

She Walks in Beauty

- by Lord Byron -

Activities

A

Students should be familiar with the ideas of 19th century Romanticism and here its emphasis on feminine beauty described through nature. There is a sense of wonder, almost awe, at the woman's perfection of soul and body as shown in the highlighted words and phrases. They should come up with other examples. They should see the difference between 'romantic' and 'Romantic'. He is not apparently lusting after this woman.

B

There is a sense of fascination here as though she were other worldly. Students might look at the difference in the way night is described and "gaudy" day. There should be other suggestions of how both states 'meet' perfectly in this woman. There might be discussion as to what constitutes beauty e.g. mind and body. She does not want to be simply 'seen' – she simply is.

C

Students will be encouraged to look at the elegance and ease of the physical description of the woman in the continuity of the lines. They should look at the verbs like 'waves' and 'lightens'. The last two lines have a slightly different emphasis which makes her pure as well as lovely. Pupils should note the use of sibilance in Line 5 of this stanza and should discuss the effect of this device.

D

Discussion will focus on the different aspects that attract the poet to the subject. "That cheek" "That brow" distinguish his subject exactly. It is body language, personality and expression that make her desirable. She doesn't pose or boast. Discussion might develop on what attracts a person to another. There might be reference to other poems in the Eduqas anthology.

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E

Students should read the poem aloud or listen and watch a reading on YouTube. They might respond to the gentle steady pace of the verse and the regular stresses of the iambic tetrameters. They might mention that there is only one main simile when he compares the woman to the night and light. There is nothing shocking or startling about this description - rather she becomes part of nature itself - innocent and pure, "cloudless" and "starry". The structure and rhythm will suggest a natural order both to her appearance and the poet's awe of her beauty. Students might note the Romantic gloss given to the lady. Form and structure help with the tranquil and gentle pace and pictures in this poem.

F

Candidates should notice the steady unhurried description as we move with and through the poem. There would be further consideration of pace and serenity and how they are achieved. Structure and form, language choices, the poet's voice will be selected and considered.