

What do we learn
about the society of
messina in the play
"much ado about
nothing..."

[Society](#)



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What do we Learn about the Society of Messina in the play “Much Ado About Nothing”? Essay Sample

The elaborate society of Messina is an apposite setting for the plot of Much Ado About Nothing being based upon premeditated deceptions, full of social grace ideals, packed with entertainment and churned with aristocracy and hypocrisy. It is darkened with counterfeiting and tricks that manipulate the thoughts and feelings of characters which exist in its setting. The sinister element of concealing reality by ornamented outward outlooks plays a major part in this civilization. In my personal opinion, it is a flamboyant world where ceremony dominates and, likewise, one's affluence, power and social class hold great value upon one's position in the society – they are very important social indicators.

To start with, Messina is full of courtiers of social elegance which constantly aim to serve the individuals who are higher up in the ladder of societal standing. The typical conventions of courtiers as described in Baldassare's Casitiglione's sixteenth century manual “The Courtier” were to use highly manufactured lingo, yet, crafting the show of effortless in their self-lifting and judicious performances. The characters' exaggeratingly polite manner of speaking and gracious demeanour represents the principle that Renaissance courtiers such as Benedick, Claudio and Don Pedro with their witty repartee and wordplay attracted attention in noble households as that of Leonato's.

Skilfully, by the use of metaphor, which is festooned by rhetoric, Don Pedro and his companions attempt to exhibit their refined social modishness, both

in their conduct and in their verbal communication, which helps them to succeed in their social interactions. This is evident from the very first scene in the play after their entry into the Leonato household when Don Pedro greets Leonato in the most colourful way, “ Good Signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble” and later on when he requests him, “ Your hand, Leonato, we will go together” which portrays his gratefulness towards Leonato and builds up a very modest notion of him amongst the Shakespeare’s Elizabethan audience who will be expecting the same of his two associates. Suitably, Leonato also demonstrates his hospitability and welcoming stance. By using courteous language, he salutes the aristocratic victor, “ Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace”. I believe the excess formality in his speech and his addressing of his guests – “ lord”, “ Signior” and “ sir” portrays him as a highly regarded and flattering gentlemen.

Alternatively, the whimsical language of love which Claudio uses when he falls in love with Hero declares him as the romantic hero of the play. He was already been informed as a courageous “ young Florentine” who has gained the regard and esteem of his mentor Don Pedro as he has been doing “ in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion”. When he expresses to Benedick that “ Lady Hero” is “ In mine eyes the sweetest lady I ever looked upon”, he succeeds as the perfect courtier . Likewise, Benedick also uses intricate language in his soliloquy speech in Act II Scene 1 to mock the amorous state of Claudio – “ His words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes” to confirm himself as the other courtier in the play.

Claudio's obedient behaviour towards his senior Don Pedro leads him to easily and without much ado, let Don Pedro woo Hero for him instead of he wooing her himself. There is every chance that he turns down the wooing of Hero not because of his shy nature but because he must acquiesce to Don Pedro's authority in order to remain in Don Pedro's good books, as his favourite. This gives the Elizabethan audience an indication that citizens in the Messinian society served others of higher social prominence than themselves in order to gain their support for the purpose of succeeding in societal order.

Apparently, at the instigation of Don Pedro's bastard brother Don Jon, Claudio's influential outlook leads him to mistrust his own guru. When Claudio believes the treacherous Don Jon that Don Pedro has betrayed him by wooing Hero not for Claudio but for himself, his civil courteousness is yet not engulfed by his state of misery and desolation as he informs Benedick, "I wish him joy of her". Benedick's wit rival and Hero's cousin Beatrice jokingly compares Claudio's pungent courtesy with that of an "orange". She uses the simile "civil as an orange" to pun on the bitterness of the Seville orange fruit. Unmistakably, he shadows his compliance to his leader over his love for Hero in order to sustain the regard and admiration which Don Pedro has for him and maintain his position as a man of commendable reverence in the superior eyes of Don Pedro. This is how he remains successful at exhibiting social equanimity.

Inevitably, his strict devotion to social decorum and etiquette eventually escort him to entrapment. Again, at the initiation of Don John, he abandons

Hero at the wedding because Don Jon leads him to believe that she is unchaste so “ it would better fit your [his] honour to change your [his] mind” as matrimony to an unchaste female would be socially objectionable and rather intolerable. However, after the short time success of Borachio’s plan, Don Jon’s goals of degrading Claudio in Don Pedro’s eyes fails and Claudio remains Don Pedro’s favourite, a positive and optimistic impression that the triumph of truth and justice over lie and deceit is blatant in Messina as it was believed to be true amongst the public of the Elizabethan England.

On the contrary, because it is the female character of Hero who was to suffer disgrace and loss of nobility in Act III Scene v of the play until her unblemished reputation is re-established, the audience would have been indicated that similarly to their society, women were seen inferior and powerless when compared to men in the male dominated world.

Shakespeare uses dramatic irony to attract the attention of his audience and keep them interested in carrying on watching the play. In Act III Scene iv, he focuses upon her virtuousness and incorruptibility as he shows her shocked by Margaret’s down-to-earth views on the realities of marriage, dramatically fortifying the horror of the allegation against her in the following scene.

The theme of female passivity, submissiveness and helplessness of women at the time was as prominent in the Messinian culture as it was in the sixteenth century Elizabethan culture. This is palpable as the men of Messina made up their minds in about a half of a second about the guilt of a young lady who was looked upon highly in community. Also, Hero’s own father wastes no time in defaming and disowning his own daughter in order to

protect his reputation and avoid further embarrassment as he describes her as a rotting carcass which can't be preserved – “ the wide sea / Hath . . . / . . . salt too little which may season give / To her foul tainted flesh!” (Act IV Scene I , lines 139 – 142).

Moving on, I feel the magnitude of personal vanity also figures large in the Messinian society. The entire band of focal characters, both male and female, carry a burly wisdom of their own position in social order. Consequently, their conduct is driven by their motives to preserve if not improve this status. At the abandoned nuptial ritual in Act IV, Scene I, in which Hero is denounced by Claudio who indicts her of disloyalty and sullied chastity and overtly humiliates her in front of her own father and all the guests, is the play's climax. His latest description of Hero – the metaphorical image of her being a “ rotten orange” will be a complete contrast to his previous depictions of her – “ sweetest lady I [he] ever looked upon ” which will shock the Elizabethan audience.

The audience would find it surprising the way Claudio appallingly shames Hero and humiliates her. By using slanders such as “ You seem to me as Dian in her orb” and “ more intemperate in your blood than Venus, or those pampered animals, that rage in savage sensuality.”, he emphasises the image of her innocent outlook is an illusive disguise over her corrupted reality as he uses the repetition of the word “ seem” while degrading Hero. Shakespeare's application of iambic pentameter in the blank verse and the inclusion of the image of “ blood” in Claudio's speech in lines 55 to 59 of this scene helps Claudio's character to express his rage and build up a picture of

guilt and sexuality amongst the audience who would be, robotically, linking these two themes with the accused Hero.

Shakespeare depicts the Messinian society as a world where the characters belong to a stylised, highly conventional world in which the mundane needs of everyday life fade into the background. The daughters locate their husbands in accordance with their rank and affluence and their marriages were arranged by their parents. In this play, Hero is the female character who belongs to this male-subjugated world. She fulfils the criteria of the conventional romantic heroine as she is mild, dutiful and dependant on other characters throughout the play. She is portrayed powerless and is always on the receiving end, being constantly controlled by others, for example, at her wedding, when Claudio accuses her of unfaithfulness and adultery, she fails to defend her chastity and faints and even after her public humiliation, she, thoughtlessly, lets her relatives with the Friar take control over her personal catastrophe by plotting the Friar's plan -devising her tragic and shameful death. This adds the tone of female submissiveness and helplessness in the play which exposes Messina's social system as very patriarchal.

Unmistakably, Leonato and Don Pedro just like Claudio, are viciously protective of their places in the society. Leonato is aware of the honour which would land on his doorstep if the Prince's follower, Claudio, is to marry his daughter. However, when Hero's chastity is questioned at the wedding ceremony, Leonato's solitary consideration is his communal disgrace as his prideful reputation of being a dutiful guardian of an obedient daughter is questioned. This is because in Shakespeare's time, a woman's virginity and

unblemished conduct were the foundations of her honour. For a woman to lose her honour by committing the sin of adultery led her to lose all societal eminence, an adversity from which she could never recuperate.

Moreover, I consider this loss of nobility would pollute her whole clan. For that reason, when Leonato hastily believes Claudio's shaming of Hero, it wounds him so much that he tries to eradicate her completely as he growls, "Hence from her, let her die" (IV. i. 153). In addition, he exemplifies Hero's loss of dignity as an ineffaceable blemish from which he cannot distance himself as he stresses, "O she is fallen / Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea / Hath drops too few to wash her clean again" (IV. i. 138-140). To describe the shocking element of chastity in Hero, he uses words such as "mired" and "smirched" and as well as using the metaphor of her having fallen "into a pit of ink" which further highlights his anger over loss of honour.

Just before the exeunt of Don Pedro, the perfidious Don Jon and the raged Claudio, he emotionally mentions, "Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?" and this reveals his intentions of avoiding further humiliation.

Predictably, Don Pedro, guarding his honour, also refuses to defend Hero's honour when Leonato addresses him. This is because being the mentor of a man being married to an unchaste woman would tarnish his patrician standing in the society. Because he, like Claudio, was deceived by the illusion of watching Hero engaged in sexual activity with a "ruffian" the night before her marriage, he is forced to break the commitment made with Leonato of Hero's marriage with Claudio and hence he slurs her by calling her a "common stale". I believe this insinuates the audience that for women

in that era, public shaming and dishonour was a form of extermination and degradation.

On the other hand, a man's esteem in the Messinian society was footed on manly companionship. Still, just like the women in the society, he could be publicly shamed as Claudio was when he revealed at the marriage ceremony that his fiancée was adulterous. Consequently it is exceedingly momentous that the bastard Don John is the one to cause discord, as he is the only masculine character without any authentic prominence in the civilization as he, himself, acknowledges to his host Leonato in Act One, scene one, " I am not of many words".

He believes that the shame brought upon Claudio will lead him to lose his place as his brother Don Pedro's favourite as once Claudio is discovered to be engaged to a loose woman, Don Pedro will reject Claudio as he may have rejected Don John, himself, being his illicit sibling. He plays the shadowy and self-confessed villain who adds dissonant and cacophonous element in the play. Being an unwanted result of an illegitimate sexual pairing himself, Don John has constantly been reminded of his own social shame all his life. For that reason, he aims to cause conflict amongst characters with a real identity such as Claudio to right the balance.

Undoubtedly, being born as a bastard child, he didn't have a great chance of acquiring a respectful standing in the society as, in Shakespeare's time, being born out of wedlock meant being tainted with evil. Hence, by acting the treacherous villain – in his vain pursuit of shaming other innocent characters he, indirectly, ensured the audience that he would never get a

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significant place in the chivalrous society. Ironically, in the end Don John is mortified and threatened with torment to chastise him for betraying the troupe. His eventual capture and punishment are essential to fulfil the first convention of a romantic comedy ending which is the elimination of evil from the society, the second part being harmony being restored and the reunion of the two pairs of lovers in the format of marriage, seen as commercial responsibility. This indicates the Shakespearean audience that people with inconsequential social status attempted to degrade the reputation of other characters who do have significant standing in the society via public shaming although veracity and righteousness did eventually triumph over the short time effects of illusion, sham and treachery.

Contrastingly, unlike a woman, a man could preserve his reverence, and that of his relatives by fighting in a battle or a duel. When Benedick at last reveals his love for his wit rival Beatrice, she returns his warmth by claiming, “ I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest”. This makes the audience alert of expecting some dramatic tension as their love avowals are confirmed at a very inapt time – after Hero’s, Beatrice’s offended cousin’s, public shaming. Beatrice, after grasping that Benedick is madly in love with her, realizes that she could take revenge from Claudio via her lover. Therefore as the love tied Benedick flatters, “ Come, bid me do anything for thee”, Beatrice replies, “ Kill Claudio”, urging Benedick to avenge Hero’s honour by duelling with Claudio to the death. This would be his way to prove his love for Beatrice as being a female, Hero cannot seize back her nobility in the male-dominated Messinian Society, but as a man, it is possible for Benedick to restore Hero’s dignity via bodily clash. The words

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“ Kill Claudio” are monosyllabic and the harsh alliteration is influential generates tension which creates considerable impact on the audience curiously wondering whether Beatrice’s wish will be fulfilled by Benedick or not.

As expected, because Beatrice’s request is illogical, Benedick refuses which makes her erupt into an outburst of words and rancour on the subject matter of her wronged cousin until Benedick is forced to give in to her and agree to challenge Claudio. Noticeably, Beatrice’s dominance in this scene would shock the audience who would have previously thought that the women were helpless and always controlled by the men in the society. From a personal viewpoint, it suggests me that although the women were supposed to be serene in their stance being dependant on the men, they could also command men to do what they wanted them to do, in Beatrice’s case being the re-establishment of a fellow woman’s honour by means of aggressive emotional blackmail as Beatrice did by proclaiming, “ You would kill me to deny it”.

Shakespeare displays varying perceptions on the charisma and benefits of marriage from the varying viewpoints of the characters in the Messinian society. Claudio and Hero being the standard romantic lovers eventually have a straightforward and desirable marriage. In contrast, Beatrice and Benedick take pride in their similar unorthodox, stubbornly negative stance to romantic love and marriage. This is evident from the very first scene of the play when Beatrice stresses, “ I had rather hear a dog bark at a crow than a man swears he loves me” and Benedick challenges his companions,

Claudio and Don Pedro, that if he goes against his word of “dying a bachelor”, Don Pedro should, “hang me (him) in a bottle like a cat and shoot at me (him).”

Nevertheless, because the play is a romantic comedy whose conventions demand a successful pairings of similar characters such as themselves as the conclusion of the play, the two wit rivals are made give in to their pride – melt away their fixed views of leading an unmarried life, fall in love and accept marriage, courtesy of their companions. From a different perspective, one can assume that despite their “merry wars”, Benedick and Beatrice were paired off from the beginning of the play and were, inevitably, bound to fall in love by their contradictory traits and independent characteristics.

However, they continue to spar wisecrack comments on one another to the very end of the play. Beatrice jokingly expresses her approval for marrying Benedick in Act V scene 4 of the play, “I yield upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption” to combat his consent of their marriage – “Come, I will have thee, but by this light I take thee for pity”. This gives the Elizabethan audience an indication that in the Messinian society, there are people like Benedick and Beatrice who remain apart from the societal milieu of pretence. Their argumentative, independent and witty demeanour portraying their insulting behaviour towards each other in the form of constant wisecrack retorts is a wise distinction to the formality and courtly behaviour of the other pair of lovers – Hero and Claudio. This brings in considerable variety in the ostentatious tone of the society which thrills the already animated audience.

Interestingly, the scheme of this play is weaved upon premeditated deceptions. Reality is manifestly in opposition to appearance in character as well as events. The swindling of Claudio and Don Pedro leads to ignominy of Hero, while the scam of her death arranges the way for her reunion with lover Claudio. In a more jocular vein, Beatrice and Benedick are hoodwinked into thinking that each loves the other at the persuasion of characters of their own gender which does actually result in them actually do fall in love. Messina is portrayed as a place where perfidy is not shown to be necessarily malevolent but as a means to an end as almost all the characters in the play attempt to deceive others to be successful in their aims.

Without a shadow of a doubt, the sinister and villainous of Don Jon uses malevolent deception to the greatest extent in the play. When Claudio announces his desire to woo Hero, Don Pedro takes it upon himself to woo her for Claudio. Then, at the instigation of Don John, Claudio begins to mistrust Don Pedro, thinking he has been deceived as he says, “ Farewell therefore Hero” (Act 2, Scene 1, line 164). Likewise, later on in the play, again at the initiation of Don John, he believes that Hero is an unfaithful woman by trusting appearance over actuality as he witnesses Margaret dressed up as Hero involved in sexual activity with a “ ruffian” who was the villain’s devotee Borachio. Because Claudio so readily believes the fraudster Don John at his both attempts of false persuasion, a very susceptible impression is created of courtly lovers such as himself, amongst the audience. In addition, the Elizabethan audience would be confirmed that Don John’s transgression only thrives because of the vulnerability of characters

such as Don Pedro and Claudio who trust manifestation, as they did of Margaret dressed up as Hero, over reality.

Nonetheless, positive male and female characters (Don Pedro, Leonato and Antonio, Claudio along with the Hero and Ursula) use a benign form of deception, in the form of gulling, to a great effect bringing Benedick and Beatrice together. At the time of Shakespeare, the “ Nothing” in the title of the play – “ Much Ado About Nothing” would have been pronounced “ Noting” which is why many of the characters or players in this play participate in the actions of observing, listening, writing or noting as in order for a plot hinged on deceit, the characters must note one another constantly. The characters Benedick and Beatrice are no exception. The women, Hero and Ursula, manipulate Beatrice that Benedick adores her by concealing themselves in the orchard so that Beatrice can better note their conversation. Since they know that Beatrice loves to eavesdrop, they are assured that their practical joke will accomplish. The evidence of this kind of a mental assurance is present as Hero notes, “ look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs / Close by the ground to hear our conference”, (Act III, Scene 1, lines 24-25).

The gossip of the women includes carefully placed notes such as “ Benedick is sick in love with Benedick” even though “ disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes” (Act III, Scene 1, lines 51) which are designed to make Beatrice ponder again about her views on Benedick and the institution of marriage itself so she eventually melts her stubbornness to give way to union with Benedick. Same is true for the men’s plan to convince Benedick of Beatrice’s

infatuation for him. Carrying out the counterfeit, they use similar techniques to bring about persuasion such as focussing the subject matter of the conversation on Beatrice's obsession with Benedick as soon as he observes them chitchatting. This is apparent as Don Pedro commences the tittle-tattle by questioning the elder and reliable character of Leonato, "What is it that you told me of today, that your niece Beatrice is in love with Signiour Benedick? (Act II, Scene iii, line 87-88) to attract Benedick's attention setting the stage for his persuasion. These two series of practical jokes will provide sheer amusement and intensify the thrill amongst the audience.

On the contrary, when Claudio has mortified and denounced Hero, Shakespeare devises the Friar's plan to give sufficient time for the redemption of Hero and the restoration of her honour which, although, is not lost but is overtly tarnished by her fiancè's blunder. When Friar Francis, Beatrice and Hero, herself, convince Leonato of Hero's blamelessness, the Leonato household "publish" that Hero has died a tragic death due to her humiliation in order to penalize Claudio for his blunder. When Claudio returns, remorseful, to accept the hand of Leonato's "niece" (actually Hero), there is an entry of masked women, one of which Claudio must marry blindly. The masking of Hero and the other women reveals that the communal foundation of wedlock in the Messinian society has remote connection with love and emphasises on the theme of female submissiveness as they are the ones instructed and controlled by Leonato and the wise Friar Francis.

Hero's planned communal with Claudio as her non-existent cousin also emphasises on the idea of parents arranging marriages for their daughters

which was practised by the people in the Messinan society. Because Claudio flounders and asks, “ Which is the lady I must seize upon?” (V. iv. 53) , he is ready and willing to perpetrate the rest of his life to one of a band of strangers which creates an impression that his acquiescence and obedience shoots more from the fact that he may care more about mounting in Leonato’s good books than in marrying for love than his blunder about denigrating a blameless woman. On the whole, this leads us to the conclusion that deception in the form of trickery was used in the society as a technique to create a mirage that helps one to climb up the ladder of social prominence.

Throughout the play, war imagery recurrently signify vocal confrontations. Right from the very first scene of the play, Leonato explains to the messenger that there is a “ merry war” and “ a skirmish of wit” (I. i. 50-51) between Beatrice and Benedick. Beatrice persists with this martial imagery, describing how, when she won her last duel with Benedick, “ four of his five wits went halting off” (I. i. 53).

Later on in the play, in Act V, Leonato indicts Claudio of slaying Hero with his choice of words: “ Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart” (V. i. 68).

Afterwards in the same scene, Benedick confronts Claudio with a fierce verbal challenge of duelling to the demise over Hero’s wounded graciousness. Besides, when Borachio owns up to dramatization which led to the loss of Hero’s virtuousness, Don Pedro illustrates this verbal confirmation as a sword that tears through Claudio’s heart: “ Runs not this speech like

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iron through your blood?” (V. i. 227), and Claudio replies that he has already allegorically committed suicide upon hearing these words as he, shamefully, highlights, “ I have drunk poison while he uttered it” (V. i. 228).

This indicates the Elizabethan audience that the Messinian civilization was free from war and its dreadful consequences but it was the entry of Don Pedro and party (the noble courtiers of the play) into Messina influenced local Messinians like Leonato and his niece Beatrice to start using war metaphors in verbal disputes. It epitomizes the fact that their majestically regal presence in Messina is what triggers the main events in this play which completely changes the Leonato household which Don Pedro ironically suggests has “ come to meet your trouble” in the first scene of the play when he is welcomed by Leonato. Hence it leads us to a general conclusion that even the descriptions of the destructive activities of the upper classes such as killing in wars were measured admirable and hence they adapted these in their speech by the society’s habitants as a pretentious attempt to increase one’s status in Messina’s grandiose society.

Entertainingly, from the witty yet nostalgic song that Balthasar sings about the faithlessness of men to the masquerade and by the insertion of music and dancing at the end of the play, it can be concluded the noble households in the Messinian society as that of Leonato’s spent much of their time getting involved in convoluted spectacles and enjoyments. The fact that characters who blithely wrangle in the beginning end up falling in love and uniting in marriage at the play’s conclusion will be the main source of comedy. The enclosure of a masquerade as court entertainment in Act 2 Scene I , as well

as two songs and a dance in the last scene, the play naturally presents itself as sheer entertainment.

Because the play is a romantic comedy, sources of entertainments are not just going to be present as material activities – singing and dancing but also in the actual speeches of suitable characters. The blissful resolution of Claudio and Hero is the key reason why the play is categorized as a romantic comedy. Although the scenes involving the courtly lovers are rather romantic and contain remote comicalness, they can still be considered comical simply because they are not tragic, their eventual reunion being the comedic rudiments. The sources of authentic humour in play are merry wars of Benedick and Beatrice and the incompetence of Dogberry.

The witty verbal exchanges of Benedick and Beatrice are included to amuse the audience via the humour created, thus entertaining them. One can assume that the obvious reason Beatrice has “merry wars” with Benedick as he challenges her quick fire smart remarks and belligerent attitude by his witty comebacks such as calling her “Lady Disdain” which matches her name for him “Signior Mountanto”.

The matching heretic and contradictory traits of Benedick and Beatrice are momentarily keeping them apart but play a role in bringing them together and tying them in love as the performance proceeds. Fascinatingly, before Don Pedro and company’s entry into the play, Beatrice’s continuous intention to degrade Benedick’s reputation will puzzle the audience whether Benedick is really a “good soldier” with “honourable virtues” or just a “stuffed man” who is only a “good soldier to a lady” as Beatrice describes

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him implying he is more active in a woman's private room than he is on a battlefield. This further magnifies the intensity of thrill amongst the audience

In addition, Shakespeare's use of vivid language in the argumentative and slanderous speeches of Benedick and Beatrice will resemble a perfectly performed fencing contest acting as a source of sheer hilarity and also keeps them interested in the events which follow in the play. His application of animal imagery for mocking comparisons such as Benedick calling Beatrice a "rare parrot teacher" when she rebukes him, "A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours" infuses the element of wistful humour, sarcasm and light heartedness in the play. These round of insults sparred on Benedick by Beatrice in the very first two scenes of the play will ask the audience the question whether their witty rivalry will be one of the future sources of humour in the play and what significance does it carry. To see if the fictional reality on stage matches their expectation, they will be persuaded to continue watching the play and be entertained (via the soliloquy speeches of Benedick and Beatrice which follows after the gulling take effect. They melt away their stubborn views on marriage being a stupid institution) and admit falling in love with the other).

Just like the cerebral repartee diverts the audience from the escalation of hostility of the negative characters, mainly the iniquitous Don John. The second main source of verbal humour in the play is the self-opinionated character of Dogberry. His misunderstanding and subsequent destruction of the English language via Shakespeare's use of malapropisms in his speeches is a basis of laughter throughout the play. A classical example of his deprived

linguistic skills are palpable in Act 3 Scene V when he fails to pass the plot of Borachio's plan to Leonato but exceeds to make the audience laugh as he burbles, " one word sir, our watch sir, have indeed comprehended (instead of apprehend) two auspicious (instead of suspicious) person . . ." (lines 42 – 45). Also, because his unique misuse of logic bewilders everyone except his companion Verges, the humorous effect is magnified. Besides, Dogberry's unfitness in his responsible role of Town Constable will also contribute in adding humour as the Shakespearean audience when they would compare him with the authoritarian police officers in their society. Because he has a pompous attitude and so desperately attempts to impress other characters on the stage and fails so miserably even without realizing it makes him appear even funnier.

His bizarre vocabulary provides us with the comic relief in the play and assures us that the successes of villainy will be short termed and that peace will be restored in the end. By being preoccupied with the work of finding language related mistakes in Dogberry's speeches, the audience would be prevented from lamenting over Hero's overt humiliation. Shakespeare makes blatant distinctions of his lower status from other more erudite characters higher up in the social ladder by including Dogberry's speeches in prose rather than blank verse with iambic pentameter which allows affluent characters such as Claudio to maintain their status of " high rhythm".

Looking at Dogberry's significance in the play from a different point of view than that of being the jester, he can also be classed as the play' real hero. Although, unable to communicate himself in a comprehensible manner and

being a disgrace on the authority, he and Verges remain the only characters who were successful in uncovering Don Jon's and Borachio's treacherous plot so that Hero's dignity could be restored again. This suggests the Elizabethan audience that people should listen more to the lower classes because even their plain ignorance can sometimes grasp very vital information as the culprit Borachio, himself, admits to Don Pedro in Act 5 Scene 1, lines 219-220, "What your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light". Finally, this would lead the Elizabethan audience to the derivation that, unlike in their society, the less educated you are in the Messinian society the more likely you are to remove deception and corruption as it is the lower-class character of Dogberry who finds the resolution of the play.

In conclusion, I believe we learn that the society of Messina is male-dominated and hence the theme of female tameness is quite prominent as they are the typical characters in the play who are constantly controlled by others especially the heroine of the play mostly shown as helpless. However, both sexes use deception to thrive in their particular objectives although it is the men who use the wicked form of treachery as a means to succeed in a social context even if this means at the cost of maltreatment of women whereas women use the more light hearted form of it for purposes of unity and reconciliation. Despite this, the Messinians were frequently involved in amusements from which they entertained themselves, the merriment being in the form of music, dance and practical jokes or from hypocritical pursuits such as masquerades.