

Shakespeare's Sonnet 130 mocks the conventions of showy and flowery courtly sonnets in its realistic portrayal of his mistress. It satirizes the concept of ideal beauty that was a convention of literature and art in general during the Elizabethan era. It was customary to praise the beauty of the object of one's affections with comparison with beautiful things found in nature and heaven. Shakespeare here satirizes the hyperbole of the allusions, used by conventional poets, which even by the Elizabethan era had become clichéd and unpredictable. This sonnet compares the poet's mistress to a number of natural beauties; each time making a point of his mistress' obvious inadequacy in such comparisons; she can't hope to stand up to the beauties of the natural world. The sonnet plays with poetic conventions, in which the mistress' eyes are compared with sun, her lips with coral and her cheeks with roses. His mistress, the poet says, is nothing like this conventional image, but is as lovely as a woman. Shakespeare seems to simply breakdown the mould and parody a great many sonnets of the time. The first two quatrains compare the speaker's mistress to the aspects of nature like snow or coral; each comparison ending unflatteringly for the mistress. In the final couplet the speaker proclaims his love for his mistress by declaring that he makes no false comparisons; the implication being that other poets do precisely that. His sonnet aims to do the opposite by indicating that his mistress is the ideal object of his affections because of her genuine qualities, and that she is more worthy of his love than the paramours of other poets who are more fanciful.