

Performing Race: Interrogating Gareth Hinds’s Graphic Novel Adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*

J. Katharine Burton, University of South Florida

ABSTRACT ♦ BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT ♦ SHAKESPEARE’S *ROMEO AND JULIET* AND RACE ♦
GRAPHIC NOVELS AND PERFORMANCE MEDIA ♦ SEMIOTICS OF RACE AND PERFORMANCE ♦
RACE AND COLORISM IN HINDS’S *ROMEO AND JULIET* ♦
TEACHING SHAKESPEARE TO A YOUNG ADULT AUDIENCE ♦ CONCLUSION ♦ REFERENCES

ABSTRACT

Gareth Hinds’s graphic novel adaptation of Shakespeare’s *The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* assigns the two rival families to different races: South Asian (the Capulets) and Black (the Montagues). Published in 2013 by Candlewick Press, Hinds’s adaptation received favorable reviews from *Kirkus Reviews*, the *Horn Book* (Long), and the *Wall Street Journal* (Gurdon), generally centered on the colorful graphics, the skillful editing of Shakespeare’s text, and its resemblance to stage productions. Although a few reviewers note the racial/ethnic characteristics of the families, none focus on what this depiction might contribute to the story other than giving an “added poignancy to the enmity between the families” (Gurdon 2013). The only acknowledgment that Hinds’s interpretation may create problems for student readers is a brief mention in an article by Turchi and Christenson explicitly addressing the issue of racism in this and other related productions. They note that “ignoring racially and ethnically marked differences erases race but not racism” (2018, 112). In today’s environment, with the recent #BlackLivesMatter social protests and ongoing contentious argument of whether our nation’s schools should teach critical race theory, the lack of debate about Hinds’s racialization of Shakespeare’s characters is surprising. The concerns surrounding discussions of race, particularly in classroom settings, draw new attention to the fact that adapters should make thoughtful, conscious choices in the characterization of different racial/ethnic groups. If they do not, they risk perpetuating “colorblindness,” defined by Lipsitz as “pretend[ing] that racial recognition rather than racist rule is the problem to be solved . . . reinforc[ing] whiteness as the unmarked norm against which difference is measured” (2019, 24).



As Ayanna Thompson describes it, “race . . . has multiple, and at times contradictory, uses in contemporary American discourse . . . At its most basic sense . . . it is a categorization of humans into groups based on heritable traits . . . but it is also used to signify a set of cultural practices . . . as well as to denote only nonwhite people” (2011, 4). All, several, or only one of these definitions may be at play either in a Shakespeare play or an adaptation where characters from different racial/ethnic backgrounds interact. I argue that by racializing the Montagues and the Capulets and their rivalry, Hinds introduces racism and colorism into the story, highlighting the complicated ways in which race frames the conflicts, thereby impacting how readers interpret those conflicts. After a background and context discussion, I interrogate Hinds’s creative choices in adapting Shakespeare’s text to a graphic novel format. In doing so, I consider how Shakespeare’s text has been modified to incorporate race in stage, film, and graphic novels, and the relationship between graphic novels and performance media. I then contemplate and apply an understanding of the semiotics of race and performance to this novel before offering close readings of selected graphical depictions and discussing the interaction between Hinds’s graphics and text to illustrate how his racialization impacts readers’ perceptions. Before concluding my essay, I offer suggestions for classroom discussions.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Hinds’s choice of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* to adapt to a graphic novel format is not unique or unusual. Shakespeare’s plays are a favored source for many forms of adaptation, including film, stage, screen, and, most recently, comics/graphic novels. *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *Romeo and Juliet* are the most popular plays to be adapted. The significant number of Shakespeare graphic novel adaptations published in the first two decades of the twenty-first century reflects this popularity, with over twenty English-language versions of *Romeo and Juliet* alone. Hinds’s adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is one of four Shakespeare adaptations by this American artist, who also created adaptations of several classical texts, including *Beowulf*, *The Illiad*, and *The Odyssey*, and stories from Edgar Allan Poe. Although his text is primarily educational and intended for a young adult audience, it has commercial appeal. In *Romeo & Juliet*, Hinds provides notes to the reader immediately following the title page and an author’s note at the back of the book explaining some of his sources for the text and his thought processes concerning this particular adaptation (second opening to the left and 130–32). Outside of the graphic novel, his extensive online presence includes a blog with notes captured during the process of creation as well YouTube videos discussing his creative strategies in general (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EnsGQ-4noME>) and specifically, *Romeo & Juliet* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3BRRp4zJtc>).¹ The availability of this material provides significant insight into Hinds’s thinking concerning the creation of this adaptation.

1 Hinds’s website at <https://garethhinds.com/> lists his books. His blog—*Hindsight: sketches and musings of Gareth Hinds*—found at <http://garethhinds.com/blog/?cat=104>, contains a category for *Romeo and Juliet* with twelve entries, not all of which are for this text. He provides examples of the development of the art for the text, some of the influences on his thinking as he developed the artwork, and information on

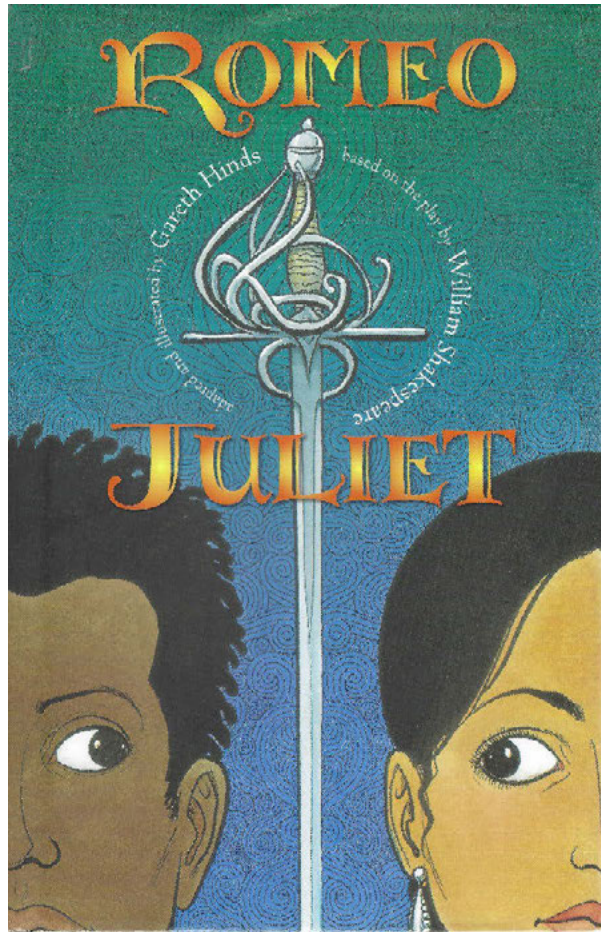


Figure 1: *Romeo and Juliet* cover illustration. Image from *Romeo and Juliet*, Candlewick Press, 2013, Copyright ©2013 by Gareth Hinds, used with permission from the publisher.

Despite retaining the historical setting in Verona, Italy, and using Elizabethan-era costuming, Hinds’s characterization of the families as Blacks (Montagues) and South Asians (Capulets) reflects a contemporary US social context, suggesting a possible racial motive for the rivalry lacking in Shakespeare’s original. Hinds states in his dedication, “[I] chose to cast my retelling of *Romeo & Juliet* with multiracial characters in order to reflect how universal this story is. It is not a statement about racism or racial conflict” (2013, i). Adapters frequently use claims of universality, referring to themes, plots, emotions, and characterization, to tap into the cultural credentials assigned to Shakespeare, as well as by theater reviewers to “assess productions based on their ability to communicate Shakespeare’s universal themes” (Thompson 2006, 21). Contrary to Hinds’s disclaimer, however, by treating nonwhiteness as a loose symbol of “diversity” or “universality” while rejecting direct attention to race and racism, his statement is, by definition, “colorblind.” Blacks and South Asians experience racial discrimination in different ways—blacks through slavery and displacement from Africa and South Asians

reviews and book launches for this text. It shows that he at one time considered setting the story during the Harlem Renaissance, which may have made more sense for one of the families, but not the South Asian family.

through colonialization and diaspora as part of the British empire. Both groups suffer under White racial dominance focusing on skin color, but differently—dark brown to black for Black and various shades of brown for South Asians, with lighter skin tones in both groups seen as more desirable—an example of colorism. Hinds displays this color distinction on the cover of his graphic novel. In figure 1, Romeo and Juliet appear in partial profiles—Romeo on the left as Black and Juliet on the right as South Asian, separated by an ornate sword symbolizing the racial divide between the two families.

SHAKESPEARE'S *ROMEO AND JULIET* AND RACE

Shakespeare's original play text offers no justification for the family rivalry Romeo and Juliet must overcome other than an ambiguous statement about an "ancient grudge" and a note that the Montagues and Capulets are "both alike in dignity" (*Romeo and Juliet*, "Prologue," lines 3, 1). The reasons for the rivalry are left open to speculation, with their absence providing a popular element that adaptations leverage, especially, but not exclusively, stage and film productions. Introducing a variety of motivations into the family rivalry, these productions set the play in different times and places, incorporate national, political, and racial rivalries, and use various casting options to represent characters in these relationships, exposing diverse racial discourses (MacDonald 2020, 53). Stage production directors are the most likely to introduce these motivations. For example, Nicola Hyland discusses a 2009 performance at Shakespeare's Globe in London where actors from different races, a Black Romeo and White Juliet, play the two lead characters. Hyland notes the focus on the "colorblind approach" and how the production instead presented "multiple complex questions concerning race, place, and representation" (2015, 2). Hyland points out that, regardless of the director's intent in assuming the audience would not notice the difference, the "cultural identity of an actor cannot be made invisible" and that the attempt to appear integrated without addressing issues of racial politics impacts how a performance is perceived (1). As Joyce MacDonald stresses more specifically concerning productions of *Romeo and Juliet*:

Modern theatrical practice has transposed *Othello's* explicit racial consciousness onto many productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, as directors have seized on interracial or cross-ethnic casting to visualize the arbitrary separation between Montagues and Capulets. Directors also use the audiences' knowledge of racial prejudice to clarify what the play's naturalizations of social compulsion and sexual violence can obscure (2020, 53).

The fact that many modern theatrical productions "transpose" the explicit racial themes of *Othello* onto *Romeo and Juliet* highlights the audience's challenge in understanding the motives behind the family rivalry that the injection of racial tensions provides. Depending on the choice or mix of race/ethnic backgrounds, directors/

producers deliberately encourage specific resonances and interpretations on the part of their intended audience.²

Among the many *Romeo and Juliet* film adaptations, two stand out for depicting the family rivalry as one of racial discord. In both films, the directors made conscious choices incorporating issues of race of specific eras—the 1950s for one and the 1980s/90s for the second—that still resonate with today’s audiences. The first example, *West Side Story*, released in 1961, began as a stage production adapted for film and transports the story to 1950s New York with the rival families portrayed as gangs of White Jets and Puerto Rican Sharks. This film did not initially generate much scholarly discourse about its use of race because of the time period of its release, but the recent Broadway revivals and new film adaptation released in 2021 have rekindled interest in the depictions of rival Latinos and Whites of the period and modern productions.

The second film, *Mississippi Masala*, released in 1992 and set in the more recent past of modern-day Mississippi, portrays a relationship between a Black man and a South Asian Indian woman, exposing a different set of racial interactions, in this case between a Black family and a South Asian one. This film generated substantial scholarly discussion concerning the racial issues presented in the film, particularly those between Blacks and South Asians, both of which are “differentially racialized and subject to different forms of racism” due to their different histories, experiences, and current realities in the United States (Barker 2012, 254). The timing of the release of the film came at a critical time in terms of both significant South Asian immigration beginning in the 1960s and growing interest in and studies of South Asians in academia in the decade before the movie’s release.

Graphic novel adaptations, another visual media form used to adapt Shakespeare’s plays by incorporating race, are sophisticated interpretations of texts, integrating graphics and text and providing opportunities for adapters to reinterpret classic texts.³ Will Eisner, one of the founding fathers of comics/graphic novels scholarship and comics theory, describes how “the format of comics presents a montage of both word and image, and the reader is thus required to exercise both visual and interpretive skills . . . the reading of a graphic novel is an act of both aesthetic perception and intellectual pursuit” (2008, 2). Derek Parker Royal explains that this type of reading poses its own set of issues when “the figures that make up the comics rub up against reality in ways that words cannot, revealing the various assumptions, predispositions, and prejudices that author-illustrators may hold” (2001, 7). He further asserts that comics and graphic art present a potential danger by using negative stereotypes and caricatures, including racialized ones, possibly stripping characters of unique

2 *Romeo and Juliet*, MIT Global Shakespeares, Video and Performance Archive, The MIT Global Shakespeare Project archive contains information on both stage productions and feature films of Shakespeare productions. As of May 2022, this archive contains information on forty-two worldwide stage and film productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, more than any other single play in the archive, many of which employ racial or ethnic motivation for the family rivalry and interracial or cross-ethnic casting. <https://globalshakespeares.mit.edu/play/romeo-and-juliet/>.

3 *Graphic novels* are defined as novel-length complete stories told in the comics form using frames and panels. Comic books are generally shorter (16–32 pages) issued in series over a period of time. Scholars use the terms graphic novel and comics somewhat interchangeably but generally refer to scholars of this form as “comics scholars.” *Manga* is a specific style of graphic novel (both text and style of art) developed in Japan and is now used by artists and publishers in the West.

identities and dehumanizing them by reductive iconography (2007, 8). Despite these challenges and cautions about interpreting integrated text and graphics, graphic novels are a popular literary form with young adults and others because of their innovative and often colorful graphics and their provision of another vehicle for incorporating race into an adaptation of Shakespeare's plays. Although Hinds's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is the only version in my informal survey of over twenty *Romeo and Juliet* graphic novel adaptations specifically introducing racialized characters into the family rivalry, other versions raise other social and political issues.⁴ However, graphic novel adaptations of other Shakespeare plays where race is already part of the story, such as *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Tempest*, have been produced, including Gareth Hinds's adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*. The treatment of the family rivalry in *Romeo and Juliet* as one of racial discord in both stage and film productions provides some approaches for exploring Hinds's directorial choices in the graphic novel due to the similarities between the two media types I discuss in the following paragraphs.

GRAPHIC NOVELS AND PERFORMANCE MEDIA

Film and comics/graphic novels share several features that comics scholars regularly use to describe comics/graphic novels. These similarities enable comparisons between films and comics/graphic novels, especially when using the same source material. For example, Thierry Groensteen compares comics theory with film theory in his foundational monograph, *The System of Comics*. He describes both comics and films as narrative species within a narrative genre. He notes, "in an image-based story, as in film or comics, each element, whether it is visual, linguistic or aural, participates fully in the narration" (2007, 11). Another influential comics scholar, Scott McCloud, defines comics as "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" (1993, 9). McCloud notes that the only difference between comics and film is that "each successive frame of a movie is projected on exactly the same space—the screen—while each frame of comics must occupy a different space" (1993, 7). This difference allows comics/graphic novels to be read at the reader's chosen pace rather than hurried along at a pace dictated by a film director.

Scholars examining the graphic novel form and Shakespeare adaptations are concerned with the graphic novel's relationship to performance and literacy. Shannon Mortimer-Smith states that

reading Shakespeare through graphic novels and manga . . . allows students the opportunity to engage in a type of reading that more closely emulates performance itself. Through the synergy of the written word (linguistics) and pictorial imagery (visual literacy), readers interpret these texts not only through

⁴ Of the three manga versions I have identified, two use traditional settings and characterization, but the third, *Manga Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*, published in 2007, adapted by Richard Appignanesi and illustrated by Sonia Leong, sets the action in present-day Tokyo with the families as rival Yakuza (Japanese organized crime syndicates). A different graphic novel version, *Romeo and Juliet: The War*, published in 2011, adapted by Max Work and illustrated by Studio Hive, has a futuristic sci-fi setting with the two rival families as either cyborgs with manufactured DNA or as genetically enhanced humans.

written cues, but also through body language, facial expression, movement, spatial placement, timing, costuming, and artistic design (2012, 84).

She emphasizes the similarity in reading strategies by comparing performance to the types of visual and verbal cues used to read graphic novels and manga. The combination of visual and verbal resembles performance media (film, stage, and screen) and allows the application of many of the same analytical processes used for performance. Katherine Schaeffer and Richard Burt take the comparison further, stating that “Shakespeare’s plays . . . are uniquely suited to comic adaptations, as comics, graphic novels and manga tend to have many of the same components as do dramas, including: spoken dialogue, visible settings and props, visually foregrounded characters and action” (2013, 2).

Directors and comics/graphic novel adapters choose where, how, and when to set the action of the narrative and where and how to set the specific scenes or frames of action sequences. They also decide on costumes and how to interpret individual characters, including which characters to emphasize or deemphasize. Additionally, the arrangement of background, setting, and character placement in comics/graphic novel frames is analogous to camera angles of film and screen, for example, close-up shots, panoramic views, and bird’s eye views. Each choice impacts how the audience or reader understands the action presented. These similarities allow for a comparable critique of racial characterization and casting choices between performance media and graphic novels that affect what the viewers/readers see and how the viewers/readers interpret the characters and actions of the story. In Hinds’s adaptation, his choices of staging in terms of historical Verona, Italy, period costuming (with some modification), racialization of the characters in the Montague and Capulet families, and setting and camera angles within each frame are similar types of decisions to those made by directors of film/stage/screen performances. As a result, scholars can use approaches such as semiotics in performance media to analyze what characters might represent to readers/audiences in graphic novels.

SEMIOTICS OF RACE AND PERFORMANCE

Regardless of Hinds’s motivation or intentions in assigning the Montagues and Capulets to racial categories, readers’ interpretations can give racial explanations to the fighting between the rival families, especially when they see how they are coded as Black or South Asian and how they relate to other characters with different racial characteristics. Thompson defines semiotics of race in performance as “when we see race; how we see race; how we make sense of what race means within a specific production,” as well as “if and how an actor’s race is endowed with any meaning within a performance—whether realistic, symbolic, or otherwise” (2006, 77). She also addresses the issue of reception, saying that “while many authors, directors, activists, etc., appropriate Shakespeare for a specific socio-political purpose (whether progressive or conservative), the reception of that appropriation is impossible to control” (2006, 15). Lisa Anderson notes that the stage is “a semiotic system” and that everything “is coded to direct an audience toward a particular understanding” as well as that “race is a significant element of the sign system; it has social, political, and economic meaning” (2006, 92). As

with stage, film, and screen, graphic novels are a semiotic system. In Hinds's adaptation, readers/viewers could interpret the two families as socially separated because of their race and politically divided with their different alignments with Prince Escalus. The Prince, the novel's character with the lightest skin, most likely white, is the highest-ranking individual in Verona with the power of life or death. The Prince uses this authority to quell the first fight, punish Romeo after the second fight leading to his banishment, and assign blame for the fighting and deaths to the family patriarchs.

Another perspective regarding race and performance concerns recent studies of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Shakespeare film and stage adaptations that critique the practices of directors and others involved in the selection processes of actors of color. These nontraditional casting model practices offer different approaches to and understandings of the semiotics of race in performance.⁵ Directors of modern Shakespeare productions need to consider how modern audiences interpret these characters and how audiences interpret other characters represented by actors of color in productions where the original intention was not characters of similar racial or ethnic backgrounds. When actors of color are employed, the directors and producers of these works must be aware of how audiences may interpret or misinterpret this employment and provide some indications of the reasons for their decisions to help guide such interpretations. They need to know that "even when the director is 'blind' to 'colour', the audience often will not be" (Daileader 2000, 183). In Hinds's graphic novel, his assignment of racial categories to the rival families is a "casting choice" that impacts how the reader/viewer interprets his adaptation.

While semiotics of race in performance looks at race in such performances as Hinds's graphic novel, critical race theory looks at the broader role of race in social relationships, specifically how readers/viewers apply what they see in the graphic novel to their everyday lives. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic discuss how race and races are socially constructed, invented, manipulated, or retired when convenient. Graphic novels and other visual media are implicated in the visual construction of race—what we see and how we interpret "race" as a social construction. Terry Kawashima describes the visual reading process in graphic novels, as one that "operates at a level below everyday awareness and is thus naturalized: it is central to the ways in which 'race' itself is conceptualized, perpetuated, and constantly reconfigured" (2002, 162). She further states that this reading process generates "race" by highlighting certain features and suppressing or ignoring others to "ensure a coherent result" that identifies and defines visual racial characteristics assumed to belong to different groups (2002, 164). These characteristics include but are not limited to skin color, hair texture, eye shapes, and other facial features.

5 Thompson describes four types of nontraditional casting: colorblind, societal, conceptual, and crosscultural. Each of these models provides "radically different approaches to and understandings of the semiotics of race in performance" (2011, 80). Each of these casting types examines the director's intent, the impact of the decision on the meaning carried by the performance, and the different potential audience receptions, and assumes that the director's decisions are explicit and conscious rather than accidental or without conscious thought.

These distinctions among these variously constructed groups also contribute to “differential racialization” that Delgado and Stefancic note includes “the ways the dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times” (2012, 8). Acknowledging “race” as a social construction and how we interpret what we see on both page and screen requires an understanding and appreciation not only for current instantiations of race and races—a difficult enough challenge—but also a historical understanding of how various groups have participated in the construction of society at different times and geographical locations. Differential racialization applies to the different histories, experiences, and current realities of South Asians and Blacks employed in this text. Colorism, the differential treatment of individuals within or among groups due to gradations in skin color, is related to racism and differential racialization but carries different social and political consequences. As Vinay Harpalani states, “color has become a metaphor for race, but race is a social and political status that involves many dimensions beyond color” (2015, 609, 612). These concepts are particularly relevant in visual and performance media and graphic novels, where readers must interpret a character’s appearance and skin color and what that means in the context of both a specific performance and in society as a whole.

RACE AND COLORISM IN HINDS’S *ROMEO AND JULIET*

From the cover on, as noted in figure 1, race is evident throughout the graphic novel. In this section, I focus on the cast of characters, Friar Laurence, the groups of youths, and the romantic pair of Romeo and Juliet. Hinds interprets and illustrates the similarities and differences between the rival families that Shakespeare’s play describes as “both alike in dignity” (*Romeo and Juliet*, “Prologue,” line 1). He gives the families different racial characteristics, ethnic markers, and social and political circles to justify a rivalry that stems from various potential sources—social, political, economic, or racial. His choices regarding race assignment invite readers to interject their own experiences and interpretation of racial discord regarding these two groups.

Hinds’s Dramatis Personae

The two families, along with other characters, are first encountered by the reader in the *Dramatis Personae* shown here in figure 2 as it appears at the beginning of the graphic novel. This depiction of all the significant characters in the graphic novel presents a clear visual statement about the racial characteristics, relationships, and social and familial hierarchy among all the characters. Readers first encounter the Prince, with Count Paris and Mercutio just below him, followed by the two family groupings, with Capulets on the left and Montagues on the right. At the top of the page, Prince Escalus, a light-skinned male, faces out toward the reader from the torso up with his arms crossed, radiating power, authority, and confidence—he is clearly in charge. The ermine-trimmed purple coat worn over a gold-colored doublet or jacket suggests that he is also the wealthiest member of Verona society. His light skin, combined with his wealth and social status, implies a hierarchy of colorism and that lighter is higher, more significant, or important in Veronese society.

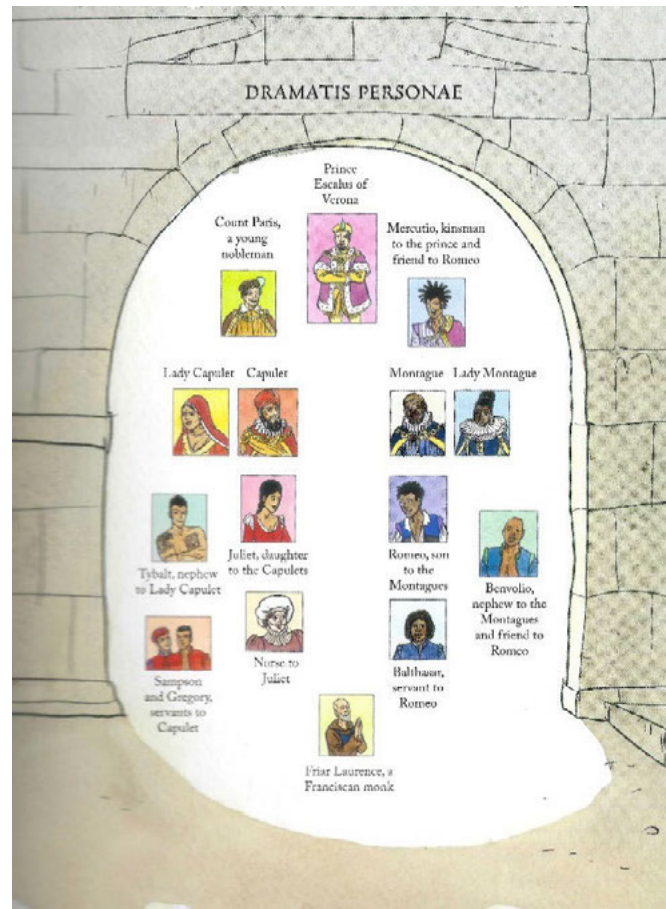


Figure 2: *Dramatis Personae*, unnumbered page, second opening on the right. Image from *Romeo and Juliet*, Candlewick Press, 2013, Copyright ©2013 by Gareth Hinds, used with permission from the publisher.

Just below the Prince on the *Dramatis Personae* are Count Paris, a young nobleman, and Mercutio, the Prince’s cousin. On the left is Count Paris, a light-skinned male like the Prince, who wears a short purple cape, a hat, gold/yellow-colored doublet and breeches, and short dark brown hair. On the right is Mercutio, a darker-skinned male with distinctive short, wiry hair, who wears clothing like the Count’s, but generally bluish-purple. The two men relate in different ways to the Prince—Paris as a young nobleman and Mercutio as a kinsman – whose wearing of purple indicates that noble connection and their social position in Veronese society, just below the Prince but above the rival families. They could be allies or rivals but never directly interact with each other. However, their skin colors and hairstyles distinguish them from each other and indicate different alignments with the families (Paris with the Capulets and Mercutio with the Montagues) or potentially divided loyalties between the families and the Prince. Count Paris is the Capulet patriarch’s choice of marriage partner for his daughter, Juliet, providing an example of colorism and classism. Not only a member of a higher social and economic class than the merchants, but he is also lighter-skinned than Juliet, a distinction seen most clearly when in frames with Juliet’s father and mother in act 3, scene 4 (Hinds 2013, 90). Had Juliet married Count Paris, any children they had might be lighter-skinned.

Below the Count and Mercutio on the left and the right are the Capulets and the Montagues, with their heads turned toward each other. The family leaders (Capulet and Lady Capulet, Montague and Lady Montague) are in a single row, with the next generation in the next row of each column. Having noticeably darker skin than the Prince and Count Paris, the Capulets wear distinctive Indian Sikh clothing such as a turban for the patriarch and a sari-style dress with a headscarf for Lady Capulet, primarily in red and gold—powerful colors in modern Hindu culture. The hair and clothing styles, head coverings, and colors indicate not only the Capulets’ racial/ethnic grouping as South Asian but also their wealthy merchant economic and social class. The parents wear traditional head coverings while the younger members wear none, clearly distinguishing between the older and younger family members. In another contrast between young and old, Tybalt, Juliet’s cousin, appears without a shirt and arms crossed, exposing his tattoos that indicate his arrogance and rebelliousness in proudly displaying tattoos resembling modern gang members. The Capulets’ darker skin color than the Prince and position on the *Dramatis Personae* indicate their subordinate social and economic position to the Prince.

Opposite the Capulets in the *Dramatis Personae*, Romeo’s family, the Montagues, are much darker skinned than either the Prince or the Capulets but like Mercutio. They wear primarily richly ornamented and accented indigo blue classical Elizabethan-style costumes. The bearded and bald Montague patriarch does not wear any headgear, nor does Lady Montague—instead, her hair is piled high on her head, emphasizing its tight coils and showing off large gold hoop earrings. The clothing styles and colors all indicate a wealthy, high-status merchant-class Elizabethan-era family, not only in ornamentation but also in the choice of a rare and expensive dye color worn only by the wealthy at the time. This costume choice is an interesting one for the Montagues. It could indicate that they more tightly integrate into Venetian society than the Capulets or that other ethnic markers such as hair and jewelry are essential in distinguishing between the two families. The hair styling of the Montagues is the most distinctive element that would read Black to a modern audience, as well as Lady Montague’s large gold earrings that would be more typical of jewelry worn by a modern Black female. The younger members’ clothing is much more relaxed than that of their elders, with the youths wearing jackets open to show bare skin. The Montagues’ position on the *Dramatis Personae* is below the Prince, equal to and wealthy in the same merchant class as the Capulets. The choices of ethnic markers in clothing and hairstyles between the two families indicate possible social distinctions in which the two groups do not mingle and have different relationships with the Prince.

At the bottom and the opposite end of the *Dramatis Personae* from the Prince is Friar Laurence, a Franciscan monk, a bald, bearded light-skinned older man. In many ways, he mirrors the Prince in racial characteristics and societal position. His light skin color aligns him with the Prince and the secular order that the Prince represents. However, as a member of the clergy, the Friar is responsible for the spiritual aspects of Veronese society, while the Prince is responsible for the civil aspects. His hands in a prayer position and head tilted towards the heavens indicate his allegiance to God rather than man. The Friar’s nondescript clothing, a dark brown hooded garment with what Hinds describes as a “ceremonial Buddhist garment”—a blue apron-like element on his chest—demonstrates his renunciation of worldly wealth (Hinds 2013, 131). He does not align directly with

either of the families allowing him to act as a neutral party between them. Friar Laurence tries to leverage this by marrying Romeo and Juliet and assisting them in their plans to leave Verona together. Although initially reluctant, he facilitates the marriage, not just for Romeo and Juliet's sake, but because he sees an avenue to broker peace between the two families: "For this alliance may so happy prove, [t]o turn your household's rancor to pure love" (2013, 59).

Hinds's Fighting Youths

Hinds's emphasis and depiction of the interaction between the two groups of youths—the Montague and Capulet youths and the romantic pair of Romeo and Juliet—emphasize not just their rivalry but also highlight their distinctive racial characteristics. In contrast to the romantic couple of Romeo and Juliet are the young male members of the two rival families who incessantly fight each other and whose aggressive behaviors resemble gang conflict, leading to several deaths. Romeo, a member of both youth groups, must adjust his priorities and perspectives as he navigates between groups. The Montague youths, including Romeo, his friend Mercutio, cousin Benvolio, servant Balthasar, and an unidentified fifth individual, wear blue doublets and short breeches, with blue leggings and boots, swords on their left hips, and sometimes a small metal shield on their left hands. They all have wiry black hair in various lengths, some of which is in twisted locks. In the frames that show close-ups, such as page 5 in the top right corner, the reader can see their dark skin and wide, full noses, mouths, and distinct cheekbones. The Capulet youths, including Tybalt, Sampson, and Gregory, wear red doublets and reddish/purple short breeches with brown leggings and boots. These youths have short, dark, straight, carefully manicured hair, long, narrow faces, straight and narrow noses, thin lips, and pointed chins that are best seen on page 2 in the frames on the bottom half of the page. As with the Montague youths, the Capulet youths wear swords on their left hips and sometimes a short dagger on the opposite hips.

In contrast with the elder family representatives' more conservative clothing, the Montague and Capulet youths wear waist-length doublets, frequently opened to reveal muscular chests and tattoos, and short breeches that allow significant freedom of movement. This distinctive clothing, hair, and behavior with tattoos and trendy hair, indicates that these are not peasant youths but members of wealthy merchant-class families with the resources for ostentatious displays of clothing and weapons, illustrating that "violence can be glamorous" (hooks 2000, 99). Their hairstyles "involve declarations about the self and society [. . .] [and] are a key ethnic signifier, second only to skin," marking them as members of different racial/ethnic groups (Barker 2012, 440). Along with their aggressive behavior, their clothing, hair, and wearing of swords ready to use at the slightest provocation convey the macho image they are trying to portray. In their display of wealth and status, these youths resemble either young peacocks or fighting cocks with razor-sharp claws, parading their trendy masculinity for all to see. In both the graphic novel and the original play text, they fight in combative encounters in the public square of Verona, despite orders by Prince Escalus to cease. This fighting endangers the townspeo-

ple, who condemn both families. It causes the Prince to intervene with his troops, threatening punishment to any who disturbs the peace in a clear display of his authority.



Figure 3: *The Montague and Capulet Youths Fighting in the Market*, p.6. Images from *Romeo and Juliet*, Candlewick Press, 2013. Copyright ©2013 by Gareth Hinds, used with permission from the publisher.

Hinds allocates a substantial number of pages to the fighting between these young men, visually highlighting their racial differences and suggesting racial tensions between the two groups to justify the rivalry.⁶ In the first confrontation, beginning on pages 4–6 in act 1, Hinds shows the young male members of the two families as they pass each other and engage in provocative behavior. Crossing each other’s paths, one youth—a Capulet—bites his thumb at two members of the Montague family, leading to verbal challenges (rapid back and forth of speech bubbles). Biting a thumb and flicking it towards the person is intended to insult, like “flipping someone off.” As seen in figure 3, these verbal challenges result in the drawing and crossing of swords, the commencement of fighting, and a general melee joined by the patriarchs of each family, requiring intervention

6 This action, from act 1, scene 1, and act 3, scene 1, results in 25 pages or about 80 percent of the pages for those two scenes compared with 1900 lines or 40 percent of the original text lines relevant to this activity.

by the Prince. The second confrontation occurs later in act 3, beginning on page 65 and continuing for several pages, resulting in the deaths of both Mercutio and Juliet's cousin Tybalt and Romeo's banishment. The illustrations of these macho, aggressive youths and the participation of the patriarchs in the fighting highlight a culture of multigenerational and interracial violence that permeates the text leading to the deaths of several of their members and an unavoidably tragic conclusion to the play. This brown versus black violence is halted only by Romeo and Juliet's deaths. However, the root causes are never discovered or resolved, and the systemic mechanisms that support the violence are countered only by the Prince's promise to punish those responsible by death or banishment.

Hinds's Romeo and Juliet

The second but most significant group of youths is Romeo and Juliet and their relationship. It is, of course, the central element of the original play text and Hinds's adaptation. Hinds establishes the racial distinctions between the two lovers by featuring them on the graphic novel's cover, as shown in figure 1. They appear in partial profiles divided by an ornate sword, symbolizing the racial divide between them and the deadly consequences of their love in trying to bridge that divide. In the *Dramatis Personae* (figure 2), Romeo is shown in the Montague family group with dark skin and short, wiry hair, wearing a vest and breeches in Montague blue with a white shirt open to the waist, attire that only slightly changes throughout the novel. He is about the same height as Juliet. In contrast, Juliet in the Capulet family group has lighter skin and long, dark hair sometimes braided. Her clothing changes depending on the scene, from a knee-length red dress with boots (not typical of Elizabethan clothing) to a light nightgown and an elaborate white gown that functions as her wedding and funeral dress. In the *Dramatis Personae*, they appear opposite but turn towards each other within each familial line, graphically showing the familial and racial boundaries they must cross to pursue a relationship.

When Romeo and Juliet first meet in the masked ball scene (act 1, scene 5, pages 35–41), the contrasts in skin color and other external racial characteristics are apparent and highlighted against the light-colored background of the Capulet ballroom yet are insufficient to keep them apart. They appear to be dancing together in a crowded ballroom, yet their instant attraction has them dancing as if alone, despite their apparent differences. They part with a kiss, only to find out to their dismay that they are members of rival families when the Nurse informs each of them separately. Romeo responds with shock and dismay as he holds his hand to his head, while Juliet exclaims upon finding out Romeo's name, "My only love sprung / from my only hate!" (Hinds 2013, 43), characterizing her initial horror at finding out who and what Romeo is. She is depicted with her eyes looking up and hands together in prayer in a plea to God to either remove her feelings for Romeo or change him so that he is no longer a member of the rival family.

Their next meeting occurs at night in a darkened outdoor setting where the differences in their skin color are not as noticeable. The meeting includes a dialogue between Romeo and Juliet that occurs in act 2, scene 2, featuring the famous "balcony scene" depicted in Hinds's adaptation on pages 45–54—a significant span for

a graphic novel of only 129 pages. This meeting puts Juliet’s “what is in a name” soliloquy into a racial context, showing her trying to come to grips with the reality of her situation. In the original play, the significance of Juliet’s desire only refers to Romeo’s name as a member of the Montague family. However, in the graphic novel, her question refers to more than just a name, but also his identification as Black, something he cannot change. She must accept Romeo as he is, and if she is going to love him, she must love not just “who” he is but “what” he is—referring to his race. Romeo’s initial response, “By a name, I know not how to tell thee who I am. My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself, because it is an enemy to thee” (2013, 47), indicates a potential self-loathing because of either his race or familial association. However, even if he could change his name, he cannot change the fact that he is Black. To love him, Juliet must confront her own racial biases and accept Romeo’s association with his family and his blackness.



Figure 4: Romeo and Juliet’s Last Embrace, p. 124–25. Images from *Romeo and Juliet*. Candlewick Press 2013. Copyright ©2013 by Gareth Hinds, used with permission from the publisher.

The final scenes with Romeo and Juliet occur in the Capulet family vault—where Romeo encounters Juliet’s body—are done in a light gold-sepia tone emphasizing the enclosed space within the tomb and the minimal lighting from a small lantern. This setting minimizes but does not entirely do away with the contrast in skin color between Romeo and Juliet. In a most emotional scene in the frame at the top of page 118, Romeo finds Juliet’s inert body in the tomb and decides to take poison. He kisses Juliet with their faces framed one above the other, contrasting the lighter-skinned Juliet against the darker-skinned Romeo. This frame seems to continue the depiction from the cover, only this time with the two lovers facing each other in a final kiss, as the ornate sword from the cover has already done its worst. The most vivid coloring in the tomb scenes is in figure 4, the final scene where Romeo and Juliet lie in each other’s arms in death. Juliet’s blood seeps from the wound in her chest under both their heads and pools down the bier to the floor, highlighting the terrible price both pay to remain together and that the color of their blood has nothing to do with the color of their skin.

Hinds’s Concluding Scenes

Indications of hope in resolving the rivalry follow the discovery of the bodies in the Capulet family vault and the family patriarchs’ response to the news of Romeo and Juliet’s deaths. Facilitated by the Prince’s chastisement, the patriarchs commit Juliet’s dowry to raise a memorial gold statue and reassess their rivalry and its impact on other family members. In figure 5, Hinds captures the commitment of the patriarch in a frame showing them grasping each other’s hands, highlighting their mutual grief at the loss of Romeo and Juliet (2013, 128). This frame highlights their distinct racial differences and their similarities as grieving parents. Suppose this were to happen in real life. In that case, unfortunately, neither this adaptation nor the original play text offers evidence that the patriarchs’ remorse and reconciliation results in systemic change to remove the incentives for the conflict that the younger generation, specifically the young men who have been fighting, will still pass on. These young men are most likely to continue their aggressive and provocative behavior.

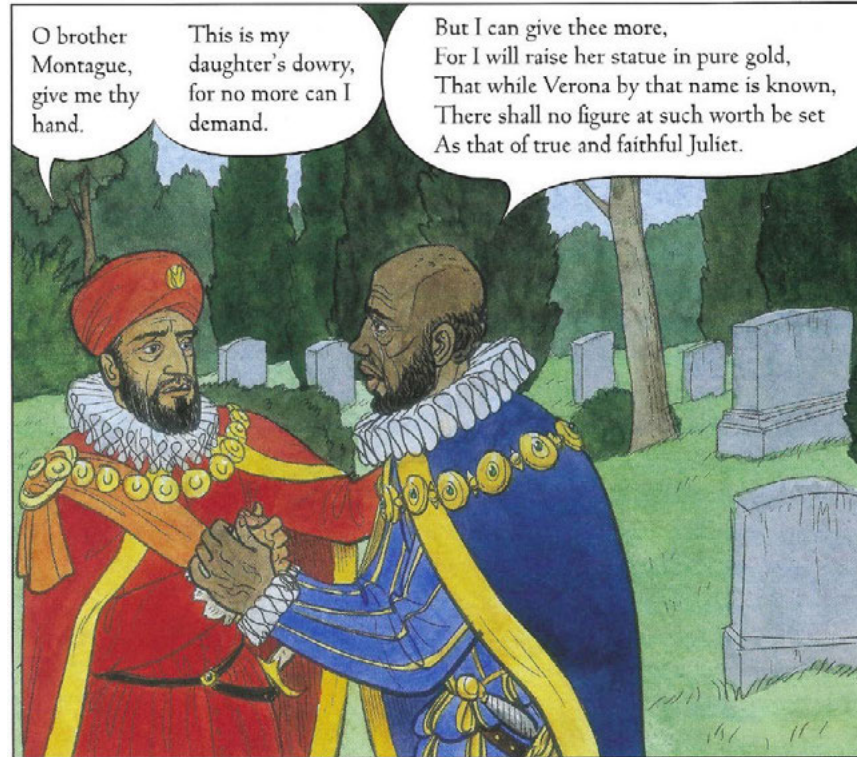


Figure 5: The Capulet and Montague patriarchs sharing their grief, p. 128. Images from *Romeo and Juliet*, Candlewick Press, 2013. Copyright ©2013 by Gareth Hinds, used with permission from the publisher.

TEACHING SHAKESPEARE TO A YOUNG ADULT AUDIENCE

Younger readers similar in age to the youths in the graphic novel can benefit in several ways from examining this adaptation. As graphic novel adaptations are both a textual and a visual medium, approaching them as performance takes advantage of the similarities between performances and graphic novels in terms of content, presentation and students' familiarity with visual media. Shari Sabeti claims that comic books/graphic novels can be "true to the spirit of Shakespeare the dramatist, [while] also respect[ing] and aid[ing] the demands of literature education in analyzing, close reading, and deconstructing of texts" (2021, 116). Such activities are particularly valuable in investigating how Hinds depicts and racializes the characters and the significance of that racialization within the context of the novel. Specifically, as readers closely examine the panels and frames, they will see how the characters of different racial groups interact. Turchi and Christensen note that teaching adaptations such as Hinds's, which characterize the rivalry as between contrasted racial or ethnic groups, can help students recognize that "cultural conflict is both historical and current, but not inevitable" (2018, 111). In *Romeo & Juliet*, the intersections of race and violence allow students to explore the implications of race and racism not only in the long-ago fictional Venetian society as depicted in Hinds's graphic novel but also in the contemporary historical moment. Given current controversies in teaching critical race theory, these conversa-

tions about contentious issues are not only relevant but necessary. Turchi and Christensen encourage the use of questions, for example, how “the violence that shapes the men in the play [is] viewed when it is couched within a larger system of racism” (2018, 112). Students not only gain a better understanding of how racism contributes to the family rivalry and its devastating consequences from both sides of the issue, but they can also explore how other choices open ways to manage or avoid conflict. Students can discuss the Montague and Capulet patriarchs, what might have led to their animosity/rivalry, and how their early behavior, particularly as depicted in the graphic novel as they participated in the general melee of the first confrontation, contributed to increasing rather than containing the violence. They can contrast that with displacing the action to contemporary society and how the racialized violence of older generations perpetuates through time and how younger generations might respond. A similar approach considers how to view Romeo and Juliet’s interracial/interethnic marriage from different perspectives or how to interpret gender roles, particularly those of Juliet and her father, through race and racial boundaries.

Educators frequently use Shakespeare graphic novel adaptations to introduce texts to students as they are seen as more adaptable and accessible to younger readers from various backgrounds who have difficulty with Shakespeare’s original language. Anelise Farris asserts that “performance-based approaches to Shakespeare’s plays emphasize his works as plays to be acted rather than simply as texts to be read—through performance, interpretation becomes visual” (2019, 560). This approach makes it easier for those who have difficulty reading in general or with Shakespeare’s language specifically by having students speak, act out, and embody the action of the characters. Students can more easily visualize and understand what is happening in the play and the spoken rather than read words demonstrate how inflection can change meaning. Having students act out what they see on the page allows them to experience increasing levels of anger and hostility, from taunting to drawing swords, especially regarding their body positioning, hand gestures, and back-and-forth dialogue.

Another suggestion from Turchi and Christensen is for students to investigate historical contexts of words that appear in the text, compare them to modern interpretations and how Hinds uses or depicts these words in his novel, and explore how these meanings complicate understanding (2018, 112). Students can examine emotionally charged words, such as “love” and “hate,” or unfamiliar words or words used in unfamiliar ways by using the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* to trace their meanings between Elizabethan England and modern US/UK usage. Since Hinds uses Shakespeare’s language rather than modernizing it, students can look at how he uses the language, as well as his contextualizing notes to explain unfamiliar terms. One example on page 7 explains that a pejorative term used by Tybalt to describe the Montagues is “hind,” described as a servant or a female. At the same time, a “hart” is a male deer, so the statement of “heartless hinds” is a double pun used to taunt the Montagues and ensure they respond to the insult by fighting. Students can also explore how graphics interpret the meanings of words and how that interpretation either clarifies or confounds their understanding of the text. Another helpful discussion concerns puns and plays on words or the use of color terms that explores the potential meanings and how these meanings impact interpretation within Hinds’s novel. Thompson and Turchi assert that “Shakespeare is alive when new readers, actors, and audiences bring new meanings and

contexts to old words” and encourage the discovery of new meanings as students bring modern contexts to Shakespeare’s language (2016, 44).

In addition to close reading, speaking/performing to improve understanding, and investigating the meanings of words, Thompson and Turchi add that “preconceived ideas about what Shakespearean characters look and sound like need to be uncovered and interrogated” (2016, 78). Students should investigate how Hinds’s specific choices about racialization may change their perception of characters, motivations, and choices in the novel. As Thompson and Turchi emphasize, the graphic novel presentation in the classroom allows students to ask questions and make statements about race, gender, and other sensitive topics in Shakespeare without fear of censorship. These conversations may not occur elsewhere in students’ lives, but teachers need to “make explicit and model engaged behavior” (2016, 83). Hinds’s text allows students and teachers to explore how his racialized depictions impact their overall perspectives on the play and its characters. The point is to encourage using visual resources and information about these types of performance-related issues presented in the graphic novel format to conduct critical thinking exercises and create a safe space where students can critique depictions about assumptions of difference.

CONCLUSION

Hinds’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* takes a love story and introduces a racialized context missing from the original text that motivates the family rivalry. The racial conflict in Hinds’s adaptation involves the South Asian and Black communities, illustrating concepts of both differential racialism and colorism in the portrayal of the characters and their interaction. Although he is careful with his historical research to place his graphic novel in Renaissance-era Verona, by racializing the family rivalry, Hinds incorporates a new element that complicates our interpretation of the story. Like performance-related media, a graphic novel’s visual representation, rather than obscuring racial issues, highlights them in illustrations for the readers, emphasizing that pictures speak louder than words. Applying the semiotics of race in performance provides a way of understanding how Hinds’s characterization impacts viewer perception of this adaptation, particularly the characters he racializes. Although unintentional, Hinds’s use of race in this illustrated adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* adds to the novel in ways he could not anticipate. Still recognizably a story of doomed lovers, this love story’s societal and familial context reflects complex issues of race and culture that we are still grappling with in the twenty-first century. As Hyland states, “the language of the text, the history of staging it, and received historical notions of the relationships between race and conflict have all affected *Romeo and Juliet*’s meaning on contemporary performance . . . race will always mean something” (2015, 15–16). Despite Hinds’s disclaimer that his graphic adaptation does not mean to discuss race, this text provides a vehicle for conversation with young adult audiences about how race, ethnicity, and color impact members of our modern society.

Hinds may have assumed the audience (or, in this case, readers) would be blind to his assignment of racial categories to the Montagues and Capulets of *Romeo and Juliet* in concert with his claim of universality of

Shakespeare's themes. However, as Thompson describes, the meaning of "universal" is slippery and depends upon the speaker, subject, condition, and/or situation (2011, 22). Hind's illustrations explicitly call out both race and color. Hence, his expressed intention to emphasize the universality of the love story rather than to comment on race or color becomes problematic. The incorporation of race into the story of *Romeo and Juliet* affects the reader/audience's perception of Hinds's graphic novel in ways that should be explored. In addition to choosing to assign the rival families to South Asian (Capulets) and Black (Montagues) racial/ethnic categories, he has placed two characters, the Prince and the Friar, as White in positions of power and authority (one secular, one religious). These choices layer real-life experiences of diaspora, slavery, and discriminatory treatment of the two rival groups onto the original storyline in contrast to the white leadership. Hinds may have been "color blind" in his decision to assign characters to specific racial/ethnic groupings, but his readers may not be so oblivious.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, Lisa M. 2006. "When Race Matters: Reading Race in Richard III and Macbeth." In *Colorblind Shakespeare: New Perspectives on Race and Performance*, edited by Ayanna Thompson, 89–102. New York: Routledge.
- Appignanesi, Richard, adapter. 2007. Illustrated by Sonia Leong. *Manga Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet*. London: SelfMadeHero.
- Barker, Chris. 2012. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, 4th ed. London: Sage.
- Daileader, Celia R. 2000. "Casting Black Actors: Beyond Othellophilia." In *Shakespeare and Race*, edited by Catherine M. Alexander and Stanley Wells. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 177–202.
- Delgado, Richard, and Jean Stefancic. 2012. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. New York: New York University Press.
- Eisner, Will. 2008. *Comics and Sequential Art: Principles and Practices from the Legendary Cartoonist*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Farris, Anelise. 2019. "Visual Rhetoric as Performance: Shakespeare in Comics." *Pedagogy* 19 (3): 558–73.
- Groensteen, Thierry. 2007. *The System of Comics*. Translated by Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Gurdon, Meghan Cox. 2013. "Review—Children's Books: New Discoveries and Old Favorites." *Wall Street Journal* (Eastern Edition), September 21, 2013, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1434385611?accountid=14745>.

- Harpalani, Vinay. 2015. "To Be White, Black or Brown? South Asian Americans and the Race-Color Distinction." *Washington University Global Studies Law Review* 14 (4): 609–36.
- Hinds, Gareth. 2008. *The Merchant of Venice: Shakespeare Classics Graphic Novels*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.
- Hinds, Gareth. 2011–2019. "Archive for the 'romeo and juliet' category." *Hindsight: Sketches and Musings of Gareth Hinds*. <http://garethhinds.com/blog/?cat=104>. [Accessed April 16, 2021.]
- Hinds, Gareth 2011. "Ghinds_Inking_Romeo_Juliet_party.mov." YouTube, December 20, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3BRRp4zJtc>. [Accessed August 10, 2022.]
- Hinds, Gareth 2011. "Point of Departure." In *Handbook of Research on Children's and Young Adult Literature*, edited by Shelby A. Wolf, Karen Coats, Patricia Enciso, and Christine Jenkins, 268–71. New York: Routledge.
- Hinds, Gareth. 2013. *The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo & Juliet*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press.
- Hinds, Gareth 2018. "About me." Gareth Hinds. <https://www.garethhinds.com/wp/about-me/>. [Accessed August 10, 2022.]
- Hinds, Gareth. 2020. "Graphic Novels with Gareth Hinds." YouTube, July 1, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lEnsGQ4noME>. [Accessed August 12, 2022.]
- hooks, bell. 2000. *Where we stand: class matters*. New York: Routledge.
- Hyland, Nicola. 2015. "'Young Hearts'/White Masks: Leading the (Color)blind at Shakespeare's Globe." *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* 9 (2). <https://openjournals.libs.uga.edu/borrowers/issue/view/224>.
- Kawashima, Terry. 2002. "Seeing Faces, Making Races: Challenging Visual Tropes of Racial Difference." *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 3 (1): 161–90.
- Kirkus Reviews. 2013. "Hinds, Gareth: ROMEO AND JULIET." Gale Academic OneFile, September 1, 2013. link.gale.com/apps/doc/A341243644/AONE?u=tamp44898&sid=bookmark-ONE&xid=59e7fb36. [Accessed July 25, 2022.]
- Lipsitz, George. 2019. "The Sounds of Silence: How Race Neutrality Preserves White Supremacy." In *Seeing Race Again: Countering Colorblindness across the Disciplines*, edited by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, Luke Charles Harris, Daniel Martinez HoSang, and George Lipsitz, 23–51. Oakland: University of California Press.

- Long, Joanna Rudge. 2013. "H Romeo & Juliet." *Horn Book Magazine* 89 (6):120–21. Gale Academic OneFile. link.gale.com/apps/doc/A351081343/AONE?u=tamp44898&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=84eb949b. [Accessed July 25, 2022.]
- MacDonald, Joyce Green. 2020. "Uncrossed Lovers: Remembering Race in Romeo and Juliet and Mississippi Masala." In *Shakespearean Adaptation, Race and Memory in the New World*, 47–75. Cham, Switz: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McCloud, Scott. 1993. *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, New York: Harper Collins.
- MIT Global Shakespeare Project, MIT School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. MIT Global Shakespeares Video and Performance Archive. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. <https://globalshakespeares.mit.edu/>. [Accessed 16 April 16, 2021.]
- Moeller, Robin A., and Kim Becnel. 2018. "Drawing Diversity: Representations of Race in Graphic Novels for Young Adults." *School Library Research* 21: 1–17. <https://web.s.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=117fcb1c-d9ef-4579-ae70-38f9a158154f%40redis>. [Accessed December 28, 2022.]
- Mortimer-Smith, Shannon. 2012. "Reinventing Shakespeare Through Comics, Graphic Novels, and Manga." In *Locating Shakespeare in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Gabrielle Malcolm and Kelli Marshall, 81–92. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Nair, Mira, dir. 1992. *Mississippi Masala*. Samuel Goldwyn Company.
- Royal, Derek Parker. 2007. "Introduction: Coloring America: Multi-Ethnic Engagements with Graphic Narrative." *MELUS* 32 (3): 7–22.
- Sabeti, Shari. 2021. "All that Shakespeare Stuff: Comic Books and the Public Pedagogy of Adaptation." In *The Comics World: Comic Books, Graphic Novels, and their Publics*, edited by Benjamin Woo and Jeremy Stoll. City: University Press of Mississippi, 107–27.
- Shaeffer, Katherine, and Richard Burt. 2013. "Editors' Introduction, Shakespeare and Visual Rhetoric, a special issue of ImageText." *ImageText: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies* 6 (3). http://imagetext.english.ufl.edu.ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/archives/v6_3/introduction.shtml. [Accessed July 15, 2021.]
- Shakespeare's Globe. 2021. "Romeo & Juliet." Globeplayer, The Shakespeare Globe Trust. <https://globeplayer.tv/videos/romeo-juliet>. Accessed November 6, 2021.
- Shakespeare, William. 1996–2021. *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Folger Digital Texts, edited by Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine. Washington DC: Folger Shakespeare Library. <https://www.folger.edu/romeo-and-juliet>. [Accessed August 27, 2018.]

- Shakespeare, William. 2004. *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice*, Folger Digital Texts, edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Folger Shakespeare Library. <https://www.folger.edu/othello>. [Accessed November 10, 2021.]
- Shakespeare, William. 2010. *A Merchant of Venice*, Folger Digital Texts, edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Folger Shakespeare Library. <https://shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/the-merchant-of-venice/>. [Accessed December 30, 2022.]
- Shakespeare, William. 2015. *The Tempest*. Folger Digital Texts, edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. Folger Shakespeare Library. <https://shakespeare.folger.edu/shakespeares-works/the-tempest/>. [Accessed December 30, 2022.]
- Spielberg, Steven, dir. 2021. *West Side Story*. Twentieth Century Studios.
- Thompson, Ayanna. 2011. *Passing Strange: Shakespeare, Race, and Contemporary America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Thompson, Ayanna, ed. 2006. *Colorblind Shakespeare: New Perspectives on Race and Performance*. New York: Routledge.
- Thompson, Ayanna, and Laura Turchi. 2016. *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose: A Student-Centred Approach*. London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare.
- Turchi, Laura B., and Ann C. Christensen, eds. 2018. "Teaching Shakespeare: When the 'House' (of Montague) is a Color, Not a Clan." *English Journal* 108 (2): 111–14.
- Wise, Robert, and Jerome Robbins, dirs. 1961. *West Side Story*. United Artists.
- Work, Max, Stan Lee, and Terry Douglas, adapters. 2011. *Romeo and Juliet: The War*. Illustrated by Skan Srisuwan and Studio Hive. Los Angeles: 1821 Comics LLC.