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## Representation Of Women In Much Ado About Nothing

In Elizabeth Era, men would be considered as more superior than women because of the gender roles. Also, men would have a higher expectation of women's appearance (Howard 180). Thus, beauty would be mainly valuable for women. At the same time, the typical Elizabethan women were not often seen or heard in the public, and they all had no legal property, no right for the poll and no any kind of authority in the household (Sharnetter). In Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, is rarely focused on the conflict of the two sexes and the development of the relationships between the male and female in this drama. In addition, Shakespeare did a remarkable job at differentiating the stereotype of Elizabethan women, he created the plot with two important female protagonists: Beatrice and Hero. Thus, this essay is to analyze the representation of women in this play by figuring out the individuals who got different standards or characteristics even women are depicted as weak and powerless.

In *Much Ado About Nothing*, both female protagonists are involved and present, which can perfectly indicate the portrayal of women in Shakespeare's point of view in the play. Hero and Beatrice have big contrast by being the similar class and with close relatives; some other female characters like the servants and Ursula, they are also portraying the lower class women, who can be comparable. This scene gives the sense of comedy as it used to have dramatic irony in the relationship between Beatrice and Benedick with their 'entertaining banter', so the play has an engaging plot with those dramatic elements, even though the play can indicate the portrayal women in the play (Straznicky 141). Shakespeare wrote this play around 1600, which was in the Renaissance period. In some sense, Hero can be considered as the typical or ideal type of women in the Renaissance Era, as she is quiet and has a good manner and loyal around men. On the other hand, Beatrice is different from the traditional type of women in a particular period, who breaks the archetypal stereotype of female, as she has great self-esteem and independent (Henderson 200). Her characteristic indicates that the play encourages both traditional and unconventional women in unnecessary and unfairness.

In Act 2 Scene 1, Hero does not have much to say, and what quote she says the most would be like "He is of very melancholy disposition" referring to Don John. This may indicate that Shakespeare may have chosen to interpret Hero in this manner to illustrate the compare and contrast retains between Hero and Beatrice. In addition, it is obvious that the play carries on for the readers and audience to show that how Hero admires Beatrice, just like when Don Pedro asked Hero to talk to Claudio and she mentions: "you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk, and especially when I walk away." (2.1) This shows that Hero uses something similar to what Beatrice will tease or talk to the men.

Besides, from the beginning of Act 1 Scene 1, Beatrice is different from Hero as she represented as a well-spoken and intelligent lady. It seems like Shakespeare wants to confirm the image that Beatrice dares to share her mind with everyone meet by chances. This is evidence that Beatrice and the messenger start communication and talk about Benedick: "lord to a lord, a man to a man, stuffed with all honourable virtues" (1.1). Then Beatrice replies: "It is so indeed, he is no less than a stuffed man, ... well, we are all mortal." (1.1) This answer makes her like a woman who is not afraid of saying out her own thinking and also stay strong in the argument. Shakespeare may want to represent that Beatrice with her manner to show the

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female in the Elizabethan period could be smarter than men and could imagine them to be clever. Also, women have only a little or even no power in society during the Elizabethan period. As a woman, their main role was to get married and take care of their children, so that could be the evidence to indicate that women at that time were not even seen as second class citizens. Probably Shakespeare just gave Beatrice as a sense of humour in the play as people might not take it seriously and see it as a joke when there was the independent girl. However, Beatrice may represent the woman who dares to challenge the gender inequality at that time, as she is a proud and strong lady in Shakespearean play. Since she rejects to marry as she does not find a partner and she is unwilling to let the authority and freedom pass to her husband. She pursues equality with men, which is challenging gender inequality during that period.

Actually, there is another point to show that the play is even Shakespeare is a male playwright, yet he is not a biased writer as he creates some plots which may not let the male characters win the conflicts and arguments. Certainly, the female characters that will stand out and some case, just like in Act 4 Scene 1, Hero is charged with being disloyal to Claudio. In the beginning, Claudio looks so victorious when he charges with an innocent woman, yet at the end of the play, he feels embarrassed when he is trapped by someone even Hero is true to him. Also, Shakespeare explains the role of two pairs of lovers and how to do that interpersonal relationship work. As he is progressively indicating the true relationship between the plot and the characters by using the essential scene. Through his play, Shakespeare reveals the dark side of gender inequality during the Elizabethan era. He does so through the character Beatrice, who stands out and yearns for gender equality, even she tries not to marry to keep her independence, but she understands that society may not let her to speak out her mind when it protects herself (Suzuki,139). At that time, honor considers as anything, if only saved by guys who conflict with others. The honor of a man may rely on how woman looks at, but she may not give a voice in her honor if this is criticized (Cook 190).