



St. Mary's English Department

Year 9:

Work to support
academic progress

This term you are reading *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare and a selection of poetry.

Romeo and Juliet

Read the extracts below and answer the questions that follow:

Act 1 Scene 1

At this point in the play, the Prince has warned the Montagues and the Capulets about the consequences of warring the streets. Lord and Lady Montague then speak to Benvolio about their concerns over Romeo.

MONTAGUE

Many a morning hath he there been seen,
With tears augmenting the fresh morning dew.
Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs;
But all so soon as the all-cheering sun
Should in the furthest east begin to draw
The shady curtains from Aurora's bed,
Away from the light steals home my heavy son,
And private in his chamber pens himself,
Shuts up his windows, locks far daylight out
And makes himself an artificial night:
Black and portentous must this humour prove,
Unless good counsel may the cause remove.

Questions

1. How does Shakespeare emphasise Romeo's overwhelming sense of melancholy?
2. How does Shakespeare juxtapose dark and light? What is the effect of this?
3. *Harder question. Later in Act 1, Romeo quickly shifts to become an impetuous, typical Petrarchan figure of romantic love: why might Shakespeare create this juxtaposition in character?*

Act 2 Scene 2

At this point in the play, Romeo returns to Capulet's orchard following the ball. He sees Juliet on her balcony.

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:
Be not her maid, since she is envious;
Her vestal livery is but sick and green
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.
It is my lady, O, it is my love!
O, that she knew she were!
She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?
Her eye discourses; I will answer it.
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek!

Questions

1. Analyse the use of light in the soliloquy, zooming in on the metaphor "Juliet is the sun". *Harder question: use your knowledge of the play studied in class to further explore how Shakespeare uses the juxtaposition of light and dark throughout the play as a whole*
2. Analyse the use of celestial imagery.
3. How does Shakespeare use language to create a sense of infatuation and fascination?
4. Why does Shakespeare write the majority of this soliloquy in free verse?
5. *Harder question: earlier on in the play, Romeo is depressed over his rejection by Rosaline. What does his swift infatuation with Juliet suggest about this character?*