

The Poetics of *Romeo and Juliet*

Michael Clay Thompson

Poetics: the technical devices of sound and meter that poets use in composing poems.

PROLOGUE

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

SAMPSON

A dog of the house of Montague moves me.

GREGORY

To move is to stir; and to be valiant is to stand:

PRINCE

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel,—
Will they not hear? What, ho! you men, you beasts,
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mistemper'd weapons to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.

LADY CAPULET

Well, think / of marr / iage now / youn ger / than you,
Here in / Vero / na, la / dies of / esteem,
Are made / alrea / dy mo / thers: by / my count,
I was / your mo / ther much / upon / these years
That you / are now / a maid. / Thus then / in brief:
The val / iant Pa / ris seeks / you for / his love.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
Deny thy father, and refuse thy name.
Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
belonging to a man. O, be some other name!

Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,
That sees into the bottom of my grief?
O, sweet my mother, cast me not away!
Delay this marriage for a month, a week;

Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems
Upon so soft a subject as myself!

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