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MY THOUGHTS ABOUT SONNET 130 BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

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Many poets speak of their thoughts about concept of poetry, their ideas about own poems and poetics/ars poetica in the preface of published poetry books or in seperated books. However, some poets do this in the poems; when writing a poem they talk about poem and discuss literary traditions or conventions. Such poems are not only a poem, they can be read as a poetic theory/philosophy text at the same time. The sonnet by William Wordsworth, which is beginning with the line "*Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room*" is one of the examples for this. The another example is William Shakespeare's "Sonnet 130" which is beginning with the line "*My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun*".

In sonnet 130, the literary tradition of the era in which the poet lived is criticized; the addressee-in-text is not beloved or mistress in fact, the sonnet was written to the poets who loves exaggreation/hyperbole very much, especially poets of petrarchan sonnets. They use some similes, conventions and cliches for their beloved's some organs in poems like sun for eyes, snow for breasts, coral for lips. Sometimes they also similizes the beloved to a goddess. Sonnet 130 is a reaction to poets who uses such exaggerated literary devices/elements for telling love. Shakespeare does this in an ironical and satirical way in the poem. Also he prefers a sarcastic discourse and tone, some literary devices -such as rhetorical question, conditional clause, affecting ignorance- are used to enhance theese irony, satire and sarcasm. The third line of the Sonnet is one of the examples for this usage: "*If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun*".

The speaker believes that his beloved is not the most beautiful woman in the world or some natural elements may be more beautiful than her. Even so, he likes speaking with her or hearing her sound but there are some musics that have far more pleasing sound. Maybe such realistic emotions and mortal/humanistic loves are more valuable than the exaggreated ones. Because, a lover exaggreating his beloved loves her as she looks like a goddess for him. But one day when he realizes she is not a goddess he will not love her anymore probably: "*And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare / As any she belied with false compare*".

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When reading this sonnet I remember a classical Turkish (Ottoman) poem written by Nedim (1681-1730). It is a ghazal that has eight couplet. In the first seven couplet he praises the beloved by exaggreated statements and similes. His beloved is not polite, politeness is her figure itself. Her face don't simile to red wine, the distilled and pure wine is (on) her face now. However, the speaker says in the last, namely eight, couplet so: "*Oh Nedim! There is no beauty in this city like the one you described. A fairy/nymph apperaed to you or you saw a dream/imagination/illusion*".[2] We can simile the first seven couplet to Petrarchan/Italian sonnets and the last couplet to English/Shakespearean sonnets. It is interesting to see the two different manners in the same ghazal. Maybe the speaker really saddened for non-existence of such a beauty or maybe Nedim criticises some unrealistic cliches of classical literature tradition indirectly. But beginning from 19th century, in Tanzimat reform era and republic era, this tradition and metaphors will be critised more directly by some literators and researchers like Namık Kemal, Ziya Paşa, Abdulbaki Gölpınarlı.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE	**NEDİM**
My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun; Coral is far more red than her lips' red; If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun; If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head. I have seen roses damask'd, red and white, But no such roses see I in her cheeks; And in some perfumes is there more delight Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks. I love to hear her speak, yet well I know That music hath a far more pleasing sound; I grant I never saw a goddess go; My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground: And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare As any she belied with false compare.	Haddeden geçmiş nezâket yâl ü bâl olmuş sana Mey süzülmüş şîşeden ruhsâr-ı âl olmuş sana Bûy-ı gül taktîr olunmuş nâzın işlenmiş ucu Biri olmuş hoy birisi dest-mâl olmuş sana Sihr ü efsûn ile dolmuşdur derûnun ey kalem Zülfü Hârût'un demek mümkin ki nâl olmuş sana Şöyle gird olmuş Firengistân birikmiş bir yere Sonra gelmiş gûşe-i ebrûda hâl olmuş sana Ol büt-i tersâ sana mey nûş eder misin demiş El-amân ey dil ne müşkilter su'âl olmuş sana Sen ne câmın mestisin âyâ kimin hayrânısın Kendin aldırdın gönül n'oldun ne hâl olmuş sana Leblerün mecrûh olur dendân-ı sîn-i bûseden La'lin öpdürmek bu hâletle muhâl olmuş sana Yok bu şehr içre senin vasf etdiğin dilber Nedîm Bir perî-sûret görünmüş bir hayâl olmuş sana

[2] *Yok bu şehr içre senin vasf etdiğin dilber Nedîm / Bir perî-sûret görünmüş, bir hayâl olmuş sana*.