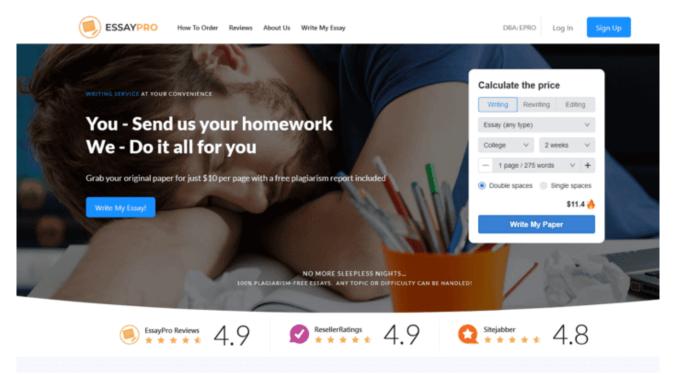
Much Ado About Nothing - A Feminist Perspective of Hero



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A Feminist Perspective of Hero in Much Ado About NothingUnlike the title of this piece suggests, Hero did not undergo her transformation in Much Ado About Nothing through magic. Rather, Hero was a victim of the double standards and illogical fears that the men of Shakespeare's plays commonly held. The following quote sums it up quite well:In the plays female sexuality is not expressed variously through courtship, pregnancy, childbearing, and remarriage, as it is in the period. Instead it is narrowly defined and contained by the conventions of Petrarchan love and cuckoldry. The first idealizes women as a catalyst to male virtue, insisting on their absolute purity. The second fears and mistrusts them for their (usually fantasized) infidelity, an infidelity that requires their actual or temporary elimination from the world of men, which then re-forms [sic] itself around the certainty of men's shared victimization (Neely 127). Hero's plight in Much Ado About Nothing is a perfect example of how the skewed male perspective can turn a sweet and innocent girl into a scheming strumpet in no time. The main problem is young Count Claudio. He is immature when it comes to matters of love, and it shows when he hints of his growing feelings for Hero when he asks Benedick what he thinks of her (I.i.161). Claudio cannot come out and just say that he has feelings for Hero, he has to seek

approval from his male counterparts first. While talking to both Benedick and Don Pedro, Claudio describes his feelings as passion first (I.i.219-220), and then he says, "That I love her, I feel" (I.i.228), indicating that he knows he feels something for Hero, but he is unsure of exactly what his feeling...... middle of paper Ironically, this has occurred because of the folly of the men, almost making up for the double standards exercised in the beginning...But not quite. Hero should not have had to depend on the men to regain her honor. Works CitedMuch Ado About Nothing. Directed by Kenneth Branagh. Samuel Goldwyn Company and Renaissance Films, 1993.Much Ado About Nothing. The Riverside Shakespeare, 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997. 366-398.Neely, Carol Thomas. "Shakespeare's Women: Historical Facts and Dramatic Representations." Shakespeare's Personality. Ed. Norman N. Holland, Sidney Homan, and Bernard J. Paris. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. 116-134.Ranald, Margaret Loftus. "'As Marriage Binds, and Blood Breaks': English Marriage and Shakespeare" Shakespeare Quarterly 30, (1979): 68-81.

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