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The Sound of Whiteness, or Teaching Shakespeare's "Other 'Race Plays'" in Five Acts
DESCRIPTION: Dialogue with David Sterling Brown and Jennifer Stoever
JULY 16, 2020

OWEN WILLIAMS: Welcome to the Critical Race Conversations, a series hosted by the Folger Institute with the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation as part of the Institute's 50th anniversary programming. I am Owen Williams, Associate Director for Scholarly Programs at the Folger Institute. We're delighted to gather so many friends, old and new, through these conversations. I'd like to take a moment to introduce the series and our session leaders for today's event. This series of free online sessions feature scholars who are offering new insights into the prehistory of modern racialized thinking and racism.

OWEN: Our speakers are acknowledging deeper and more complex roots to enduring social challenges and conducting more inclusive investigations of our contested pasts, all with the goal of creating a more just and more inclusive society and academy. The Institute is providing the frame work and platform. But, as is our practice, we turn to scholars across disciplines and career stages to lead discussions from their own experience and expertise. We recognize that we should allow others who are more knowledgeable about the field of critical race studies to create the conversations. We have much to learn.

OWEN: In these critical race conversations, we're actively experimenting with new technologies and new ways to foster dialogue and present content just as so many of you are in your own classrooms. For this session, we are foregoing YouTube's live chat feature. Our speakers welcome live tweeting with the hashtag #FolgerCRC. We remind you that this session will be recorded and posted on the Folger's YouTube channel as soon as it is processed with closed caption enabled and a transcript will be uploaded next week.

OWEN: Please contact the Folger Institute with any questions or concerns. Today our session leaders will offer an important and timely discussion that merges Shakespeare and early modern English studies with Black studies and sound studies to showcase ways of integrating critical race studies into the classroom. They remind us that every humanities professor already teaches profound lessons about

race, whether or not they intend them or are even aware that such lessons are happening. Let me now briefly introduce our two presenters for the second event this month on how teachers and college faculty might work to actively dismantle racism in their classrooms.

OWEN: Dr. David Sterling Brown, a Shakespeare and pre-modern critical race studies scholar is assistant professor of English at Binghamton University. He is a member of the Race Before Race Conference series executive board. Dr. Brown's a published and forthcoming scholarship in *Radical Teacher*, *The Sun Dial*, *The Hare, Arden's Hamlet*, and *Titus Andronicus State of Play* volumes and other venues centers on Shakespeare, race, gender, and/or pedagogy. Prior to entering academia, David worked as the Connecticut recruitment director for a national nonprofit in the K-12 fight against educational inequity.

OWEN: Dr. Jennifer Stoever, a scholar of African American literature and culture, and sound studies is associate professor of English at Binghamton University. She is co-founder and editor in chief of Sounding Out, the sound studies blog. And her first book, *The Sonic Color-line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening*, was published by NYU Press. Before entering her PhD in American studies and ethnicity from the University of Southern California, Professor Stoever was a high school English and avid teacher for six years in Riverside, California.

OWEN: Without further ado, I give you The Sound of Whiteness, or Teaching Shakespeare's "Other 'Race Plays'" in Five Acts.

DAVID STERLING BROWN: Thank you for that introduction, Owen, and thanks to the Folger Institute and The Folger Shakespeare Library, The Mellon initiative in collaborative research and all viewers, and to our colleagues, Dr. Nedda Mehdizadeh, and Ambereen Dadabhoy for offering the first conversation in this Folger Institute series. We also must thank Binghamton University and our department for letting us teach how we want to and need to teach, especially given that our distinct anti-racist research agendas are inextricably linked to our pedagogical agendas.

DAVID: And finally, we offer a special thanks to the K-12 teachers out there for there would be no higher education without all of you. Before we get started, we also want to make two important points and recognize certain limits pertaining to the hearing impaired. First, the sonic color-line and the listening ear, Jennifer's concepts that we'll be relying on today, describe a hearing culture that is also ablest. The way listening is limited to the ear for example in European culture because it is closest to the mind and reason, even though we know that we listen through the whole body as vibrations hit it.

DAVID: The sonic color-line and listening ear are ideologies that impact our individual embodied listening which operates on a spectrum from full body only to fill body and ear. Secondly, the sonic color-line and listening ear are very connected

to bodily carriage and proper comportment. So, it is likely that the impacts of this can be perceived through visual cues as well. That is to say people perform listening often in very exaggerated ways. Thank you for performing that, Jenny [LAUGH].

JENNIFER STOEVER: I got you.

DAVID: To be clear, racism is also a painful reality within the deaf community as the National Deaf Center on post secondary education noted, in their June 2020 statement on racism and oppression. And they added specifically that disparities in opportunity and outcomes for Black deaf Americans are incredibly high. For today, Jennifer and I have incorporated a lot into this critical race conversation with the hope that since it is recorded, you will take advantage of the opportunity to re-watch it and share it with others.

DAVID: And on that note, we'll now turn to our overall objectives for this session. We have five main goals. First, we may encourage teachers and challenge you to think not just about individual plays but about each act in the five act play structure as an opportunity to explore race and especially whiteness in white-centric Shakespeare plays like *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Richard III*, and *Hamlet* for example, plays that have not been essential in Shakespeare and race conversations as they should and need to be despite important work in this critical direction by many scholars.

DAVID: For example, and I want to name a few of them, Arthur Little, who draws on the legal scholarship of Cheryl I. Harris to reflect on whiteness as property, Erickson, who among other things asks in the past, can we talk about race in *Hamlet*, Matthew Chapman, who scrutinized the importance of the Black presence in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Patricia Parker who has examined the English Renaissance racialized preoccupation with the Blackness, soiling, sullying, and dulling in *Hamlet*, Scott Newstok and Ayanna Thompson who offered a robust co-edited volume, *Wayward Macbeth*, which features work on whiteness, and Roman Polanski's *Macbeth* by Francesca Royster.

DAVID: And of course, Kim F. Hall, who in her first book, *Things of Darkness*, deployed Black feminist methodologies, explored the fetishization of white skin and boldly demanded that the field takes seriously the critical interrogation of whiteness. 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of Hall's path breaking study. And so, Jennifer and I will use this session in part to answer Kim Hall's 1995 call.

DAVID: For this kind of Shakespeare in pre-Modern critical race studies scholarship must be centered more frequently and the centering of discussions about whiteness must be normalized by all pedagogues and especially book presses and journal editorial boards as argued for in the Race Before Race executive board's recent call to end publishing gatekeeping. Much is at stake with respect to understanding the invisible workings and history of whiteness, white supremacy, and to Blackness and racism.

DAVID: As these histories coupled with the realities of now significantly affect all students. Another goal of ours is to showcase how Shakespeare and critical race theory are complementary and to suggest concrete methods for how teachers can consciously, consistently, and conscientiously offer lessons about race in relationship to sound. The latter concept having been explored by Bruce R. Smith in *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, Gina Bloom in *Voice and Motion, staging gender, shape, and sound in early modern England*, and in a 2010 special issue of the journal, *Upstart Crow* titled *Shakespearean Hearing*.

DAVID: That's volume 29. Race stands not apart from but as an important part of the sound and hearing conversation. I suggest as much in my article, *The Sonic Color-line: Shakespeare and the Canonization of Sexual Violence Against Black Men*, an essay in *The Sun Dial* that offers examples of how to apply Jennifer's sonic color-line ideology in the pre-modern context. As Shakespeare's plays present us with racialized soundscapes, that prompt us as Bloom suggests, to reflect on the materiality of sound.

DAVID: Why does sound matter? And how is sound matter? This critical conversation is a program of action.

JENNIFER: Thank you, David, for starting us out and for that wonderful introduction. We have a couple more goals. We're gonna work on reinforcing the power of empowerment with respect to student learning and racialized authority in the classroom. One of the things that white professors in particular should be more self-reflective about is our unearned authority at the university and the classroom. And I say unearned here because I'm not referring to our educational credentials, achievements, abilities. Those are of course varied, but rather the immediate assumption of belonging and the quite literal command of the room that is structurally granted to us simply by inhabiting our bodies in this space.

JENNIFER: I'm rarely taken for a student, for example. While differences in gender, class, and sexuality temper the force of this unearned ideological authority, everyone white has some kind of access to it. In a society structured by white supremacists ideology, whiteness comes with the force of the state behind it and therefore the expectation of automatically being listened to, whether or not we are teaching Shakespeare but especially when we're teaching Shakespeare. Why is that?

JENNIFER: What are the unspoken lessons about race do our bodies teach? What can Shakespeare teach us about how such unearned power came to be and how we can dismantle it? What possibilities for teaching and learning open up when we're aware of our racialized bodies in the classroom? And rather than reinforcing the lessons that they teach, those unspoken ones, how can we work to empower students and dismantle that unearned authority? We're also gonna reflect on how sound is very racialized today, how race is both a visual and aural phenomenon as I note in the sonic color-line.

JENNIFER: And to think about Shakespeare's plays even individual acts and scenes as racialized soundscapes and we'll talk about what a soundscape is, where sounds have invisible racialized and critical power that kind of gives us the affect and feeling and making of race. You know, that's what creates white people in white spaces. It's the making and performing of race and we're gonna show you that today. Finally, our final goal is to help teachers think about pedagogical prep so that you are ready to hit the ground running with your students on day one.

JENNIFER: Both David and I have a lot of pedagogical training and experience at multiple levels, secondary school, public and private universities. We know how important it is to start class with strategies in your pocket to begin this work. So, let's begin to work. Let's go. What do you say, David?

DAVID: I say let's get to it. So, right now, you should be seeing our front slide which has a phrase that was part of the description of our talk. Quiet as it's kept, every teacher already offers profound lessons about race. And the question that we want you to think about and also give you ideas to help you think about is how do you do it?

JENNIFER: Mm-hmm.

DAVID: And so, among other things, the five act structure of this critical race conversation is meant implicitly to call attention to the notion that race is performative. As Margo Hendricks suggests in her essay, *Gestures of Performance: Rethinking Race in Contemporary America*, an essay that gestures toward the sonic color-line. Our five act structure also acknowledges how gender is performative as Judith Butler argues in *Gender Trouble*. I, a Black man, and Jennifer, a white woman, are acutely aware of our racial gender differences.

DAVID: Which we are deliberately relying on here as educational tools with respect to our collaborative development of ideas and how we've structured who talks when and who says what to whom. We maintain this awareness as well in our individual classrooms at Binghamton. Because racialized sound exists in most classrooms and really wherever you are at any given moment, we want you who are watching and listening right now to be acutely aware of our racial difference and of your responses to our different racialized identities.

DAVID: And more importantly, our voices, how they sound, how they make you feel, how you respond to them as listeners. You might even consider closing your eyes for a portion of this session to see what you learn about you. Give it a try right now. Are you resistant to my Black voice which is not emitting from a white body and therefore not the norm with respect to Shakespearean authority? Are you more willing to give Jennifer that unearned authority that she just spoke of because she is white despite the fact that she is a scholar of African American literature?

DAVID: Does my masculinity complicate your response to Jennifer's white female voice and does our crossing into each other's respective fields as we'll speak later disrupt the assumption you might have about the scholarly knowledge we should have? And to echo sentiments expressed in Eric L. De Barros's article, *Teacher Trouble: Performing Race in a Majority White Shakespeare Classroom* is society's ambivalence about the Black teacher scholar at work for you right now or at any point during this presentation.

DAVID: If the answer is yes, it is good that you have recognized you have a serious problem. Now, you must think about solutions. For if you are ambivalent to the Black teacher scholar, then what are the implications there for your Black students for example? To further subvert certain expectations during the session, Jennifer will speak on Shakespeare and I will speak on African American literature at times. This is all deliberate. Thus this is an opportunity to consider the intersections of our various identity markers and how they resonate with you as you listen.

DAVID: This critical race conversation is an opportunity for you to slow down and think about how race happens and to listen to yourself listening. This particular act, Act I, of our conversation, the exposition, is designed to get you thinking about Shakespeare and race outside of the usual categories, namely the so-called race plays as Ayanna Thompson has put it and introduce you to some other ways of thinking.

JENNIFER: Okay. Well, we are going to interview each other a little bit before we move on to let you kind of into and have some insight into our practice. And I want to ask you, David, colleague, in 2013, you first began consistently integrating Shakespeare and race in your teaching through a course that you created called early modern literature, crossing the color-line. And this course is really cool, I think unique, and I hope after this talk maybe less so, combining the study of early modern English drama in African American literature.

JENNIFER: Why did you create this course?

DAVID: Good question. So, in 2013 I joined a faculty at Trinity College in Connecticut as the Ann Plato Predoctoral fellow in English. And Trinity's educational policy committee made it very clear that they wanted me to create something that was innovative at least for the curriculum at Trinity for instance. And much like I do with my teaching now at Binghamton, I had a pedagogical latitude at Trinity. And I reiterate that point because I know that teaching what I teach and how I want to teach it is a privilege of being at the kind of institution that we are at.

DAVID: However, I'm also not naive to the fact that there are cases where instructors have that latitude but choose to perform helplessness and say that they don't have the time. So, having studied at Trinity as an undergrad and remembering the experience that I had being the only Black student in my Shakespeare class, I

worked backwards from that great but uncomfortable undergraduate experience. And I thought about how I could use my course description and syllabus structure to attract a diverse group of students.

DAVID: As I recall that as an undergrad, my African American literature and Black women writers classes were much more diverse and imagine you probably see much more diversity in your classes than I do in my Shakespeare class for instance. How could I duplicate that and preemptively solve the racial homogeneity problem in my Trinity classroom as a teacher? This was a matter of marketing for the student audience I wanted. And so, part of the answer was in combining the study of early modern English drama and African American literature.

DAVID: And the other part was framing the course as one whose methodology integrated the personal critical and experiential pedagogical choices that led to 50 percent of my students being students of color. Beginning with the Du Boisian theory that could then be used to re-read the early modern drama, crossing the color-line, as the students call it for short, allowed the productive de-centering of Shakespeare and white maleness through the syllabuses inclusion of Black authors such as Paul Lawrence Dunbar, James Baldwin, Adrian Kennedy, Jim Jordan, Harriet Jacobs, Nella Larsen, and others.

JENNIFER: So, building from that, obviously whiteness matters in the course built around Shakespeare. How did the whiteness factor in for you here?

DAVID: Yeah, so it was a challenge [LAUGH]. I'll say that. I knew in 2013 that whiteness, you know, it's a race position. Of course there's no denying that but my comfortability with discussing whiteness as a race position was not all there. And this took time to develop especially because leading up to this moment, I really only heard one untrue message reiterated that is Blackness equals race which we know that's simply not true. All people are race beings.

DAVID: And so additionally, I sensed that at the time as Martha R. Mahoney aptly puts it in her essay, *The Social Construction of Whiteness*, in the logic of white privilege, making whites feel white equals racism. And now I certainly do not want to be accused of that. So, I unfortunately allowed the power of whiteness to police me and my teaching a little back then. While white-centric plays like *Hamlet* and Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II* were included in my color syllabus, class conversations about race in those plays might usually center on comparative conversations between say Edward II and Galveston's intense homo-social bond and the homosexual relationship between David and Giovanni in Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* or even the homo-eroticism in Nella Larsen's *Passing*.

DAVID: In other words, the chats oscillated between race and gender with students not really wanting to stay in the former category. And I find that often in a classroom to be the case that students are much more comfortable discussing gender and sexuality than, or even the intersections of those things.

JENNIFER: Yes, me, too. Me, too.

DAVID: Yet especially because 2013 was the year that Black Lives Matter movement began, following the 2012 murder of Trayvon Martin, my students were willing to identify Black tropes and stereotypes or call out the horrors of anti-Black racism and that enduring legacy by focusing mostly on the victims rather than the perpetrators and in subduing, rendering whiteness unexamined and under-examined or even invisible. So, now on day one, as I think about things like white privilege and, you know, white guilt, I make it important that I demonstrate my comfortability with discussing race and particularly whiteness.

DAVID: And also I exuded genuine excitement about it even though, you know, these conversations are difficult, much like the one that we're having right now.

JENNIFER: Okay, so talk to me about this article here that's on this slide, the piece in *Radical Teacher* called "Crossing the Color-Line." Why is it important that this kind of pedagogy that you talk about in this article be written about more and taken seriously by journals in the field?

DAVID: Yeah, so I'll answer this question pretty quickly using the lens of cultural psychology by drawing on the work of Canadian professor and psychologist, Steven J. Heine, who uses culture in reference to both information and groups of individuals. He asserts that cultures emerge from the interaction of various minds of the people that live within them and cultures then in turn shape the way those minds operate. And he also argues that humans have prestige bias which prompts us to imitate what others are doing and to be concerned with those who have the skills that are respected by others.

DAVID: Keeping all this in mind, we can then think about the journals in Shakespeare's studies as information repositories and culture shapers of the field. What it values, what it deems most important, or unimportant, and even whose work is respectable and should be respected. So, the accepted authors, too, are culture shapers. If pedagogy scholarship is marginalized for instance, and or not deemed as important as other kinds of scholarship, particularly in our flagship journals, this shapes how our minds treats such work.

DAVID: Moreover, if people do not have access to pedagogy scholarship through widely respected channels that could promote and amplify the work, teachers risk reinventing the wheel and they lose out on opportunities to build on or adapt to others' ideas and time is wasted. But it's not the teachers who lose out the most here. It is of course the students.

JENNIFER: Speaking of students, you started out at Trinity and now you are here at Binghamton, how has your pedagogy evolved since in that time?

DAVID: Yeah, it's definitely involved a lot, you know, for the first time, as I think about teaching it soon, the course is going to be taught online for instance. We are in the middle of a pandemic. And so there's a lot to consider as I think about how aware now my students are about racism and systemic oppression and ways that they were in the past. Because I think this pandemic has really helped to put the spotlight on the fact that racism and these issues are everywhere, under the rocks we'd never even thought we'd find it under.

DAVID: And additionally, we're in a moment right now where the continued killing of Black people by white people has extended this anti-Black racist brutality, this legacy of it that I, you know, call the attention to in this course. And so I'm going to bring those things into the classroom because I know that the students, it's on their minds. And I know that pedagogical evolution keeps things fresh. Now a more obvious answer to your question is that there is not one size fits all model to teaching. And so the students of yesterday are not the same as those of tomorrow.

DAVID: And thus the latter deserve to get, you know, an education that's current. And so that's what I want to give them.

JENNIFER: Mm-hmm. So, leaning into Act II, why did you ask me to join you in this talk? I'm sure if I asked Professor Stuart at UC Riverside, my undergrad Shakespeare teacher, if you imagine me presenting on Shakespeare years into the future, he'd probably say no [LAUGH]. So, please tell us.

DAVID: So, my short answer to that question, actually I would do like a little treasure hunt here. It's in your book. So, everyone should really consider having this on your bookshelves. And it can be found in the Lena Horne epigraph on page 229, and also in the Racial Gentile epigraph on page 277. But on a more serious note, you know, as a Shakespeare scholar who is heavily influenced by WEB Du Bois' work and not just his color-line theory but also his concept of the veil and double consciousness, which have applicability in the Shakespeare canon and beyond it.

DAVID: I invited you because I was inspired by your work and I know that some of my colleagues are as well and how it opens up another dimension for us to think about race particularly through sound. And so I've applied your work in my own as I know others have. And moreover, like other Black thinkers and artists such as James Baldwin, Suzan-Lori Parks, Maya Angelou for instance, Du Bois directly calls attention to Shakespeare and uses Shakespeare's pre-modern cultural capital to bolster his own statements in his text on global and American racial politics.

DAVID: And so with that in mind, Jennifer, you know, your work helped me understand that when I read Du Bois' words, and when I encounter so much more in the world, I hear all that comprises Du Bois' Blackness, the pain, the striving, the violence, the struggle, and even the hope. And on that note, a positive note of hope, let's transition into Act II.

JENNIFER: So, Act II of course presents the rising action, the intensification of the matter at hand. In our Act II offers an aural flipping of the script. So, we're gonna move from the sound of a white woman's voice asking questions of a Black man teaching Shakespeare and race to the sound of a Black man's voice asking questions of a white woman teaching African American studies and race. How does this role reversal sound to you? How might each interview amplify the other? How do they defy our expectations of these voices and any automatic authenticity or authority they signal?

JENNIFER: What also intensifies the action here is the introduction of a critical race theory toolkit that you can use to discuss race in your classroom in conjunction with Shakespeare and in terms of analyzing the classroom atmosphere itself.

DAVID: Okay, thank you for that introduction. So, now I want to kind of dive into thinking about your work and your book, you know, your introduction to you, Owen mentioned that you taught high school for seven years to grad school. And what prompted you to become an academic particularly studying race and sound?

JENNIFER: That's a long road. I'm gonna give you quick relevant details. I taught high school in my hometown. I taught for six years, fresh out of college. I am first and a half generation in college. I'm the first in my mother's side. My dad went to community college, army, and finished up at Cal State Fullerton. I was really, really young. I loved teaching high school. The students, as anyone will tell you, are the best part of the job. And the classrooms in Riverside I taught in were more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, home language than any college classroom I have ever taught in.

JENNIFER: I got an amazing education at UC Riverside. One of those educations that, you know, changes your world. I graduated the same year. In fact just a month after, the uprisings in Los Angeles in 1992, only 60 miles, Riverside's only 60 miles from LA. So, when I went into college like a lot of young white people right now with questions about my complicity in the racial system, how the racial system works, what is the racial system. And you know, I started and was able to begin that work at UC Riverside.

JENNIFER: So, when I went into teaching high school, I expected to be teaching students on this material that we had been kind of, you know, essentially robbed of and lied to about in a lot of our public education. But I ended up continuing to learn a whole lot about structural racism in the classroom. And, you know, I was also an avid teacher which meant that I was an advocate for students underrepresented in college to help them, you know, complete their requirements. The high school I taught at, guidance counselors, 600 students to one counselor.

JENNIFER: So, people were falling through the cracks and especially students of color who are first gen to go to college. But in that, becoming an advocate for these students and helping them with their classes is also, you know, they're getting

kicked out of classes for being noisy or loud. When they come to me, Ms. Stoever, I'm just working on the work, like what's happening? Kennedi Johnson, a PhD student at Bloomington is doing a lot of work on Black girls in the secondary classroom right now, great project.

JENNIFER: And so I was seeing that firsthand and going through that and then I talk about this a little bit in the acknowledgement to the book in 1997 of someone close to me, James Martinez, was shot in the back by the CRASH gang unit in Home Gardens, California. And less than a year later, Tyisha Miller, one of the first students in the high school class, my very first class I ever taught, was killed by Riverside Police, shot 12 times and she was passed out in her car just about a mile from my parents.

JENNIFER: And those burners were devastating and upsetting and unsettling on a deep level. And I felt really powerless as an individual in the classroom and going to graduate school particularly studying race and ethnicity at USC. Their program was started after the 1992 uprisings. And that was where I wanted to be. I wanted to understand. I wanted to enact change on a deep systemic level. So, that's probably how I ended up, you know, going to graduate school, actually went to study representations of students of color in public school.

JENNIFER: That the example from the reading Du Bois, when the white girl turns away his visiting car, that was one of the scenes that I talked about in my grad school application. And when I got there and began studying music as well and popular culture and TA-ing for a course called Black Popular Culture with Judith Jackson Fossett, that opened my world to thinking about this question about sound in connection with race in this way.

DAVID: So, you mentioned, you know, the word power and powerlessness. You seem to absorb a lot of power from Du Bois. And so I'm wondering if you could talk about how his work influenced you and also how you build on his concept of the color-line in your book, the sonic color-line.

JENNIFER: Du Bois is one of the foremost intellectuals of United States' history. And reading him, I read him the first time at UC Riverside and I've just read him, you know, tens of times over and over again. And what I appreciate about Du Bois was in laying out the color-line. He changes that terminology from thinking about race as what, in the parlance of the 19th century was the "Negro Problem."

JENNIFER: He puts race both onto whiteness and white supremacy and ideologies of white supremacy I should say, and putting it on the color line that the problem is the designation itself, the hierarchies, the system. And so pointing us toward that is very important. Also the way that he thinks about music and the way that those bars of music, you know, which he puts, we wanted to make sure we gave a link to a version that has those bars of music there, those are transcriptions into European notation of what he called the [sour?] songs of enslaved people's traditional culture.

JENNIFER: And the way that he thinks of sound as both opening up a form of empowerment, even as he recognizes that the ways in which his own voice will be silenced, even as he's speaking the truth, was very profound to me. And this idea that we can be co-workers in the kingdom of culture, right, that the goal, this American kind of melting pot that we're fed, especially in a lot of our public education, it doesn't have to be. The assimilation is not a one-way street into kind of white Americanism that we're still working out each and every day what America is, who Americans are was also very powerful to me.

JENNIFER: I saw sound as a way that that's being kind of being worked out. And so I build from both his notion in *The Souls of Black Folk* that sound is important to us culturally, that we hear things differently. And in part, that's because of how race works on our daily. And that's the other thing is that a lot of white people don't understand I think the deep double consciousness and the kind of way that race works on one's psyche, one's emotions, one's sense of the world, one's sense of safety.

JENNIFER: And, you know, that's why this argument like oh, you know, segregation's over, that, you know, there's no legal racism, right? And so Du Bois is showing all of these ways that it still exists and proliferates which is a question that I very much had going into, you know, college, teaching grad school, etcetera. And he changes his mind, you know, that's the other thing is he's so nimble as a thinker that by 1940, you know, he's like forget the veil. People can't hear. We have a plate glass window in front of us.

JENNIFER: That is also I think for me an important thing to aspire to is constantly learning, speaking fearlessly, and changing your mind when, you know, when new evidence arises, charting a different course and going after it. so, he inspires me both, you know, in my way of being as well as in how I think about sound and race. So, yeah, I owe him. I owe him everything.

DAVID: So, do I. I agree with you in terms of just how inspiring and I feel like also to, every time I read *The Souls of Black Folk*, it just hits me from a different angle. So, it's another one of those works that moves really well with the times. And, you know, thinking about the times and times changing, of course the way that your ideology adjusts and augments how we think about the color-line, you have this concept that you work with, the listening ear, which we've defined on the slide.

DAVID: Maybe you can talk about what is it? Just, you know, what is it? How does it work and also how is it connected to the notion of the soundscape?

JENNIFER: Well, you know, I mentioned Du Bois having this image in the '40s of the color-line now not as this visual kind of veil, this visual image where he says, you know, you can hear me. You may not be able to see who I really am. You've created this illusion and projected stereotype and fantasy onto my visuality but you can hear

me. And by 1940 when World War II starts, he's like no, there's something happening. You cannot hear me. You're not hearing. He says I'm screaming in a vacuum unheard.

JENNIFER: So, both the image of losing air, not being able to breathe, and that image of that glass, and so the listening ear is like that clear glass. And part of my job as a teacher and as a person out in the world is helping people to understand, to see, and feel, and hear that clear glass so we can figure out how to break through it. So, the listening ear is an ideological filter that is shaped in relation to the sonic color line. It's that judgmental like oh, this is how a class should sound.

JENNIFER: It should sound quiet 'cause that signals students are working. That Americans should speak English, it's that should, right? We have all these complex experiences of sound and how it works and what we think. But then we narrow it. And also the notion that, right, certain neighborhoods, this is where soundscape builds in, right, that white suburban neighborhoods are quiet, whereas Black neighborhoods are neighborhoods of people of color are loud.

JENNIFER: And it's these binary elements of race that, you know, after the Civil Rights Movement became, um, you know, taboo to kind of, you know... until recently, for white people to be overtly racist in public, sound was a code. And this idea, the listening ear, became a code. It's not that, you know, we don't hire Black people here. It's that you don't speak properly on the telephone at this job. You don't sound professional. And so these terms, oh, you don't wanna live in that neighborhood, it's noisy.

JENNIFER: And so I noticed that sound was operating in these covert ways. And John Baugh calls it linguistic profiling. And also I should say I'm building on the scholarship of Fred Moten, who was on my committee, Judith Jackson Fossett who's also on my committee, you know, Kristin Moriah, Jonathan Sterne, Carter Mathes, Eric Porter, like all of these folks, Priscilla Peña Ovalle, all these folks that are calling attention to the social construction of race. And so it's not just music. It's not just voice. But it's also our expectations of how the world should sound, you know.

JENNIFER: The idea that a white man gets to tell everyone at the gas station whose music is too loud and what music should be played there, you know. Michael Dunn, you know, shooting and killing Jordan Davis for that reason, that's how listening ear works in the soundscape.

DAVID: And what is the soundscape just for folks who...

JENNIFER: Oh, so those are the sounds, the obvious sounds you hear in a particular location. You know, one of the exercises I do with my students is I have them list the soundscape of the classroom on the board and then we talk about the hierarchies that are in there. I mean it's everything from, you know, the sounds of pencils scratching to the hum of the air conditioner to the professor's voice. And then we

rank them in order of importance. I'm like what's the sound that's most important in this room? And inevitably, they'll say the professor's voice. And they have this all the way listed down.

JENNIFER: And so we're trained to index sounds, you know, we act like all this comes at us. But these filters shape, you know, how we're listening. And inevitably my students never mention their own voices. And that's one thing, by the time students get to college, they're trained to not hear or treat as irrelevant each other's voices. And you know, we're trying to have these deep conversations but, you know, they're already trained to tune that out from each other. And so a lot of our work today is gonna be how to undo that.

JENNIFER: So, that's how soundscape works.

DAVID: All right, thank you for that. Yeah, and you know, what you say about voices, I hadn't really thought about it in that way just in terms of how students are trained in a certain way to think about how they use their voices in certain spaces and what that can mean. And I guess that actually is a nice segue into Act III where we're going to talk about Shakespeare in the racialized sound of masculinity and authority. So, for us in this act structure, Act III is our turning point in this conversation as we shift to focus directly onto the Shakespeare.

DAVID: And on this slide, we have two very different images of Shakespeare. One we might consider a pre-modern reflection on the left and one on the right that is more modern. While both images are powerful in their centering of whiteness and masculinity, they do so quite differently. For me for example, every modern Shakespeare with his early modern attire evokes a classic traditional authority whereas the more modern cool looking tatted up Shakespeare whose pose mimics and appropriates the B boy stance that originated with hip hop culture conveys a sense of authority that is much less intimidating than the image on the right despite both images being of the same white man.

DAVID: In either image, authority is gendered and it is also racialized. Depending on who you are, you may be more intimidated by the Shakespeare image on the right. Is it his tattoos, his sartorial pre-modern departure or perhaps it's his Black racial signifying that makes him too much like or unlike whatever your mythical idea of Shakespeare is? The very responses that people will have to the visual power of these two different images reflects what can also occur in the classroom with respect to how students respond to and engage with pedagogical authority figures who differ in many ways, especially with respect to race for the purposes of our conversation.

DAVID: And since the classroom is a space of mutual engagement, it goes without saying that instructors should be attentive to how they respond to students' different racial backgrounds as well. For those responses, as we allude to at the beginning of our talk, lessons are being taught consciously or unconsciously about

race and power. And sometimes when one does this without care, such lessons are harmful and constitute what might be considered pedagogical malpractice because they participate in the structuring of racial inequality.

DAVID: To quote Ruben Espinosa from his article, "Diversifying Shakespeare," to foster a classroom atmosphere where students can be confident makers of Shakespeare where they do not see their background, language, or cultural heritage as an obstacle to understanding Shakespeare but instead as an asset is essential. If *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* are the only moments and of course when race enters the conversation, consider who that helps and harms.

TEACHING SHAKESPEARES OTHER RACE PLAYS [00:46:14]
DAVID: Or as Joyce Green MacDonald puts it, to produce the non-white alien is thus implicitly and often explicitly to produce a white early modern self. With that in mind, it is misguided to think that a play alone can teach race. *Othello* and *Merchant* alone cannot teach race. Teaching is the teacher's job.

JENNIFER: So, we're gonna talk a bit here about power and empowerment, you know, who has the power in the classroom, who is empowered? And I mentioned a little bit earlier about one of the things that Du Bois did was to change the terms of the debates about race. And for closed readers out there, Easter egg, right, he likens the issue of race and America to Banquo's ghost from *Macbeth*, invisible only because of the suppression of a guilty conscience. He says in vain do cry this to our vastest social problem?

JENNIFER: Take any shape with that and my firm nerve shall never tremble. So, to change the terms of the debate, right, so he says, you know, it's the color-line. Black people are not the problem. The hierarchy is the problem. He even hyphenated color-line so that color could never be broken off from line but it's never color that's the problem. It's its attachment to this line. And that's something I fought with my book press about that hyphen. I lost as you can tell but I really, you know, I do that in my own practice.

JENNIFER: Black people's presence is not the problem, white people's racial hierarchy isn't the problem, and this holds true in our classrooms today from K-12 to higher education. And so how does power in the classroom work, you know? And one of the things we didn't talk about in our Q&A, we didn't get a chance to was about, you know, my whiteness in the classroom teaching African American studies and thinking about, you know, what does it mean for me to be teaching about race and literature in that context.

JENNIFER: And one of the things I try or I always enact as a practice from day one is calling attention to that unearned authority and that I don't expect it. That, you know, and it's easier for me to say and to perform it but I do several things with my students including, you know, helping all of us giving students an opportunity to set the agenda in my classroom. I talk to them and I tell them I'm vulnerable with them.

I allow them to ask me any questions they have because inevitably Black and white students and students of color are curious as to how I came to study what I study, right?

JENNIFER: Because it isn't the norm and also if I know, you know, if I know what I know. But I know that, you know, I'm not only open to those questions, I'm welcoming to them because I recognize, you know, systemically what's going on and why this is so. So, that's one thing that, you know, I even have them email me, you know, if they do a formal email as their first assignment I ask them, hey, is there anything you want to know about me as a professor. I make it optional and I always answer those questions in class fully, completely. You know, it's important.

JENNIFER: When I work with Judith Jackson Fossett, she modeled this for me. She talked to the class about, you know, I'm a Black professor, I have a white TA, like what did you all think when you walked into class? And one of the students in class, a Black woman, said, you know, was like, ugh, she's probably gonna know about hip hop and slavery but that's it. And she, you know, pleasantly surprised me that... and that's what I want like I want to earn authority through the knowledge that I offer and I build that knowledge in conjunction with my students.

JENNIFER: You know, and I always have students presenting. I have students at the second half of the semester opening the class and all of my lectures are built in response to what the students are leading with. I open up our classroom to Black critical voices. I'm only one voice in this network and I talk about my own scholarly lineage, not as a flex but as, you know, that I learned from Black and white scholars, you know, in my quest.

JENNIFER: You know, Katherine Kinney, Fred Moten, Judith Jackson Fossett, Carla Kaplan, Cynthia Young, you know, and I talk about that and what they gave me and I bring all those voices into the classroom and I do a lot with students. You know, I make sure those first few days that I bring student voices into the classroom as well and I fill it with the sounds of all of our voices and it's imperfect and but I'm open to that dialogue every single day of the semester.

DAVID: I think that's so important, that recognition of all of the student voices and that's something that's really important for me too and so it's kind of a mission that I make for myself. You know, by a certain point in a semester, I don't care if it's a 50-person classroom. I need every student to say something before... they need to be involved in the class discussion and if they're not, I do offer them other ways for them to do that, you know, online or having dialogues with me. But I think it's so important it's not their, you know, oral voice at the very least I'm hearing their writer-ly voices.

DAVID: Because they're communicating with me in that way and I think, you know, it seems like we have a lot in common and we've talked about this in terms of our teaching approaches. Uh, but one of the things that I think is the biggest

commonality and I think it's so important because it made all the difference for me as an undergraduate student is just that approachability aspect, you know. The professor for me was a scary figure and depending on the race of the professor, one might be more scary than the other. So, it really, you know, makes it important to break down that barrier.

JENNIFER: I went to office hours in undergrad exactly one time and only because the professor, and it was Katherine Kinney, wrote please see me during office hours on my paper. I make a habit to do that myself every semester and write please come see me. And it wasn't a threat. It was like come see me to talk about... have you thought about grad school, it said. Think about how that small... and I hadn't. I didn't even know what grad school was and so for her to do that, I mean is why I'm here. So, you know...

DAVID: Yeah, you know, small moments can mean so much. I think on that note we probably need to transition into our intermission.

JENNIFER: Yes, it's time to stretch a little bit. So, as you continue thinking about race, sound, gender, authority and all that we've explored thus far, we're gonna have a brief intermission to pause our Black and white voices and introduce some new voices into the conversation. We're gonna show two video clips, the first is really short, so you got to like pay attention right on the jump and the second is about four minutes. If the visuals do not appear completely clear on your end, I'm sorry, we're all familiar with this Zoom issue.

JENNIFER: It's okay, we actually just want you to focus on what you hear. And you should know that our intermission and Act IV are being shared with you as pedagogical tools that you can use in your own classrooms if you like. So, here we're gonna start with a very short clip from Boots Riley's 2018 *Sorry to Bother You*. And it is a whole entire mood this movie. But I'm gonna say really quickly among the many things that this film does is trace the daily life of Cassius Green, a Black man in his 20's in Oakland played by Lakeith Stanfield who's also from Riverside.

DAVID: He's also trying to get a job in this film and get out of his uncle's garage and he gets a job telemarketing at a company that's very symbolically named Regal View and he's had a terrible first few days and here in this clip, his coworker played by Danny Glover encourages him to use his white voice on the phone to become a power caller. The film delves into whiteness as a performance for white people. Not just this kind of imposed sound for people of color but white people perform whiteness too and that's exactly what, you know, we're getting at, an aspirational empowered desirable sound.

JENNIFER: And it is one that is as much of a fantasy as white people's imaginings of-of Black sound. Regal View is selling encyclopedias so much as it's selling all of it comes attached to this white voice. So, here we go.

[CLIP from Boots Riley's 2018 movie *Sorry to Bother You*]

LANGSTON: Hey young blood, let me give you a tip. Use your white voice.

CASSIUS GREEN: But I ain't got no white voice.

LANGSTON: Well, you know what I mean. You have a white voice in there. You can use it. It's like being pulled over by the police.

CASSIUS: Oh no, I just use my regular voice when that happens. I just say, "Back the fuck up off the car and don't nobody get hurt."

LANGSTON: Well, I'm just trying to give you some game. You want to make some money here, then read your script with a white voice.

CASSIUS: Well, people say I talk with a white voice anyway so why ain't it helping me out?

LANGSTON: Well, you don't talk white enough. I'm not talking about Will Smith white. I'm talking about the real deal. Like this, young blood, "Hey Mr. Kramer, this is Langston from RegalView I didn't catch you at the wrong time, did I?"

DAVID: Thank you for that. And now we're going to transition into listening to white sound and the white voice. So, for part two of this audiovisual intermission, we're gonna offer a brief clip of a stage production of *Macbeth* and this clip corresponds with much of the language from Act IV scene three in the drama in case you'd like to take a look at that language. By this point in the play, Macbeth has killed his king, Duncan and has assumed the Scottish throne. And Duncan's two sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, have fled the country for their safety.

DAVID: Upon reuniting in England with Macduff, a thane who also flees Scotland and regretfully leaves his wife and children behind, regretfully because they end up getting murdered. Malcolm tests Macduff's loyalty to their country in order to determine if he can trust their fellow Scottish man. Malcolm does this by suggesting he's full of vices and is himself not fit to be to be king and undo evil Macbeth. As you reflect on the white voice, the performative white male voice that the Boots Riley film satirically highlighted, pay attention to what you notice about the white voice in this scene and the words that voice speaks as you'll likely come to some of the same conclusions that Jennifer and I have about what is going on with racialized sound.

JENNIFER: Mm-hmm.

[CLIP from the Folger Theater's stage recording of *Macbeth*]

MALCOLM
More suffer and more sundry ways than ever,

By him that shall succeed.

MACDUFF
What should he be?

MALCOLM
It is myself I mean: in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted
That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
With my confineless harms.

MACDUFF
Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd
In evils to top Macbeth.

MALCOLM
I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name: but there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,
Your matrons and your maids, could not fill up
The cistern of my lust, and my desire
All continent impediments would o'erbear
That did oppose my will: better Macbeth
Than such an one to reign.

MACDUFF
Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been
The untimely emptying of the happy throne
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours: you may
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hoodwink.
We have willing dames enough: there cannot be
That vulture in you, to devour so many
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclined.

MALCOLM
With this there grows
In my most ill-composed affection such

A stanchless avarice that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands,
Desire his jewels and this other's house:
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more; that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.

MACDUFF
This avarice
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust, and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings: yet do not fear;
Scotland hath foisons to fill up your will.
Of your mere own: all these are portable,
With other graces weigh'd.

MALCOLM
But I have none: the king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them, but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.

MACDUFF
O Scotland, Scotland!

MALCOLM
If such a one be fit to govern, speak:
I am as I have spoken.

MACDUFF
Fit to govern!
No, not to live. O nation miserable,
With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd,
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the truest issue of thy throne
By his own interdiction stands accursed,
And does blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king: the queen that bore thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,

Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself
Have banish'd me from Scotland. O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!

MALCOLM
Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black scruples, reconciled my thoughts…

DAVID: Alright and we'll stop it there with Black scruples with the point of what's going on in this scene. So, for Act IV of our presentation, we turn explicitly to the falling action in *Macbeth* and an excerpt from Act IV scene three. And at Binghamton graduate course, I had my students do a critical race scene isolation that asked them to close read specific all white scenes like the wooing scene in Richard III while using our theoretical race studies tools to examine all that is racialized about the dialogue.

DAVID: And with some modifications, this is an easy exercise that could work well at the undergraduate and even high school levels. This particular *Macbeth* scene, Act IV scene three, which I critique in an essay that will appear in volume 50 of a forthcoming *Shakespeare Studies* forum co-edited by me, Patricia Akhimie, and Arthur Little uses the negative trope of Blackness to make a critical racialized statement about Black Macbeth whose Blackness is metaphorical or emblematic rather than somatic. Black Macbeth appears akin to the barbarian figure Ian Smith writes about in *Race and Rhetoric in the Renaissance*.

DAVID: This figure, he argues, is characterized as threatening and destructive to good social institutions, aggressive and politically dangerous to the survival of the state, corrupt and thus harmful to the assumed purity of the body politic and efficient and different and therefore destined to undermine every cultural tradition. Indeed Macbeth lives up to all this symbolic Blackness he exudes. And in her incredibly generative 1996 *Shakespeare Quarterly* article, "Beauty and the Beast of Whiteness: Teaching Race and Gender", Kim Hall reminds us that the difference between textural Blackness and Black people is fundamentally important.

DAVID: and as a side note for those watching this before July 31st 2020, Hall's article is available for free download until the end of this month, simply Google it and you'll be able to download it. Now, speaking of real Black people, I do want to direct attention to the image on the screen of Ira Aldridge, a stage actor who played Macbeth in the 19th century in Scotland. In addition to discussing race through the language of Macbeth, instructors can add positivity to the play stereotypical Black is bad narrative by discussing the rich professional history of an actual Black actor like Aldridge, a history that is, of course, wedded to race and racism.

DAVID: In addition to *Wayward Macbeth*, the edited collection by Scott Newstok and Ayanna Thompson we mentioned previously, you can learn more about Ira Aldridge in Clifford Mason's more recent Macbeth in Harlem Black theater an American from the beginning to *A Raisin in the Sun.*

JENNIFER: But it isn't just the overt references to Blackness that David just analyzed for us, it's also the soundscape and I will talk briefly here about, you know, testing the theory of how the solid color-line works and how race in this time period particularly ideas European ideas about race particularly in connection to imperialism, the enslavement of Africans, um, and, you know, building the so called new world of the Western Atlantic.

JENNIFER: You know, they're using sound to work out and build race and Shakespeare uses sound in this play to evoke ideas about race. They're not just sound effects as we might think of them now, especially the thunder, the thunder in the way that the thunder in the play is associated with the witches and that space of the wilderness and it's this hierarchal border, a solid color-line being built between white civilization and this dark and tempting wilderness and wildness.

JENNIFER: Thunders out of the control of humans, it's louder than any sound at the time human beings could make. It's the sound of this wild and unruly space of the forest and, you know, hurricane comes into the English lexicon in 1555 in direct reference to the Caribbean. So, thunder is quite literally imaged in this new space and thunder, you'll know also opens the tempest which is more obviously one of Shakespeare's race plays and the fact that *Macbeth* comes first and kind of *Tempest* hearkens back I think is really critical.

JENNIFER: So, the thunder in this play is uncultivated space, right, the space of the not Godly that draws Macbeth. It's race engendered by the witches who are literally beyond order. They need to be called in to order and a lot of some great work by Richard Cullen Rath is an ethnic studies scholar at the university of Hawaii wrote a great book called *How Early America Sounded* and is greatly informing our reading here and essentially it's how England interpreted sound and what kind of gets pulled white England and what gets pulled into and kind of takes route here in the, you know, early America.

JENNIFER: So, bells are actually kind of the sounds of order. And we see bells here throughout the play, alarm bells, bells are associated with Lady Macbeth who is usurping power. She hears the bells as an owl's shriek or a hideous trumpet. So, she's hearing these bells, you know, and she can't kind of assume the power of the bells, she can't even hear them that way. They had real official power. Bells were the sign of a godly community. Set as the opposite of thunder. So opposite that many church bells at this point were still engraved with Latin phrases like *fulgura flango*, "I subdue the thunderbolt."

JENNIFER: So, ringing the bells was thought to stop thunder and the damage that thunder was thought to cause and the bell extends the power of rulers beyond the human voice. You know, and again when Lady Macbeth, she tries to usurp that power, she calls that bell the knell that summons Duncan to heaven or to hell and so that's really critical that in her play between the bell and the thunder in this play and the way that the thunder is also bringing in the other and the temptation, the danger of the other and really comparing it to and kind of hierarchizing it below the sounds of the order of the court and this whole play is about the restoration of the order of the court, right.

DAVID: Yes, and along with that too, you know, the animal sounds are signs of nature reflecting Scotland sociopolitical chaos and disorder and also the racial chaos as well. Macbeth fails to be an ideal white man and that he's not good and also because his manliness is deficient as Lady Macbeth's rhetorical critiques of her husband's manhood confirmed Macbeth cannot white the Black scruples from his damaged soul like Malcolm can and quickly does in Act IV scene three.

DAVID: And the power of whiteness that Macbeth lacks is imbedded in the trumpets and drums initially used around the presence of King Duncan as sound markers of class, royalty, and also race, his kingly whiteness and thus they are linked to the play's racial politics. And the battle sounds towards the plays end are representative of the right between good and evil or more locally between Macduff and Black Macbeth representing a common racialized early modern trope of Blackness, the kinds that Kim Hall calls attention to in things of darkness, Macbeth is depicted as devilish a treasonous enemy who must be purged in Act V in order for Scotland’s restoration to be possible under its new king, Malcolm, whom you saw go through his own quick transformation in the clip we showed for the recorded Folger performance.

JENNIFER: Yeah, it's really amazing that one second, he's like I'm terrible, I'm trash, I'm actually worse than Macbeth to the point of where there was like laughter in that clip, you know, everyone was laughing at his description of himself as voluptuous, right. So, it's race and gender, the intersection there. Yes. But then all of a sudden he's like, you know, we need you and then Malcolm suddenly like kind of inhabits, right, that white voice that we saw in the clip. He ascends to good through this conversion experience and the last out of the play is that flourishing of the trumpet.

Malcolm is heralded as the new and rightful and just king of Scotland. Bruce Smith talks about this as Shakespeare's bid for unison, that's there's some kind of resolving sound at the end. So, you know, this is the... this is an acoustic closure here. It's the sound of that good version of white European masculinity taking control. It opened in thunder but now we have that royal flourish at the end. Especially... yeah, they make it through the wilderness in this play.

DAVID: And they get rid of Blackness which is also one of their goals. So, moving on to our final act, Act V, we concluding by putting more of the uncomfortable on the table, and that is the reality that we are living in unprecedented times right now and that the teaching season for many is fast approaching. We begin our act right now with a quotation from Macbeth when Macbeth becomes pale with fear, he becomes blanched with fear when he sees the ghost of the murdered Banquo, a ghost that none of his present guest or his wife can see.

DAVID: As Jennifer suggested earlier when she acknowledged Du Bois' reference to this scene, race and racism in particular share commonalities with the ghost of Banquo in a figurative sense. They can be uncomfortable to confront but they have to be confronted. As such, we've included at the bottom of this slide and image that contains some helpful popular books on race, racism, and antiracism and so you either jot them down or come back to them. And as we close out this session, we want you to know that incorporating critical race theory into the classroom does not have to be scary or intimidating.

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DAVID: But it does need to happen and it must be done with care. So, now what we'd like to do as we close out before we get to the questions that we received is help you by offering some day one strategies that we use. So, this is yet another tool that you can come back to and reference. But as you prepare for the start of your semester or the start of your school year whether it's elementary, middle school, or high school, these are some things that we hope will help you.

JENNIFER: First, make sure you see critical race studies engagement as an exciting opportunity and not a burden and you communicate that to students. I think one of the things that, you know, the students can tell I'm enthusiastic and passionate about African American literature, about the conversations we're having in class and that actually is often what helps them open up the most is when they see and feel my own investment and-and desire and to have these conversations and to kind of have a space where these conversations can happen.

JENNIFER: So, make sure that that is part of how you approach it. Make sure you define your terms, race, racism, anti-racism, biased, prejudice, like these things you... work them out what they may colloquially what, you know, with Ruth Wilson Gilmore has some great work and writing on defining racism like find those things, bring them into your class, talk about those terms. Know your students. I think the other thing I do to communicate that I come to class, you know, humble and aware of this kind of both lack of authenticity in a racialized world.

JENNIFER: But also this unearned power is by listening and talking about... and presenting myself as a listener and that listening is the most important thing I'm gonna do in that room that semester. You know, make sure you learn students' names and actually one thing I do to get everyone talking that first day is I have students go around the room and pronounce their names and I reply to them and

pronounce it and I say don't stop until I get your name correctly how you want to be called, who you answer to and I go through the process of literally pronouncing their names, getting names right is so important.

JENNIFER: So, I bring that into the classroom as well and they know that I want to work 'til I get it right and I perform that for them, too. It's important, that's who you are. Maintain awareness about how race matters with respect to face to face versus distance learning, digital racism, things like trolling. We've all unfortunately experienced it and it can be very, very traumatic. And also thinking about, you know, there's a lot out there and we can share some resources on how this may change when you're not physically in the room.

JENNIFER: Also avoiding performative helplessness, not going ah, I can't talk about this. White people know a lot about race, right? I talk about that in my book. We've been listening to white people talk our whole lives. We've been watching and hearing white people. That's how we learn that white voice is by watching and learning. And so, so don't, you know, everyone performs race, everyone here is race. From a very different perspective and teasing out those different perspectives is key. You also want to avoid performative wokeness and turning... I tell the students a little about myself but not so it becomes about so... the class becomes about me and my kind of, you know, my experience in centralizing that.

JENNIFER: It's again, to show them where I'm coming from but, you know, like our colleagues expressed so well last week from bell hooks' work, don't expect a cookie for doing this. This is just good teaching, you know, this is just good humanness and performative ally-ship. You know, I always... I say what I mean, I, you know, my word is my bond and that's how I walk it like I talk it and that's really the things that students hear, I think. So, make sure that you're on point and kind of constantly asking yourself questions and reflecting on yourself all the time.

DAVID: Yeah. I think that's so apt because students, they sense everything.

JENNIFER: Oh, yeah.

DAVID: They sense our fear, but they can also sense when we're not sincere, when we're being disingenuous and so we really need to take seriously the roles that we have in their lives. And there's other things that Jennifer mentioned, you know. Can't stress this enough, some of you who follow me on Twitter, you've probably seen me tweeting about this incessantly but we are dealing with a public health disaster at the moment with unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19 and because of that, you know, mixed with the conflation of the protests that are happening, we're seeing increases, as if it wasn't enough already, in instances of racism and anti-Semitism and just general unrest and also sexism and the list goes on.

DAVID: And so between now and whenever it is that you're going to start teaching, anticipate and just sit down and think about what this all is going to mean for you in terms of what your students, in addition to you, are gonna be dealing with and what you're going to bring and what they are going to bring in the classroom and how can you make that work for you rather than you having to work against it because it is this kind of oppositional force. That's something I really try to do in my teaching is make the world around me work for me because it's there and students are only spending 85 minutes in my classroom.

DAVID: So, they're going back out into that world that is doing far more work than I'm doing for them in 85 minutes. I also wanna stress, Jennifer and I, practicing patience and humility with yourself and your students, you know, people are people and especially right now because times are so trying, people may get sick, people may not understand certain concepts, people may have general fears with respect to discussing race in the classroom. I think it's also important to consider that as much as students might have fears and typically I find that with my white students, students also have trauma.

DAVID: And even I as a Black male professor living in this moment have trauma that I have to manage and deal with and so as much as you can put yourself in your students' shoes and be sensitive to those things, that can really go a long way, particularly from day one. If you make your students aware that this is how you operate, and this is who you are, and this is how you're presenting your pedagogy and also how you're defining your professional relationship with them.

DAVID: Now, since we had the previous quotation up from *Macbeth* blanched with fear, we're switching over now to *The Tempest* here and thinking about Caliban's language of "be not afeared." You know, this work, as we keep reiterating, it's hard, it's not something that can be done overnight and even while even if you find our critical recession useful or any of the others that you're going to watch, you're not necessarily gonna get it just by having this moment and so in addition to practicing patience and humility with yourself, recognize that as you do this work, particularly if you're not accustomed to doing this work.

DAVID: And even if you are, mistakes will and can happen and an important thing to do is acknowledge those mistakes when they happen, you know, don't get flustered. And use them as teaching moments and teaching opportunities, that's what I try to do in my classroom is make everything, even the stuff that, you know, comes down to maybe dealing with classroom management issues. Try to turn it into a teaching opportunity and if there's a way for me to connect it to literature, I do that as well.

DAVID: Second to last, you know, improvisation, Jennifer and I talk about performativity for both of us. You know, teaching when we're in our classrooms, it's pretty performative. I think by nature, I would consider myself somewhat of an introvert and so when I get in the classroom, I come alive and that excitement that I have about this work, I really try to exude that for my students but sometimes it's

hard, you know. Again, we've got the pandemic that we're dealing with right now. At times we've had to deal with student deaths in our department.

DAVID: And two, you know, within a very short period of time and that really changed the ethos of the campus and so there was some course correcting that I needed to do because I couldn't work with my students in the way that I was before their morning set in. There was also an instance near our campus in this town of Binghamton, you know, where someone had painted swastikas on the streets and that. We have a significant Jewish student population at Binghamton... So, I recognized that.

DAVID: And I came to class not prepared that day to talk about the *Merchant of Venice* or use Shylock's language as beautiful speech that is an empowering speech to have my class discussion but I felt like I at least needed to start there even though that wasn't on my agenda. So, know that it's okay to improvise and that you can course correct, too. If the term doesn't seem to be going so well with the race work that you've chosen to put together with your Shakespeare plays or, you know, you can course correct. You can change course and try something different and I think in that sense too, taking advantage of different networks and getting advice from people is also important.

DAVID: And the last thing that Jennifer and I wanna stress, which is really the whole point of these first two instances in the Critical Race Conversation series that the Folger has is stay student centered with your pedagogy, you know, which can and should have centered you with the personal critical and experiential. And on that note, we are going to turn quickly to questions that we've received and we'll try to get through as many of them as we can before we turn it over to Owen.

JENNIFER: There we go. Okay, which one do you want to talk about first?

DAVID: I'll take the first one. So, we're received a question...

JENNIFER: by the way.

DAVID: Sorry?

JENNIFER: Oh, I was just thanking everyone for the questions.

DAVID: Oh, yes, definitely, thank you. These questions are great. Do you think that the study of the sonic color-line in Shakespeare has anything to say to the work of Ian Smith on Barbara's "African Tongues," Patricia Parker on English dialects in the history plays or even the work of Bruce Smith on sound in the theater and so to that I'll just say, you know, we certainly do, we leaned on or referenced Ian Smith earlier in this talk and also Bruce Smith engaged with his work.

DAVID: So, read all of this work and you should read other work as well and make that work together in the classroom. And, you know, since Ian Smith's book was mentioned, which also, another one that you should think about having, let me just take this opportunity to say that the field and even responses to the complexity of this field have yet to really fully appreciate the complexity of race scholars work, which often gets reduced to race.

DAVID: Even though important interventions that they make rely on intersections with other matters like rhetoric, for instance in Ian's case or religion and romance in the case of Dennis Britton in his book *Becoming Christian: Race, Reformation, and Early Modern English Romance* and so it's important that those other aspects of these books be valued. So, I just wanted to add that to my response to that question.

JENNIFER: Okay, I'm gonna build on that and kind of combine some of the sound questions into one. We got three questions about sound, one about the question of hearing as racialized and how that might help us speak back to critics of by POC performers of Shakespeare. We got a question about the special insights that sound and performance provides us versus the visual or written representations and then we got a question about, again, about racialized sound and it says that, you know, one of the things that was striking in the introduction to my book is deconstructing the scream as a universal sound.

JENNIFER: and I actually look at and think about the ways that Black women's and white women's screams and how they're heard and processed in the media and politically etc. that there is no universal reactions to these gendered and race screams. And this person asked about kind of... he says there's a well-known essay about *Hamlet* that focuses on the pure utterance beyond language at his death. "Oh, oh, oh," for instance. How do we get from the early playtext to these interpretive range of possibilities to vocalizations and plays? Are there other examples we could-we could look to?

JENNIFER: So, three really good questions and for hearing as racialized and some great work on thinking about Shakespearean accents and the, you know, in Ocampo-Guzman's work that was in the *Colorblind Shakespeare* volume which is also great, he talks a lot about this and his own experience. He's Latin American and this great essay about speaking Shakespeare with an accent and that for him, you know, embodying Shakespeare and Shakespeare as a creative force means that we all approach him and kind of use him in a way that isn't our most, you know, confident self.

JENNIFER: And however that sounds, that it isn't about this, you know, kind of false sense of authenticity in the work. And so, I really recommend that his reading of that and his questioning of that accent. In terms of other works, I am sure... and we tried to demonstrate how this sonic analysis might work, especially in terms of, again, soundscape and the work that that does, the world making. In video games, they call that wording how these sounds create the world, who's listening to them?

JENNIFER: Does class make a difference does, you know, even right now, as we pointed out, we're not all hearing the same things and the more that you can, you know, ask, what are some other interpretations to this, how my other characters in the play have heard this depending on their social position. That might be a way to play with that.

DAVID: Yeah and I guess I'll take the last two questions, I'll try to truncate my responses to them. So, someone asked another good question, you know, do boys identify education as one of the qualified successes of the freed man's bureau in the reconstruction period? Can you discuss the pros and cons of using Shakespeare as a way to extend this project and potentially bridge the high school college divide? And so Du Bois deploys Shakespeare as cultural capital tool which I mentioned and Jennifer has mentioned as well, but, for me, he also weaponizes Shakespeare in his work for his majority white audience.

DAVID: but really he's weaponizing that the weapon that he's using for himself against whiteness is Shakespeare. So, in the line, I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not, Du Bois have the agency, it's not Shakespeare sitting with him. He is sitting with Shakespeare. And so I take from his work that understanding that he has power and that I can also be empowered by reading his work moreover by funding public education, you know, the Freedman's bureau sought to educate and increase literacy through writing and reading. And so Du Bois' attention to Shakespeare reinforces the value of that education that is not without challenges, of course, for the Black reader or the Black audience, you know.

DAVID: We think of what it means for a student to sit through *Othello* and just hear the disparaging language and the, you know, the thick lips and all of that stuff. It's harmful. It is harmful but Du Bois, I think, gets us to think differently about that because, you know, he notes that the south considered an educated negro to be a dangerous negro and that point for me is really profound.

JENNIFER: and it actually is something that tells me, I need to try to acquire as much education as I can and that includes Shakespeare so that I can be as dangerous as I can be, metaphorically speaking, of course. And this is what I want for all students regardless of their education levels. I want them to feel that empowerment and the last question here before I turn it over to Owen, how would you apply this type of sonic analysis to some of Shakespeare's other works? In other genres, his lyric, in amateuric verse, his long narrative poetry, his sonnets. Felt this is a really fabulous question and the answer is bigger than Shakespeare.

JENNIFER: And so I'm going to come at this broadly. First, let me recommend that folks read chapter two in Kim Hall's *Things of Darkness*, to get a sense of how she breaks down the poetics of color with respect to the Renaissance lyric and the language of darkness and fairness. I think that will help you in reading that. You can relate it to then Jennifer's solid color-line theory and really think about how

racialized sound is working outside of the dramatic genre. And even when they engage Blackness, these non-dramatic works center on whiteness.

DAVID: So, the sonic color-line becomes useful then when reflecting on the voice of the white male speaker or especially when the poem might include the woman's voice as Spenser does in *Amoretti*. In such moments, we are prompted to think specifically about the white man and the white woman and then we can move out from there to think about the how the power of whiteness is functioning and on that note, I think we got through all of the questions. So, we will turn it over to Owen.

OWEN: Well, thank you both so much. That was an amazing conversation and presentation. It's gonna give lots of food for thought to teachers at all levels in terms of how they might cultivate an anti-racist and inclusive classroom and what pedagogies they might employ. We all, of course, would also like to send a special thanks to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for support of this series and to our audience and the very lively Twitter feed that they contributed during this. We hope that many of you will be able to join us in September. We expect to resume with the session on race and empire that Dr. Jessica Marie Johnson of Johns Hopkins has organized.

OWEN: The team of scholars that she has assembled has expertise on the Americas, Europe, and the African continent and includes Robin Mitchell at Cal State Channel Islands, and Cécile Fromont of Yale University. Further details and the full site of critical race conversations will appear on the Folger Institute's webpage soon. We at the Folger Shakespeare Library thank you for your continuing support of our work and so many audiences from K-12 educators and their students who are served by the Folger education division to fellowships and advanced programming for graduate students and faculty run by the Folger Institute to the award winning productions of the Folger Theater.

OWEN: If you're in a position to contribute, we will be grateful. Our institution was founded on philanthropy and your philanthropy will help us continue to support groundbreaking research and to share it with wider and more inclusive audiences just as we did today. Now, as their final thought, Jennifer and David will sound off and sign off with a few lines from Keith Hamilton Cobb's groundbreaking play, *American Moor*, which uses Shakespeare's character Othello to explore the experience, frustration, and perspective of Black men, perhaps as a compliment to or substitute for *Othello*.

OWEN: David highly recommends instructors consider teaching this play which contains an introduction by Professor Kim F. Hall. And now I turn things back over to Jennifer and David who will play the roles of the white director and the Black male actor respectively from *American Moor*:

JENNIFER: Something else.

DAVID: Leap and the net will appear.

JENNIFER: Pardon me?

DAVID: Yeah, Jennifer, before I jump into this speech again, may I... It is my sense that Othello has been this essential commodity to the Venetians for some time. And well, frankly, he is the only large Black entity in the room. He is aware that he comes at a premium to these men of the senate and that he is unique, which is to say I suspect that if he whispered his speech, the room would listen.

DAVID: And ending on that note, viewers, Jennifer and I thank you so much, tremendously really, for watching this Critical Race Conversation and lending us your ears. We hope that you enjoyed the show.

JENNIFER: Mm-hmm.