford University Press, 2002). 39. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Lit*

Imagination (New York: Vintage, 1993), xii. 40. For some important examples of attention to Morris see Ian Smith, "Othello's Black Handkerchief," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 64.1 (2013): 1–25, and "'These Bastard Signs of Fair': Literary Whiteness in Shakespeare's Sonnets," in *Post-Colonia Shakespeares*, ed. Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin (London: Routledge, 1998), 64–83. 41. I d for granted, here, that the newly imagined city is necessar- ily an American city. Alfredo M. M scrutinizes the ambiguous nature of Luhrmann's Verona (which was intended to be shot in Mi Angeles, but ultimately filmed in Mexico due to budget issues), and describes the city as "a tr postmodern city" (70). While I feel that the landscape evokes the feel of a city like Los Angele Miami, I am struck by Modenessi's reading of the "(un)doing of City" in the film (71). See Alfre Modenessi, "(Un)Doing the Book 'without Verona walls': A View from the Receiving End of Ba Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*," in *Spectacular Shakespeare: Critical Th Popular Cinema*, ed. Courtney Lehman and Lisa S. Starks (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 2002), 62–85. 42. For an insightful analysis of the cultural and racial markers in this sc Modenessi, 71–77 and Margo Hendricks, "Gestures of Performance: Rethinking Race in Con Shakespeare" in *Colorblind Shakespeare: New Perspectives on Race and Performance*, ed. Thompson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 196–198. 43. Bourdieu, 46. 44. "CSUN Community Stand with 'Shakespeare,'" *CSUN* [California State University, Northridge] *Today*, December http://csunshi- netoday.csun.edu/arts-and-culture/csun-community-takes-ethnic-stud- ies-star shakespeare/. 45. Martin Orkin, *Local Shakespeares: Proximations and Power* (New York:

Routledge, 2005), 18–19. 46. Ibid., 18. 47. This assignment is an attempt to engage the energies t YouTube productions afford, as Thompson has keenly explored in her work on YouTube Sha

48. aandy1992, *La Muerte de Ofelia*, YouTube video, 4.56, May 1, 2012.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHcNJ1dgAHo. 49. Justine Flores, *Foul and Fair*, Youtube vide
June 30, 2015.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbhBwlZZQ_E. 50. Peter Holland, "Performing Shakespeare fo
Community," in *Shakespeare in Hollywood, Asia, and Cyberspace*, ed. Alexander C.Y. Huang
Charles S. Ross (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2009), 257. 51. Rather signific
students employ *No Fear Shakespeare* to offer pas- sages from the play—using an approxim
Shakespeare's language in their own *approximate* encounter. 52. de la Piedra, María Teresa
C. Guerra, "The Literacy Practices of Tranfronterizos in a Multilingual World," *International Jo
Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 15:6 (2012), 628. 53. For a detailed account of the expe
living in Juárez, Mexico and attending school at UTEP, see Alana Semuels, "Crossing the Me
American Border, Every Day," *The Atlantic*, January 25, 2016. https://
www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/01/crossing-the-mexican- american-border-every
day/426678/. 54. Anzaldúa, 85. 55. Saenz succinctly describes the pressures of living on the
"This is the situation: Mexicans hate us for not being Mexican enough; Americans hate us for
American enough. We don't know English; we don't know Spanish. We're disloyal to the Unite
we've betrayed Mexico. It goes on and on. Although I am proud of my ethnic culture, history,
identity, I am every bit as American as the guy watching Fox News in Indiana" (Rodriguez, 11
Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Spiegel and
Grau, 2015), 43. 57. Ibid., 56.