

How does
shakespeare present
difficulties in
relationships in
"much ado about
not..."



**ASSIGN
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Shakespeare's play "Much Ado About Nothing" conveys the typical attributes of an English comedy although it is set in Messina, Italy. He manages to present the many difficult aspects of love and romance, as well as portraying the patriarchal society, whilst still keeping the light heartedness that comedy's of that era showed. The play is based around Count Claudio, Hero, Beatrice and Benedick and the problems they face as they embark on their journey of love and self discovery. The Masked Ball and Wedding scene are key points in "Much Ado About Nothing" as they show the couples at their best and worse. Beatrice manages to convey her feelings towards men quite early on in the Masked Ball scene;" I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face! I had rather lie in the woollen.

" This shows how Beatrice would rather suffer discomfort than be married. She does not believe there is any man alive that is suitable for her. Benedick also makes his feelings for women clear right at the beginning of the play. He re-enforces this point directing it towards Beatrice in the same scene after she insults him " He is the Prince's jester, a very dull fool.

.." Benedick claims that Beatrice has " misused me past the endurance of a block!" and this shows how angry and upset he is even though he has a very misogynistic view. During the wedding scene we begin to see Beatrice's softer side though;" I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one.

" This lets the audience know that Benedick and Beatrice have had a relationship in the past and Benedick gave cause for it to end. This also helps the audience to understand the bases of Beatrice's character and why she acts reserved in her feelings towards others and doesn't act in the traditional

feminine way (To be seen and not heard). During the wedding scene we see how Beatrice's temper can get the better of her and how the patriarchal society can get in the way of what she sees as justice." O God that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place." Beatrice wishes that she were a man so that she could do her cousin Hero justice. She is so furious with Claudio for embarrassing Hero that she wishes she could consume his heart in the way he did Hero's.

She then takes it one step further when she tells Benedick to " Kill Claudio!" if he loves her. Whereas on the other hand Hero is sweeter and would never speak out of turn or demand anything from anyone, no matter whom they were. Even when she is being accused of all sorts during her own wedding, she hardly says more than two words. She also manages to stay relatively calm and polite towards the Count...

" I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord." It is obvious that Hero is rather distraught at this accusation yet still treats the Count with respect. This is another example of how the patriarchal society controls everything. She refuses to express her anger and instead almost pleads with Claudio to believe her.

This also shows the contrast between the two couples. On one hand Benedick is agreeing to murder Claudio for Beatrice " I am engaged, I will challenge him" and on the other Claudio is accusing Hero of being unfaithful "...approved wanton". This shows how inexperienced Claudio and Hero are and how new their relationship is, trust has not yet been built between them

whereas Benedick and Beatrice are merely rekindling their relationship and have already accepted each others faults.

Shakespeare also uses clothing metaphors throughout “ Much Ado About Nothing” Such as “...see you one day fitted with a husband” and “..

. attir’d in wonder” this is a constant theme and can provide a stable base for the play. Shakespeare also shows the importance of virginity and reputation during this era through his characters. Leonato expresses the importance of reputation when his daughter is wrongly accused of having sex. First of all he believes Claudio, Don Pedro and Don John when they accuse “ gentle Hero” and doesn’t ask her side at all. He is too worried about what other people may think about him and his family to even second thought that they may be lying or a deception may have taken place.

In conclusion Shakespeare uses metaphors and dramatic language throughout the play such as “ approved wanton” and “...see you one day fitted with a husband”. Shakespeare does this to show unusual the points of view of Beatrice and Benedick are as well as get the dramatic mishaps for that era. For example Beatrice uses language not expected of a lady and does not want to get married.

Dramatic language is also used to show where women stood in society, especially in the wedding scene where Hero receives large amounts of verbal abuse but does not retaliate. This dramatic language often becomes humorous which is displayed through the denial of love between Beatrice and Benedick.