

le of Shakespeare's reversal

the beloved
may be conveyed.

ND 5

» Understanding the text

1. To describe the beloved woman the poet considers her physical features and compares them to different elements. Complete the grid with the missing words; then tick YES, if the comparison is positive, NO if it is negative.

Physical feature	Term of comparison	Yes	No
1. EYES	SUN	X	
2. LIPS	RED CORAL	X	
3. BREASTS	WHITE SNOW	X	
4. hair	black wires		X
5. CHEEKS	DAMASK'D ROSES	X	
6. BREATH	PERFUMES	X	
7. voice	MUSIC'S SOUND	X	
8. way of walking	a goddess	X	

» Closer reading

2. All the elements in column 2 of exercise 1, except "black wires" have positive connotations. Tick the words that define the qualities expressed by them.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> divinity | <input type="checkbox"/> trustworthiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> intelligence | <input type="checkbox"/> faith |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> beauty | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> brightness |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> purity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> pleasantness |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> harmony | <input type="checkbox"/> loyalty |

- ☐ purity
- ☐ harmony
- ☐ brightness
- ☐ pleasantness
- ☐ loyalty

3. In stanza 1 and 2 the lady's qualities are mainly defined by negation (her eyes are not like the sun, her cheeks are not like roses...). However, three qualities are expressed in the affirmative form. Write down the words that indicate them.

- BREASTS ARE DUN
- HAIRS ARE BLACK & WIPED
- THE BREATH RIGGS

4. What does the poet want to communicate when he says that the beloved woman has nothing to do with a goddess?

- a. ☐ The lady is horrible.
- b. ☒ The lady is a real woman, not an idealised one.
- c. ☐ The lady speaks well but is extremely ugly.
- d. ☐ The lady is pleasant when she walks.

5. The final couplet represents the turning point. What does the poet say?

HE DOESN'T REALLY CARE ABOUT
THE IDEALIZED COURTEOUS WOMEN
PRAISED BY COURTEOUS POETS
SO ALL HE WANTS TO SAY IS THAT HE LOVES
HIS BELOVED WOMAN NO MATTER HER APPEARANCE

in fact it can be d
those poems. Sh
comparisons typ
the beloved wor
[5] BRIGHT
[6] SOFT
[7] ROSES
are ridiculous
not [8] ANG.
not need fals
[9] BEAUTIFUL

» Over to y

8. CRITICAL T

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attraction
certain p
Discuss
pairs or
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with the
class.

» Rounding it up

7. **FIRST** Complete the text below with the words given.

regular • conventional • angels • bright • beloved •
quatrains • soft • parody • roses

The form of *Sonnet 130* – three [1] *QUATRAINS* and
a couplet, [2] *REGULAR* rhyme scheme, iambic
pentameters – is the traditional one. Yet its content
sets it apart from [3] *CONVENTIONAL* love sonnets.
In fact it can be defined as a [4] *PARODY* of
those poems. Shakespeare deliberately uses the
comparisons typical of love poetry to reverse them so
the beloved woman's eyes are no longer
[5] *BRIGHT* like the sun, her hair is not
[6] *SOFT* and her cheeks are not like
[7] *ROSES*. He shows that those comparisons
are ridiculous exaggerations since real women are
not [8] *ANGELS*. Finally, he writes that love does
not need false comparisons and that to him his
[9] *BEAUTIFUL* is beautiful for what she is.

» Over to you