

Poem analysis of my
mistress eyes are
nothing like the sun
by william
shakespeare...



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My Mistress' Eyes " My mistress' Eyes are nothing Like the Sun", Shakespeare's sonnet number 130, reveals some of the ideas of his time like gender social, psychological, and cultural. The general convention during those days was to write sonnets with love as the theme and compare the beloved to everything beautiful in nature in order to project her as a Goddess. This tradition was set by Patriarch. Shakespeare's sonnets try to ridicule this practice and the poem under reference here is a fine example of this. He speaks only what is true. He says his beloved is not at all beautiful when compared to several beautiful things in nature. This paper is a critical analysis of the poem to highlight the the issues the poem raises. In the sonnet, " My Mistress' Eyes", the speaker compares the beauty of his beloved to many things in nature. However, the readers who are used to listen to extravagant praises get surprised when he says " My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" (CXXX, line 1). The impression he creates is that he is not likely to like her for this simple reason, because the prevailing social attitude was such. Therefore, very eagerly the next lines are anticipated by the readers to see whether the other features and qualities of her are worthy enough to attract the lover. Unfortunately, the speaker proceeds with worse descriptions and comparisons: " Coral is far more red than her lips' red: .../ If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head, /. .../ But no such roses see I in her cheeks" (lines 2 - 6). Obviously, one should wonder, particularly in sixteenth century, how one can love such a lady. Shakespeare challenges various issues here. The social attitude that only a beautiful lady has a heart is called into question. Psychologically, it raises questions like whether true love can ever be generalized. The obvious question Shakespeare here raises is whether love is physical, social, or psychic. There is the gender problem <https://assignbuster.com/poem-analysis-of-my-mistress-eyes-are-nothing-like-the-sun-by-william-shakespeare/>

too. Whether a woman is a mere commodity for the sensuous pleasure of man, therefore, comes much before the arrival of feminist movement. In spite of several deficiencies, as the convention demands, “ by heaven, I think my love as rare” (13), says the lover. This is the most important line in the poem. This comes as a challenge to the Petrarchian convention of falsifying the beauty of the beloved. Usually not so beautiful ladies, or even ugly women, were praised by the poet through their sonnets. The clear message is that if love is true, no comparison is required. As Keats rightly observed later on, beauty lies in the person beholding. This truth Keats and Shakespeare learned from their own experience. “ My mistress when she walks, treads on the ground” (12), says Shakespeare, implying that she is not an unreal creature or any fantastic angel. His beloved is of the earth, realistic, in all respects. As a perfect being she does not require any comparisons, and the readers are made careful to watch when excessive praises are showered by a poet. Looking back, one wonders whether the beauty highlighted in the good old poems was real or unreal. The structure, which is rhetorical, helps the poet to advance his argument in a successive way. Initially, he compares only one aspect of his beloved to some object in a line. Gradually he takes two lines to provide greater stress on his assertion -- perfume/breath, music/voice, and goddess/mistress. This gives a gradual development, avoiding monotonousness in the poem. Shakespeare also employs almost all the senses, like sight, touch, smell, and hearing. This adds further meaning to the central idea that his beloved is “ rare”. The lover does not believe in platonic love. He has experienced the physical love too, and has known her close by. Reference Shakespeare, William. “ My Mistress Eyes”. The Complete Works, London: Hamlyn, 1985, 1058- 59. <https://assignbuster.com/poem-analysis-of-my-mistress-eyes-are-nothing-like-the-sun-by-william-shakespeare/>