Analysis Of Sonnet 130 Essay, Research Paper

Analysis of Sonnet 130

Of William Shakespeare’s one hundred fifty-four sonnets, his one hundred thirtieth is one of the most intriguing to examine. In Sonnet 130, the speaker describes the woman that he loves in extremely unflattering terms but claims that he truly loves her, which lends credibility to his claim because even though he does not find her attractive, he still declares his love for her. The sentences of Sonnet 130 are written in iambic pentameter, with ten syllables and a pattern of unstressed and stressed syllables. Writing the poem in iambic pentameter gives rhythm to the poem and helps it flow smoothly, which is important because the author simply wants to describe his mistress.

Traditionally, Shakespearean sonnets are written in fourteen lines, with a rhyme scheme of abab cdcd efef gg, and Sonnet 130 is no exception. The majority of the poem gives negative connotations. The sun, red coral, snow, roses, perfumes, music, and a goddess all bring to mind beautiful images, but the speaker’s mistress’ eyes, lips, breasts, cheeks, breath, voice, and walk are all contrasted with the descriptions of loveliness. Her eyes do not shine, her lips are not red, her breasts are not white, her cheeks are pale, her breath stinks, she does not have a pleasant voice, and she doesn t walk gracefully as a goddess would. The speaker seems to be viewing his mistress disdainfully, as if he is not attracted to her, and after reading the first twelve lines, a sense of indignation and perhaps sorrow for this woman who is so ugly that not even her lover describes her as being pretty is felt. The images serve to make the sonnet come to life because the readers can “see” the comparisons through the use of descriptive words.

However, in the last two lines of the poem, which are indented for the purpose of standing out, recognizing the change in attitude, and showing the point of the poem, the speaker proclaims that his love is “as rare/As any she belied with false compare”. Even though the speaker has just brought attention to the many shortcomings of his love, he not only loves her, but he loves her and thinks more highly of her than any woman who has ever been described favorably by the previously mentioned qualities. Also, the word false suggests that the women who have been described in terms such as their eyes shining like the sun have not been accurately described. No woman’s body parts really look like the beautiful images that have been described, so the speaker is being truthful rather than using the flowery language common during Shakespeare’s time. Also, beauty should not be the reason that one loves someone. Perhaps true love is accepting that a person has faults and loving him anyway.