

dialectic of success and failure as users surf the web in search of new material.<sup>33</sup> In 2016, the best of social media *Much Ado About Nothing* suggests that this dynamic is, if anything, more exacerbated than ever. Encountering media hybrids of Shakespeare piecemeal and on multiple platforms, Elsaesser's insouciant flaneur is increasingly a stranger adrift in a strange land.

But the news is by no means all bad. The emergence of the newest versions of *Much Ado* on social media points to not only new developments within social media production and consumption, but also new artistic configurations. The video blog and web series examples of *Much Ado About Nothing* discussed here are witty, skilful dramas produced by very talented artists. However the Whedon film and these slightly later spinoffs relate (or not) to one another, they have enriched the Shakespearean scene. Even more fascinating is the very way in which social media Shakespeare is changing. Once, YouTube was the province of enthusiastic amateur videographers from the youth sector. Now, professional theatre companies and commercial enterprises on YouTube mimic their ethos and methods. At the same time, the increased professionalization of amateur Shakespeare production in social media has elevated the amateur video into high art. This is convergence culture.

## 8

### Resources

#### 'How Apt It Is to Learn' – Studying and Teaching *Much Ado About Nothing*

*Brett Greatley-Hirsch and  
Sarah Neville*

In this chapter, we survey recent print editions of the play and pertinent online resources, and propose critical approaches to studying and strategies for teaching the play from thematic, critical-theoretical, textual and performance perspectives. A selected annotated bibliography of relevant criticism immediately follows the discussion of each critical approach.

#### A survey of recent print editions

*Much Ado About Nothing* first appeared in print as a quarto edition of 1600 (or 'Q'), printed by Valentine Simmes for the

stationers Andrew Wise and William Asply. This edition serves as the basis for all subsequent texts of the play. A copy of Q annotated with references to performance was used as copy when the play was later printed in the First Folio of 1623 (or 'F1'), introducing some 140 (mostly minor) changes to the text, including the insertion of act divisions and a number of stage directions. With only these minor variations to take into account, modern editions of *Much Ado* are largely more focused on the play's historical contexts, critical reception and performance history than its textual issues.

## Collected works editions

- The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*. Gen. eds Richard Proudfoot, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan, rev. edn. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2011.
- The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. Ed. David Bevington, 7th edn. New York: Pearson Longman, 2014.
- The RSC Shakespeare: Complete Works*. Gen. eds Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen. New York: Modern Library, 2007.
- The New Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*. Gen. eds Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terri Bourus and Gabriel Egan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- The Norton Shakespeare*. Gen. ed. Stephen Greenblatt, 3rd edn. New York: W.W. Norton, 2015.

*Much Ado* has appeared in every edition of Shakespeare's collected works since the First Folio was printed in 1623. With space at a premium, modern printed editions of Shakespeare's collected works typically offer limited play-specific introductory materials and commentary. Annotations, if and when they are provided, are generally confined to glosses of unfamiliar terms and concise explications of relevant cultural, historical and topical references. If textual notes are included at all, they are strictly kept to a minimum, or otherwise relegated to separate reference volumes (as in the case of the New Oxford Shakespeare) or to subscription-based, digital-only content (as in the case of the Norton Shakespeare). Some collected works

editions, like *The Arden Shakespeare Complete Works*, simply provide a text without any annotation or commentary to assist the reader. The economical approach to annotation and commentary adopted by many collected works editions makes them ideal reference volumes, whereas single-text editions, able to provide more generous critical and editorial material and assistance to the reader, may represent a better option for teaching and learning.

## Single-text editions

- Bate, Jonathan, and Eric Rasmussen, eds. *Much Ado About Nothing*, RSC Shakespeare. London: Macmillan, 2009.
- Cox, John F., ed. *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shakespeare in Production. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Mares, F.H., ed. *Much Ado About Nothing*, New Cambridge Shakespeare, rev. edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- McEachern, Claire, ed. *Much Ado About Nothing*, Arden Shakespeare (Third Series), rev. edn. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2015.
- Mowat, Barbara A., and Paul Werstine, eds. *Much Ado About Nothing*, Folger Shakespeare Library. New York: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1995.
- Zitner, Sheldon P., ed. *Much Ado About Nothing*, Oxford Shakespeare. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

All of the major print series offer single-text editions of *Much Ado* suitable for personal study and classroom use, though each has its particular editorial quirks and critical priorities. Some, like the Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Much Ado*, edited by Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine, incorporate features designed to meet the specific needs of a student readership, such as useful scene-by-scene plot summaries and generous facing-page explanatory notes (illustrated with relevant contemporary images sourced from the Folger Shakespeare Library's collection of early modern printed books), as well as an introduction addressing the play's

language and an annotated list of recommended further reading. The Folger edition of *Much Ado* also includes an interpretative essay by Gail Kern Paster on masculine anxieties about marriage and sexual betrayal, which serves as an excellent model of a historically informed close reading of the play for students new to thinking and writing critically about Shakespeare.

Intended for a more advanced readership, the other single-text print editions of *Much Ado* listed above offer introductory materials and commentary of comparatively greater breadth and depth. While the introductions cover much of the same critical ground, attending to fundamental contexts including gender, sex and social rank, as well as detailed discussion of *Much Ado*'s sources, language and structure, these single-text print editions differ in their treatment and coverage of the play in performance.

In keeping with his remarks about the need for editors to keep footnotes short and few, Sheldon P. Zitner's commentary for the Oxford Shakespeare edition of the play is thrifty but serviceable. By contrast, his introduction is ample and wide-ranging, including discussion of *Much Ado* in relation to Shakespeare's other romantic comedies (1–5), its date and sources (5–14), title, place and setting (14–18), as well as critical readings of the play's characters grouped by dramatic function and social position: 'Lovers' (19–38), 'Brothers' (38–42) and 'Gentlewomen, Conspirators, and Others' (42–8). Zitner's introduction is also notably sensitive to issues of dramaturgy, with insightful discussion of the play's 'Plot Construction' (48–50), 'Act, Scene, and Pace' (50–2), 'Contrasts and Links Between Scenes' (52–6) and 'Local Effects' (56–8). Annotations throughout the text further demonstrate Zitner's keen eye for performance possibilities. His discussion of the play's stage history is impressively detailed, paying particular attention to nineteenth-century productions ('Stage History', 58–70). However, as it was published in 1993, Zitner's performance history is now dated; covering only stage productions up to 1991, Zitner's discussion necessarily

excludes the many important stage productions and screen adaptations of *Much Ado* which have since appeared.

If Zitner's edition for the Oxford Shakespeare was remarkably sparing in its commentary, F.H. Mares's edition for the New Cambridge Shakespeare is equally notable for its attempt to avoid promoting any particular critical reading of *Much Ado*. Mares's discussion of 'The Criticism of the Play' (29–41) is something of a misnomer, since it engages with little scholarship, ruminates on the theoretical limits of interpretation and is arguably more concerned with restricting – rather than opening up – readings of the play: 'I do not dispute the infinite variety of possible readings', Mares writes, 'but in my view that infinite variety is constrained within certain bounds' (30). His treatment of the play's 'Stage History' (10–29) is more generous and especially detailed in its coverage of twentieth-century stage productions. When first published in 1988, Mares's edition surveyed major stage productions of *Much Ado* up to the early 1980s; it was subsequently reprinted in 2003 with an additional essay on 'Recent Stage, Film and Critical Interpretations' by Angela Stock (48–59), which briefly addressed British stage productions up to 2000 as well as Kenneth Branagh's 1993 film adaptation. In the course of her short stage history, Stock offers a perceptive observation about Beatrice's age on stage: 'Like the decision to play her as a self-assertive character, frumpy spinster, defensive feminist or domineering Amazon, her supposed age is a good indication of a production's idea of romance and its views of gender relations' (54). While concisely written – it spans only four pages – and necessarily selective, Stock's survey of post-1980s criticism on *Much Ado* is a much-needed supplement to Mares's original.

Of the single-text editions surveyed here, Claire McEachern's revised edition of *Much Ado* for the Arden Shakespeare (Third Series) offers generous annotations and perhaps the most lengthy critical introduction, almost a third of which is taken up with 'Building a Play: Sources and Contexts' (4–52), a detailed examination of Shakespeare's transformation of the

play's prose narrative sources. This is followed by consideration of *Much Ado's* 'Structure and Style' (52–82), a notably brief discussion of the play's critical reception (124–31), and a section on textual analysis (131–51). McEachern's discussion of 'Staging *Much Ado*' (82–124) eschews the conventional chronological survey of productions and focuses instead on how productions have addressed certain 'questions of staging' – such as choices of tone and setting (social, geographical, temporal) – and 'their implications for the play's effect' (84). For the revised edition, McEachern appends a new 'Additions and Reconsiderations' section to the introduction (153–81). While McEachern offers some discussion of recent scholarship, the 'Additions and Reconsiderations' section is almost entirely devoted to analysis of stage and screen productions appearing in the interim since the first edition was published in 2006, and might have been more usefully integrated into the relevant introductory sections.

In keeping with the theatrical auspices of the series, Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen's RSC Shakespeare edition of *Much Ado* privileges matters of performance in its introduction and commentary. Annotations (prepared by Eleanor Lowe and Héloïse Sénéchal) are glosses of unfamiliar terms with the occasional concise contextual note. Like the Folger, the RSC edition offers scene-by-scene analysis by Esme Miskimmin (102–13). In addition to Bate's general introduction (1–12), the edition includes an overview of the play's performance history by Jan Sewell (115–26) and discussion of Royal Shakespeare Company productions by Penelope Freedman (126–41), as well as interviews with actors and directors by Bate and Kevin Wright (142–63). Critics derided the decision by the RSC editors to use F1 as a base (or 'copy') text for the *Complete Works* edition as an uncritical fetishization of the Folio. Since the single-text edition reproduces the *Complete Works* text, the objection remains – this is the only modern edition of *Much Ado* taking F1 as its copy-text, and the textual notes (100–1) record the numerous readings from Q favoured over those of F1.

Readers interested in matters of performance to the exclusion of critical reception and historical context might consider using an edition in the Shakespeare in Production series, launched by Cambridge University Press in 1996, in which the New Cambridge Shakespeare text of the plays are annotated with interpretations from (predominantly major British and North American) stage and screen productions. In the introduction to his edition of *Much Ado* for the series (1–85), John F. Cox tracks the play's stage history up to Michael Boyd's 1996 RSC production, analysing theatrical trends and points of departure (such as Victorian constructions of Beatrice, 35–43, and various twentieth-century settings, 74–5) and attending to film and television adaptations (81–4). Cox's annotations offer valuable insights into the ways that directorial decisions and the treatment of specific speeches, passages and even individual words have resulted in radically different interpretations of the play.

## A glance at online resources

### Digital editions

*Drama Online*, Bloomsbury/Faber & Faber: <http://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/>.

*Folger Digital Texts*, Folger Shakespeare Library: <http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org/>.

*Internet Shakespeare Editions*: <http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/>.

*The Norton Shakespeare Digital Edition*, W.W. Norton: <https://digital.wwnorton.com/shakespeare3>.

*Oxford Scholarly Editions Online*, Oxford University Press: <http://www.oxfordscholarlyeditions.com/>.

At time of writing, there are no completed 'born-digital' editions of *Much Ado* – that is, editions with no prior existence in print. Gretchen Minton and Cliff Werier are preparing the first born-digital scholarly edition of *Much Ado* for Internet Shakespeare Editions, which, when complete, will offer an

annotated modern-spelling text of the play with collations of textual variants and historical editions, critical and textual introductions, and a performance history, supplemented with additional contextual materials and multimedia content. At time of writing, the edition provides accurate semi-diplomatic transcriptions and facsimile images of the Q and F1 texts, as well as facsimile images of the play as printed in the Second, Third and Fourth Folios, and in the 1709 and 1733 collected works editions by Nicholas Rowe and Lewis Theobald respectively. All content published by the Internet Shakespeare Editions is subject to rigorous peer review and is completely 'open access' – that is, made freely available online.

Some of the print editions of *Much Ado* mentioned in the previous section are also available online – or soon will be. *Folger Digital Texts* makes the texts of the Folger Shakespeare Library editions freely available online. While *Folger Digital Texts* accurately replicate the formatting, lineation and pagination, they do not reproduce any of the critical apparatus or commentary present in the print volumes.

*Drama Online*, a platform developed by Bloomsbury in partnership with Faber & Faber and available by institutional subscription, incorporates digitized versions of the Arden Shakespeare series, including McEachern's edition of *Much Ado*. The *Drama Online* interface provides added analytical functionality, allowing users to generate 'part-books' for each character, and to compare words and speeches between acts and characters.

Digitized versions of *The New Oxford Shakespeare* materials (including Anna Pruitt's modern- and original-spelling editions of *Much Ado*), as well as individual volumes from the Oxford Shakespeare series (including Zitner's edition of *Much Ado*), are accessible through the *Oxford Scholarly Editions Online* platform published by Oxford University Press. Ordinarily, *Oxford Scholarly Editions Online* is available only by institutional subscription; however, personal subscriptions are now included with the purchase of *The New Oxford Shakespeare* print volumes.

*The Norton Shakespeare Digital Edition* reproduces the same text of *Much Ado* prepared by Trudi Darby as the print version, with the addition of the nine 'textual comments' and four 'performance comments' that are referred to – but not reproduced – in the print edition. Curiously, while *Much Ado* survives in two early versions (Q and F1), the play is represented in both print and digital editions of *The Norton Shakespeare* solely by a text based on Q – despite the 'single-text editing' rationale described by the general textual editors justifying separate editions of both early versions. Access to *The Norton Shakespeare Digital Edition* is by registration of an individual code, whether supplied with purchase of the print edition or purchased separately.

Although it is still currently in development, the *Cambridge World Shakespeare Online* will bring digitized versions of the New Cambridge Shakespeare series – including Mares's edition of *Much Ado* – together with the *Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare*, articles from *Shakespeare Survey*, and other works of reference and criticism published by Cambridge University Press.

## Prompt-books

*The Shakespeare Collection*, Gale: <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/shakespeare>.

*Shakespeare in Performance: Prompt Books from the Folger Shakespeare Library*, Adam Matthew Digital: <http://www.shakespeareinperformance.amdigital.co.uk/>.

'Prompt-books' of *Much Ado* – that is, copies of the play annotated for specific performance, noting entrances and exits, emended lines and changes to the text, and other stage business – offer unique insights into the ways that actors, directors and other theatre practitioners have approached the play. Given their value as historical records of performance, especially in the absence of other archival material, many prompt-books have been digitized. *The Shakespeare Collection*, a database

published by Gale and available by institutional subscription, offers digitized microfilm of significant Shakespeare prompt-books, six of which are prompt-books and rehearsal scripts of *Much Ado* from productions between 1804 and 1949. The database also includes digitized microfilm of Gordon Crosse's unpublished theatrical diaries, which record his responses to over 500 performances he attended in the United Kingdom between 1890 and 1953; of these, there are twenty entries for *Much Ado* dated from 1895 to 1952. Published by Adam Matthew Digital and similarly available by institutional subscription, *Shakespeare in Performance* is a digital archive of the Folger Shakespeare Library's collection of more than 1,000 prompt-books dating from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, representing productions from the UK, the USA and further abroad. It contains thirty-eight prompt-books of *Much Ado* between 1788 and 1926.

## Archival materials

*Digital Image Collection*, Folger Shakespeare Library: <http://luna.folger.edu/>.

*Discover Shakespeare*, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: <http://collections.shakespeare.org.uk/>.

*Shakespeare in Performance Database*, Internet Shakespeare Editions: <http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/>.

The Folger Shakespeare Library's *Digital Image Collection* provides access to an impressive and growing digitized collection of artworks, archival and promotional materials, costumes, set and costume designs, and production photographs, dating from the seventeenth century to the present day. Hundreds of these digitized materials relate to *Much Ado*, including twenty-five nineteenth-century watercolour illustrations from Charles Kean's scrapbook (Folger ART Vol. d49). The *Digital Image Collection* is freely accessible, and use of its materials, unless under non-Folger copyright, is subject to a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike (CC-BY-SA) licence.

In addition to its own impressive museum and library, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust maintains the Royal Shakespeare Company's archives and collections, which include more than 4,000 artworks depicting stage productions and artistic interpretations of Shakespeare's work since the seventeenth century, as well as costumes, props and designs from the 1800s to the present day. Objects are catalogued in the Trust's *Discover Shakespeare* database, and digital facsimiles and images are often available. The database also contains information for over 4,000 RSC productions since 1879, including more than eighty productions of *Much Ado*, many with digitized photographs. *Discover Shakespeare* is free to use, but use of digitized materials varies – some digital objects are subject to a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC-BY-NC-ND) licence, while others are subject to copyright or require licensing from the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Theatre companies from around the world contribute digitized archival materials to the Internet Shakespeare Editions' *Shakespeare in Performance* database. Hundreds of these artefacts relate to *Much Ado*, including still photographs of productions, theatre programmes, prompt-books, posters and press clippings. While the Internet Shakespeare Editions is open access, permissible uses vary from artefact to artefact because individual theatre companies determine the copyright status for the material they contribute to the *Shakespeare in Performance* database.

## Digital audio and video

*BBC Shakespeare Archive Resources*, BBC: <http://shakespeare.ch.bbc.co.uk/>.

*Digital Theatre Plus*: <http://www.digitaltheatreplus.com/>.

*Drama Online*, Bloomsbury/Faber & Faber: <http://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/>.

*MIT Global Shakespeares Video & Performance Archive*, MIT: <http://globalshakespeares.mit.edu/>.

To commemorate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) launched the *BBC Shakespeare Archive Resource*, making hundreds of digitized images, video recordings of productions, and television and radio programmes from the 1950s to 1989 freely available to schools, colleges and universities across the United Kingdom. (British users unattached to institutions of formal education and users outside of the UK are unable to access this content.) Resources for *Much Ado* include video recordings of Franco Zeffirelli's 1965 National Theatre production and Stuart Burge's 1984 BBC Television Shakespeare production, an audio recording of John Powell's 1969 BBC Radio 3 production, and numerous photographs.

A number of repertory theatre companies have begun to make digital video recordings of their Shakespeare productions available to rent or purchase on demand. For example, the 2011 production of *Much Ado* directed by Jeremy Herrin for Shakespeare's Globe London may be rented or downloaded to own through the Globe's *Globe Player* service, or streamed by subscription to *Drama Online. Digital Theatre Plus*, available by institutional subscription, offers streaming video recordings of theatre productions and interviews, including the 2011 Wyndham Theatre production of *Much Ado* (starring Catherine Tate and David Tennant), Joseph Papp's 1972 CBS TV production of the New York Shakespeare Festival's Broadway staging (starring Kathleen Widdoes and Sam Waterston), and Donald McWhinnie's 1978 BBC Television production. Users can also rent or buy an increasing number of film adaptations and televised stage productions from general vendors of digital video, such as Amazon Video, including the 1993 Kenneth Branagh and 2012 Joss Whedon film adaptations.

The *MIT Global Shakespeares Video & Performance Archive* is a growing collection of streaming video-recorded stage and screen productions of Shakespeare sourced from around the world. Recordings are freely accessible online, and are supplemented with critical essays, actor and crew interviews,

scripts, and subtitles for foreign-language productions. Among others, the *Archive* includes video recordings of a 2003 Portuguese-language production of *Much Ado* from Brazil, and a 1986 production in Mandarin adapting the play for *huangmei* (Chinese opera). Productions like these demonstrate the range of global, cultural responses to Shakespeare outside the Anglophone theatrical tradition.

## Critical approaches and lenses for classroom study

### Textual history and sources

*Much Ado* first appeared in print as a quarto edition of 1600 published by stationers Andrew Wise and William Asply. The play had been mentioned in the Stationers' Company register on 4 August 1600, where it appeared in a list of four plays belonging to the Lord Chamberlain's Men that were 'to be stayed', possibly an attempt to forestall or prevent their publication by unauthorized agents. However, only a few weeks later, on 23 August 1600, Wise and Asply entered for their copy the rights to both *Much Ado* and *2 Henry IV*. The title page of their edition (or 'Q'), which was printed by Valentine Simmes, advertised both the play's theatrical origins and its authorship: 'Much adoe about | Nothing. | *As it hath been sundrie times publikely* | acted by the right honourable, the Lord | Chamberlain his seruants. | *Written by William Shakespeare*'. A copy of Q annotated with references to performance was later used as copy for the First Folio of 1623 (or 'F1'). More detailed textual introductions can be found in the editions surveyed above.

Several of the play's textual cruxes offer opportunities for class discussion. Details such as Q's silent 'ghost' characters of Innogen, Leonato's wife (mentioned in the entry directions to 1.1 and 2.1), the 'kinsman' (2.1.0) and the Town Clerk (4.2.0)

hint at Shakespeare's writing process and offer possibilities for performance. Do these characters really exist? If so, what do they signify? Michael D. Friedman ("Hush'd") suggests that Innogen's silent presence is part of the play's focus on marital and musical harmony. Likewise, stage directions and variant speech prefixes that use the names of actors and musicians demonstrate the ways that roles were written with specific talents in mind (Kathman). One crux in particular allows for an exploration and rebuttal of editorial emendation: Leonato's 'Peace! I will stop your mouth' (5.4.97), which is sometimes transferred to Benedick (Maurer).

Stories of unjustly spurned women are common in romance literature, but Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (translated into English by John Harington in 1591) and Matteo Bandello's *La Prima Parte de la Nouvelle* (translated into French by François de Belleforest in 1569) are generally agreed to be direct sources for Hero's plot in *Much Ado*. Critics have nonetheless focused on the ways that Shakespeare adapts or amplifies elements within his sources (McEachern, 'Fathering'; Moisan; Salingar). Additional studies have focused on the influence of Baldassare Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* on the character of Benedick (Collington, "Stuffed"), ballad culture (Collington, "Pennyworth"), and the association of jest books with Beatrice (Munro).

Collington, Philip D. 'A "Pennyworth" of Marital Advice: Bachelors and Ballad Culture in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. In *Shakespeare's Comedies of Love*, edited by Karen Bamford and Richard Knowles, 30–54. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. Argues that 'Shakespeare's witty courtship culture is both a product of, and participant in, England's ballad culture.'

Collington, Philip D. "'Stuffed With All Honourable Virtues': *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Book of the Courtier*". *Studies in Philology* 103, no. 3 (2006): 281–312. Examines influences of Castiglione's *Courtier* on the characterization of Benedick and on thematic events in the play such as sprezzatura and service.

Friedman, Michael D. 'The Editorial Recuperation of Claudio'. *Comparative Drama* 25, no. 4 (1991): 369–86. Explores how

editorial emendations construct the character of Claudio and affect stage treatments of him.

Friedman, Michael D. "'Hush'd on Purpose to Grace Harmony": Wives and Silence in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Theatre Journal* 42, no. 3 (1990): 350–63. Concludes that the play's musical harmony signifies a marital concord predicated on female silence.

Kathman, David. 'Actors' Names as Textual Evidence'. *Theatre Notebook* 63, no. 2 (2009): 70–9. Outlines evidence for the historical musician John Wilson, whose name appears in F1 and who likely played Balthasar in a post-1611 revival of the play.

Maurer, Margaret. 'Leonato and Beatrice in Act 5, Scene 5, Line 97 of *Much Ado About Nothing*'. In *Reading What's There: Essays on Shakespeare in Honor of Stephen Booth*, edited by Michael J. Collins, 89–98. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2014. Argues for maintaining the Quarto and Folio readings, which assign the line to Leonato, instead of the editorial tradition which transfers it to Benedick.

McEachern, Claire. 'Fathering Herself: A Source Study of Shakespeare's Feminism'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (1988): 269–90. Argues that Bandello's tale and Shakespeare's play show 'marked differences' in the patriarchal relationship between Hero and Leonato; in *Much Ado*, their bond is marked as much by personal investment as by public perception.

Moisan, Thomas. 'Deforming Sources: Literary Antecedents and Their Traces in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Shakespeare Studies* 31 (2003): 165–83. Asserts that the play's use of Bandello and Ariosto as sources is characterized by 'furtiveness' and 'ambivalence', both of which are also mirrored in the play's approach to character and politics.

Munro, Ian. 'Shakespeare's Jestbook: Wit, Print, Performance'. *ELH* 71, no.1 (2004): 89–113. Examines Benedick's accusation that Beatrice derives her humour from a popular book of jests to conclude that female wit is suspiciously rote rather than genuine, setting 'feminine print and masculine performance' in direct opposition.

Salingar, Leo. 'Borachio's Indiscretion: Some Noting about *Much Ado*'. In *The Italian World of English Renaissance Drama*, edited by Michele Marrapodi, 225–38. London: Associated University Presses, 1998. Finds Shakespeare critically adapting Bandello to



produce a 'bittersweet comedy' from a 'triumph of magnanimity over falsehood'.

## Genre and language

*Much Ado about Nothing* was written during Shakespeare's mid-career prose period, and the play is roughly 70 per cent prose to 30 per cent verse. This high percentage of prose offers students a clear visual signal as they consider the form and content of characters' speeches. Such interpretations have also found purchase in criticism: Jonas A. Barish and William W. Morgan demonstrate the ways that shifts between prose and verse can delineate nuances in theme, plot and character, while Nicholas Potter applies this study of form particularly to the play's examination of courtly and romantic love. Students may wish to be attentive to the percentage of the play that is spoken by each character or pairs of characters (figures that are available in collected works editions such as *The New Oxford Shakespeare* and *The RSC Shakespeare: Complete Works*). For example, Beatrice and Benedick speak nearly 30 per cent of the lines of the play to Claudio and Hero's 15 per cent, and despite the havoc he wreaks in Messina, villain Don John speaks less than 5 per cent of the play's lines.

Another recurring theme in criticism of the play's language examines the ways in which the play's surface wittiness can mask more sinister interpretations. Language is a medium for expressing social hierarchies and power, and critics have long been attentive to the play's discursive subtext (Straznicky; Slight; McKeown; Turner). In his introduction to *The Norton Shakespeare* edition of the play, Stephen Greenblatt notes that 'the more one attends to the language of *Much Ado About Nothing*, the more its whiplash merriment seems saturated with violence' (1398), and Russ McDonald likewise points out that the play 'explores the human damage that language can do'.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the malicious and false report of unchastity levelled against Hero is especially damaging, and critics have sought to place the slander of *Much Ado* in its Elizabethan

contexts. In 1992, S.P. Cerasano published an article on gender-based slander in the context of Elizabethan law, a theme that has been picked up in greater detail by Nancy E. Wright (focusing on legal determination of intention) and Cyndia Susan Clegg (contrasting approaches to slander in secular and ecclesiastical law). Slander is levelled most damnably against Hero, but false report is used to humorous effect towards Beatrice, Benedick and Dogberry. In exploring the humour in Dogberry's 'ass' sequence alongside Hero's defamation, Steve Cassal offers a contrast in slanders that makes the discursive issues at play readily comprehensible to undergraduate students. The multivalency of puns within the play has also garnered special focus, as they point towards the inherent ambivalence of signifier and signified, thereby offering an opportunity for characters to display linguistic prowess (McCollom; Cummings).

Barish, Jonas A. 'Pattern and Purpose in the Prose of *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Rice University Studies* 60, no. 2 (1974): 19–30. Explores the effects of rhetorical prose, particularly as they pertain to manners and fashion.

Cassal, Steve. 'Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Explicator* 64, no. 3 (2006): 139–41. Contrasts the tragically slanderous language used to defame Hero with the humorous slander used against Dogberry to demonstrate the synchronicity of plot and subplot.

Cerasano, S.P. "Half a dozen dangerous words". In *Gloriana's Face: Women, Public and Private in the English Renaissance*, edited by S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies, 167–183. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1992. Notes Hero's use of the phrase 'honest slander' to mark Beatrice's faults, and considers slander alongside Elizabethan law.

Clegg, Cyndia Susan. 'Truth, Lies, and the Law of Slander in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. In *The Law in Shakespeare*, edited by Constance Jordan and Karen Cunningham, 167–88. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Considers slander in the context of sixteenth-century English law, suggesting that the play 'embodies an essentially conservative world view that reaffirms both chivalric honor and the older, more traditional

- ecclesiastical jurisdiction [as opposed to the secular courts] as the appropriate venue for mitigating slander's damage'.
- Cummings, Peter. 'Verbal Energy in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Shakespeare Yearbook* 8 (1997): 448–58. Outlines the 'linguistic sophistication of Shakespeare's title-word dissections, puns, and wordplays'.
- Everett, Barbara. '*Much Ado About Nothing*: The Unsociable Comedy'. In *English Comedy*, edited by Michael Cordner, Peter Holland and John Kerrigan, 68–84. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. This seminal and often-reprinted essay argues that the play is one of Shakespeare's most psychologically complex comedies, deftly masking its seriousness behind humour.
- Kreps, Barbara. 'Two-Sided Legal Narratives: Slander, Evidence, Proof, and Turnarounds in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. In *Taking Exception to the Law: Materializing Injustice in Early Modern English Literature*, edited by Donald Beecher, Travis DeCook, Andrew Wallace and Grant Williams, 162–78. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015. Considers the play's use of 'judging facts' to create a binary between truth and error.
- McCollom, William G. 'The Role of Wit in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 19, no.2 (1968): 165–74. Suggests that 'wit is organic' in *Much Ado*, focusing on four forms of linguistic play: puns, 'allusive understatement', 'flights of fancy' and parody.
- McKeown, Roderick Hugh. '"I Will Stop Your Mouth": The Regulation of Jest in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Shakespeare* 12, no. 1 (2016): 33–54. Puts feminine wit in a broader social context, finding that Hero's aggressive language goes 'largely unremarked' by critics.
- Morgan, William W. 'Verse and Prose in *Much Ado About Nothing*: An Analytic Note'. *English* 20, no. 108 (1971): 89–92. A short article, particularly appropriate for students, exploring the juxtaposition of the play's prose and verse.
- Potter, Nicholas. 'Romance and Realism in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. In *Critical Essays on Much Ado About Nothing*, edited by Linda Cookson and Bryan Loughrey, 54–62. Harlow: Longman, 1989. Considers the play's depiction of courtly and romantic love language, particularly as indicated by the contrasting forms of verse and prose.
- Slight, Camille Wells. *Shakespeare's Comic Commonwealths*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993, 171–89. Analyses the play's 'metadiscourse' to suggest that the play is 'centrally concerned [...] with the power of language and with language as an articulation of power'.
- Straznicki, Marta. 'Shakespeare and the Government of Comedy: *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Shakespeare Studies* 22 (1994): 141–71. An exploration of the linguistic power dynamics at work within the play, which ultimately call into question the play's happy resolution.
- Turner, John. 'Claudio and the Code of Honour'. In *Critical Essays on Much Ado About Nothing*, edited by Linda Cookson and Bryan Loughrey, 21–30. Harlow: Longman, 1989. Finds that social class is central to understanding both the character of Claudio and the play's ambivalent genre.
- Wright, Nancy E. 'Legal Interpretation of Defamation in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Ben Jonson Journal* 13, no. 1 (2006): 93–108. Considers Don John's defamation of Hero in the context of Renaissance law, focusing on the question of malicious intent.

## Sex and gender

The pun on 'nothing' in the play's title encourages audiences to view the play as a witty war between the sexes: if men have a 'thing' between their legs, women have 'no thing'. The second pun on 'nothing' in *Much Ado About Nothing* plays on Elizabethan pronunciation: 'nothing' was often pronounced 'noting', and the title hints that the root of its dramatic conflicts stems from conflicting perspectives and misinterpretation. Many critics have explored the ways that Messina's male and female characters espouse differing views on marriage and gender norms. Harry Berger Jr's 1982 influential article on the play's 'sexual and family politics' offers a useful starting point for considering the play's normalized gender roles and attitudes towards virtues such as constancy, as well as characters' (chiefly Hero's and Beatrice's) responses to them. Carol Cook's comprehensive exploration of the play's gendered discourse

finds that *Much Ado About Nothing* 'masks, as well as exposes, the mechanisms of masculine power', rendering its comic ending less a comprehensive resolution than a suspicious 'artful dodge'. In 'The Ambivalent Blush', Andrew Fleck offers a case study that demonstrates the effects of men's 'reading' of women and their bodies; this theme is dissected further in Stephanie Chamberlain's examination of Claudio's use of metaphor in calling the disgraced Hero a 'rotten orange' – a fruit that rots from the inside out, and thus may yet appear outwardly unspoiled.

The play's plot assumes audiences have a basic understanding of early modern English courtship and marriage customs, which can be supplied by essays by Ian Frederick Moulton and Germaine Greer. (The latter's focus on the role of lovers' 'go-betweens' is especially useful in considering marriage as a couple's contract with society at large.) Alison Findlay places Hero and Claudio's marriage ceremonies within the larger context of Shakespeare's oeuvre to find that they are particular celebrations of feminine virtue and nostalgia.

Other critics have focused their attentions more specifically on the play's careful construction of masculinity (Lane), drawing particular attention to the way that misogyny is designed to create a closed community of men (Davis). Susan Harlan's freely available online essay considers masculinity as a by-product of the play's militaristic backstory, which informs the way that male characters consult each other about romance. Ann Pellegrini notes that heterosexual marriage also promotes a 'closing of ranks' that can push villain Don John into the position of 'queer anti-hero'.

Berger, Harry, Jr. 'Against the Sink-a-Pace: Sexual and Family Politics in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1982): 302–13. This often-reprinted article explores the gender conventions expected of Messina's male and female residents, as well as their subversion.

Chamberlain, Stephanie. 'Rotten Oranges and Other Spoiled Commodities: The Economics of Shame in *Much Ado About Nothing*', *Journal of the Wooden O Symposium* 9 (2010): 1–10.

Investigates the economic metaphors underlying Shakespeare's 'gendered commodity exchanges' within marriage.

Cook, Carol. "'The Sign and Semblance of Her Honor': Reading Gender Difference in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *PMLA* 101, no. 2 (1986): 186–202. An exploration of the multivalency of gender signification in the play, where men are interpreters and women are objects to be 'read'.

Davis, Lloyd. 'Rethinking Misogyny: Shakespeare, Gender, and the Critical Tradition'. *Shakespearean International Yearbook* 6 (2006): 185–211. Considers misogyny as a displacement of homoerotic desire in a variety of comedies, including *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Much Ado*.

Findlay, Alison. 'A Day to Remember: Wedding Ceremony and Cultural Change'. *Shakespeare* 8, no. 4 (2012): 413–23. Surveys weddings in Shakespeare's plays, including *Much Ado*, and argues they are sites of nostalgia.

Fleck, Andrew. 'The Ambivalent Blush: Figural and Structural Metonymy, Modesty, and *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *ANQ* 19, no. 1 (2006): 16–23. Explores Claudio's justification for his denunciation of Hero by considering the interpretative significance of her blush.

Greer, Germaine. 'Shakespeare and the Marriage Contract'. In *Shakespeare and the Law*, edited by Paul Raffield and Gary Watt, 51–63. Oxford: Hart, 2008. Draws attention to the role of 'go-betweens' in establishing early modern marriage contracts, demonstrating the public (not just private) nature of the institution.

Harlan, Susan. "'Returned from the wars": Comedy and Masculine Post-War Character in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Upstart: A Journal of English Renaissance Studies*, 24 June 2013. <https://upstart.sites.clemson.edu/Essays/returned-from-the-wars/returned-from-the-wars.xhtml>. This freely available online essay considers militaristic constructions of masculinity to explore male characters' approaches to heterosexual romance.

Howard, Jean E. 'Renaissance Antitheatricality and the Politics of Gender and Rank in *Much Ado About Nothing*', in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, edited by Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor, 163–87. New York: Methuen, 1987. This essay, later incorporated into Howard's *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge,

- 1994), considers the play's treatment of social class and gender alongside Elizabethan ideological tracts.
- Lane, Robert. "Foremost in Report": Social Identity and Masculinity in *Much Ado About Nothing*. *Upstart Crow* 16 (1996): 31–47. Considers how social dynamics and interactions construct attitudes to masculinity and male identity.
- Moulton, Ian Frederick. 'Courtship, Sex, and Marriage'. In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, edited by Andrew Hadfield, Matthew Dimmock and Abigail Shinn, 133–48. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014. Offers a broader context for *Much Ado* by exploring ideas about early modern marriage and courtship.
- Pellegrini, Ann. 'Closing Ranks, Keeping Company: Marriage Plots and the Will to be Single in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. In *Shakespeare: A Queer Companion to the Complete Works of Shakespeare*, edited by Madhavi Menon, 245–53. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. Finds Don John to be a 'queer anti-hero' who calls attention to the way heterosexual marriage promotes insularity, or a 'closing of ranks'.
- Peterson, Kaara L. 'Shakespearean Revivifications: Early Modern Undead'. *Shakespeare Studies* 32 (2004): 240–66. Compares Hero and Juliet's false deaths and resurrections to explore the purification process needed to rehabilitate hysterical women.

## Music

In her edition, Claire McEachern describes *Much Ado* as a play 'replete with the melodious conventions of aristocratic courtship: masked balls, serenades before chamber windows, lute warbling and sonnet writing' (80). While few early musical settings for such 'serenades' and 'lute warbling' survive, scholars have located contemporary sources for two of the songs in *Much Ado*: a non-theatrical setting of 'Sigh no more' (sung by Balthasar at 2.3.60–75) for three voices by Thomas Ford dating from the 1620s, and 'The God of Love' (sung briefly by Benedick at 5.2.26–9), a ballad composed by William Elderton during the 1560s and frequently parodied and imitated. Scholars have scrutinized the 'melodious conventions' of song and dance in *Much Ado*, drawing attention to their

relationship to rhetoric and language (Nelson; Womack), their role in furthering the play's central themes of misinterpretation and duplicity (Moseley), and as platforms for subversive commentary (Sheppard). Mark Womack's short analysis of 'Sigh no more' demonstrates the kinds of critical insights that may be gleaned from a close reading of the songs that students – and, though they are unlikely to admit it, scholars – frequently gloss over in their reading. Whereas Michael D. Friedman sees parallels between musical and marital harmony, Philippa Sheppard interprets the songs in *Much Ado* as opportunities for social critique. However, such opportunities are not always successfully exploited: Sheppard argues that the 'jolly treatment' of 'Sigh no more' in Kenneth Branagh's film adaptation of *Much Ado* 'obscures the lyrics' bitter taste'.

Students might usefully compare the ways that different productions of *Much Ado* use song and dance: what mood do the musical settings convey, and do these choices contradict or reinforce the lyrics? Given the range of cultural, social and symbolic associations, many of them gendered, what effect does the choice of a particular musical instrument to accompany a song have on its meaning? Students might also consider the implications of using different musical genres in performance, or of varying the (feigned or actual) abilities of the performers: does it matter if Benedick cannot sing in tune?

- Friedman, Michael D. "Hush'd on Purpose to Grace Harmony": Wives and Silence in *Much Ado About Nothing*. *Theatre Journal* 42, no. 3 (1990): 350–63. Draws parallels between musical harmony and marital concord, arguing that Beatrice's loss of power in taking a husband also represents a loss of language as she exchanges verbal mastery for dutiful silence.
- Moseley, Charles. "Men Were Deceivers Ever". In *Critical Essays on Much Ado About Nothing*, edited by Linda Cookson and Bryan Loughrey, 45–53. Harlow: Longman, 1989. Links song and dance in *Much Ado* to the central themes of verbal and visual misunderstanding and duplicity.
- Nelson, Brent. 'Faith and Sheep's Guts in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Shakespeare* 12, no. 2 (2016): 161–74. Traces explicit

and implied references to music in the play, arguing that music provides a thematic framework of social/musical harmony and discord.

- Sheppard, Philippa. "Sigh No More Ladies" – The Song in *Much Ado about Nothing*: Shakespeare and Branagh Deliver Aural Pleasure'. *Literature/Film Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (2005): 92–100. Argues that the treatment of 'Sigh no more' in Kenneth Branagh's 1993 film adaptation obscures the song's (potential) function as cynical commentary on the inconstancy of men.
- Womack, Mark. 'Balthasar's Song in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. In *Shakespeare Up Close: Reading Early Modern Texts*, edited by Russ McDonald, Nicholas D. Nace and Travis D. Williams, 57–63. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2012. Provides a close reading of 'Sigh no more', arguing that 'scrupulous attention to the language', even of a short song, 'is the only way to understand how Shakespeare transforms a mere vehicle for transmitting conceptual freight into an amusement park ride for the minds and ears of his audience'.

## Performance history and dramaturgy

Several book-length performance histories of *Much Ado About Nothing* are available. John F. Cox's 1998 volume in the Shakespeare in Performance series (mentioned above, in the single-text editions section) offers accounts of notable performances alongside a text of the play, enabling quick and easy searching for approaches to particular moments. Alison Findlay's more recent Shakespeare Handbook on *Much Ado* provides an investigation of the play's 'theatrical potential', offering students and teachers of the play insight into watershed productions and critical trends. Findlay has written extensively on women in theatre, and her volume is particularly attuned to the way the play's conflicting themes of love and war, or attraction and repulsion, are expressed in particularly gendered ways. Penny Gay's 'A Kind of Merry War' provides an accessible and shorter history of post-Second World War productions.

Performance-oriented critics have been drawn especially to the effect of Beatrice's request that Benedick 'Kill Claudio'

(4.1.288). Beatrice is deadly serious, but the line often draws laughter from audiences, much to the dismay of directors. Articles by John F. Cox and Philip Weller defend this audience impulse, and Sarah Antinora posits that such humour is needed to remedy the disquiet caused by Hero's defamation. Critics have also been interested in the phenomenological aspects of a play that relies so heavily on depictions of eavesdropping and watching others. Ros King uses *Much Ado* as a case study to consider how audiences engage with plays *as play*, a crucial element of human learning. Nova Myhill pays attention to the way *Much Ado* requires audiences to query their own privileged roles as eavesdroppers and observers, demonstrating how ideas about 'truth' are constructed by untested assumptions about the objectivity of witnesses.

- Antinora, Sarah. 'Please Let This Be Much Ado about Nothing: 'Kill Claudio' and the Laughter of Release'. *Ceræ: An Australasian Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 1 (2014): 1–21. This freely available article considers audience reactions to Beatrice's request of Benedick alongside Freud to posit that laughter here is a valuable and 'communal emotional response'.
- Cox, John F. 'The Stage Representation of the "Kill Claudio" Sequence in *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Shakespeare Survey* 32 (1979): 27–36. A performance history of Beatrice's request that Benedick 'Kill Claudio' from the eighteenth through to the mid-twentieth century.
- Findlay, Alison. *Much Ado About Nothing: A Guide to the Text and the Play in Performance*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. The *Much Ado* volume of the Shakespeare Handbooks series offers a comprehensive historical overview of notable performances of the play, as well as a summary of its critical history, and is particularly attentive to the play's approach to questions of gender and fashion.
- Gay, Penny. 'Much Ado About Nothing: A Kind of Merry War'. In *As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women*, 143–77. London: Routledge, 1994. Offers a performance history of the play from the 1950s through to the early 1990s.
- King, Ros. 'Plays, Playing, and Make-Believe: Thinking and Feeling in Shakespearean Drama'. In *Embodied Cognition and*

*Shakespeare's Theatre: The Early Modern Body-Mind*, edited by Laurie Johnson, John Sutton and Evelyn Tribble, 27–45. New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2014. Considers the role of audiences within the play and considers 'the extent to which mindfulness and the expression of feeling among performers and audience can be tested in the dynamic play of the playhouse'.

Myhill, Nova. 'Spectatorship in/of *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 39, no. 2 (1999): 291–311.

Investigates how the play's focus on witnessing and 'noting' unsettles an audience's traditional position of privileged observer.

Weller, Philip. "'Kill Claudio": A Laugh Almost Killed by the Critics'. *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 11, no. 1 (1996): 101–10. Explores directors' attempts to suppress the humour in Beatrice's request.

## Adaptations

Though the play is less frequently adapted than some other comedies, film adaptations of *Much Ado About Nothing* have nonetheless found popular favour. Students may benefit from reading the play alongside viewings of the films to consider the ways that in making *Much Ado About Nothing* 'more accessible', film adaptations are required to make cuts that limit or forestall certain interpretations at the expense of others. Kenneth Branagh's bright 1993 star-studded film features himself and his then-wife Emma Thompson in the roles of Beatrice and Benedick, alongside Denzel Washington (Don Pedro), Keanu Reeves (Don John), Robert Sean Leonard (Claudio), Kate Beckinsale (Hero) and Michael Keaton (Dogberry). The cheerfulness of Branagh's production is the result of careful cutting: William Brugger demonstrates that Branagh removed most of the play's references to cuckoldry. Likewise, Jacek Fabiszak finds that Branagh's choice to situate the play in a 'fairy-tale' version of Messina amplifies the strangeness of its setting for modern audiences unaware of Renaissance England's default assumptions about *Much Ado*'s 'exotic' Italian locale.

Much as Baz Luhrmann's 'punk' *Romeo + Juliet* brought Shakespeare's tragedy to the attention of teenage viewers, Joss Whedon's contemporary 2012 adaptation of *Much Ado About Nothing* offered a fresh take on the comedy for fans of his feminist approaches to comics and speculative fiction. Douglas Lanier notes that Whedon's *Much Ado* is difficult to contextualize: as it was shot in black-and-white, the film evokes the 'screwball comedies' of the 1930s and 1940s, yet its theme of on-again, off-again love in a time of turmoil suggests it is also of a piece with other texts in the 'Whedonverse'. Occasional and accessible articles in the online publication *Slayage: The Journal of Whedon Studies* have consequently followed, exploring the film's 'normalization of surveillance culture' (Smith) and how the early modern gender and racial norms of the text are set at odds with the film's contemporary Californian setting, causing the audience to experience cognitive dissonance (Wilcox).

Finally, as an example of 'Shakespeare in the world', students may be delighted to know that *Much Ado About Nothing* is the first Shakespearean comedy to be translated into the fictional language of Klingon. In keeping with the ethos of the *Star Trek* universe, the text of Wil'yam Shex'pir's *paghmo' tIn mIS* (literally translated, *The Confusion is Great Because of Nothing*) 'has been painstakingly restored to its original Klingon language' by linguist Nick Nicholas. For those unfamiliar with Shakespeare's role in the *Star Trek* imaginary (and Klingon more generally), Karolina Kazimierczak offers a useful primer.

Brugger, William. 'Sins of Omission: Textual Deletions in Branagh's *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Journal of the Wooden O Symposium* 3 (2003): 1–11. Examines Branagh's editing choices in creating the screenplay, which is roughly half as long as the play.

Fabiszak, Jacek. 'Kenneth Branagh's Multicultural and Multi-Ethnic Filmed Shakespeare(s)'. *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation, and Performance* 12, no. 27 (2015): 75–86. Considers the effects of Branagh's interracial casting decisions as

well as the distancing or romanticizing effects of settings for his film versions of *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Hamlet*.

Kazimierczak, Karolina. 'Adapting Shakespeare for *Star Trek* and *Star Trek* for Shakespeare: The Klingon *Hamlet* and the Spaces of Translation'. *Studies in Popular Culture* 32, no. 2 (2010): 35–47. Explores connections between Shakespeare and the *Star Trek* universe to provide a context for the choice to translate *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* into Klingon.

Lanier, Douglas M. "'Good Lord, for Alliance": Joss Whedon's *Much Ado About Nothing*'. *Représentations: La revue électronique du CEMRA* 1 (2014): 117–42. This online, freely available essay explores Whedon's decision to focus his modern-day adaptation on the play's friendships, rather than make much of the familial (particularly paternal) relationships.

Oppenheimer, Jean. 'An Indie Twist on Shakespeare'. *American Cinematographer* 94, no. 7 (2013): 56–63. Considers the cinematography of Joss Whedon's *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Smith, Philip. "'I Look'd Upon Her With a Soldier's Eye": The Normalization of Surveillance Culture in Whedon's *Much Ado*'. *Slayage: The Journal of Whedon Studies* 14, no. 1 [43] (2016). [http://www.whedonstudies.tv/uploads/2/6/2/8/26288593/smith\\_slayage\\_14.1.pdf](http://www.whedonstudies.tv/uploads/2/6/2/8/26288593/smith_slayage_14.1.pdf). Demonstrates that Whedon's film 'intimat[es] a hawkish neo-colonial political stance' and 'normalizes modern discourse on privacy and national security.'

Wilcox, Rhonda V. 'Joss Whedon's Translation of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*: Historical Double Consciousness, Reflections, and Frames'. *Slayage* 11:2–12:1 (2014). [http://www.whedonstudies.tv/uploads/2/6/2/8/26288593/wilcox\\_slayage\\_11.2-12.1.pdf](http://www.whedonstudies.tv/uploads/2/6/2/8/26288593/wilcox_slayage_11.2-12.1.pdf). Considers the cognitive dissonance caused to audiences encountering the gender or racial norms of Shakespeare's day in a contemporary setting.

# NOTES

## Introduction

- 1 Samuel Johnson, *Selections from Johnson on Shakespeare*, ed. Bertrand H. Bronson with Jean M. O'Meara (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 14.
- 2 W.H. Auden, *Lectures on Shakespeare*, ed. Arthur Kirsch (London: Faber, 2000), 119.
- 3 On the connection between literature and the night-time city, see Matthew Beaumont, *Night Walking: A Nocturnal History of London* (London: Verso, 2015).
- 4 Ewan Fernie, *Shakespeare for Freedom: Why the Plays Matter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 92.
- 5 Lynda E. Boose, 'Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (1991), 179–213.
- 6 Mihoko Suzuki, 'Gender, Class, and the Ideology of Comic Form: *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*', in *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. Dymphna Callaghan (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 125.
- 7 Alison Findlay, *Illegitimate Power: Bastards in Renaissance Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994).
- 8 *Hero and Leander*, in *Christopher Marlowe, Complete Plays and Poems*, ed. E.D. Pendry and J.C. Maxwell (London, Melbourne and Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1976), l. 175. The poem was entered in the Stationers' Register on 28 September 1598.
- 9 R.E.R. Madelaine, 'Oranges and Lemans: *Much Ado About Nothing*, IV.i.31', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1982), 491.
- 10 Claire McEachern, ed., 'Introduction', *Much Ado About Nothing* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2015), 20.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8R3GDqjJWA0> (both accessed 3 March 2017).
- 22 Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*, 3.
- 23 The Shakespeare web series, or vlog, is a very recent phenomenon, dating from around 2013–2014. Douglas Lanier provides a good introduction to the genre and a useful list of examples in ‘Vlogging the Bard: Serialization, Social Media, Shakespeare’, in *Broadcast Your Shakespeare: Continuity and Change Across Media*, ed. Stephen O’Neill (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017).
- 24 *Nothing Much to Do* was broadcast on three channels: Benedick’s, Beatrice’s and the Watch’s. There is also Ursula’s channel, which housed musical performances and some other special episodes. The characters maintained a presence on other social media: Beatrice had a Twitter ([twitter.com/beatricetheduke](https://twitter.com/beatricetheduke)), Hero an Instagram account ([instagram.com/herotheduke](https://www.instagram.com/herotheduke/)), and Ursula had a Tumblr ([watchprojects.tumblr.com](https://www.tumblr.com/watchprojects)) (‘Nothing Much to Do’, Fandom: Webseries & Digital Series Wikia. Available online: [http://web-series.wikia.com/wiki/Nothing\\_Much\\_to\\_Do](http://web-series.wikia.com/wiki/Nothing_Much_to_Do), accessed 10 August 2017). While the series was running, these extra outlets provided a way for the characters to connect with their audience and keep them updated on things they might not have blogged about in the videos themselves.
- 25 ‘SHAKES’, BardBox: Shakespeare and Online Video. Available online: <https://bardbox.net/2016/06/04/shakes/> (accessed 10 August 2017).
- 26 ‘A Bit Much’. Available online: <http://www.webserieschannel.com/bit-much/>. I discovered the web series from Erica Bianca Romero, ‘Shakespeare Modernized: Web Series Adaptations of William Shakespeare’s Works’, in *Transmedial Shakespeare: Studying Shakespeare Beyond His Texts*, 1 December 2015. Available online: <https://transmedialshakespeare.wordpress.com/2015/12/01/shakespeare-modernized-web-series-adaptations-of-william-shakespeares-works/> (both accessed 10 August 2017).
- 27 ‘Much Ado About Shakespeare in Film | Bard in Multimedia’, *The Shakespeare Standard*. Available online: <http://>

- [theshakespearestandard.com/shakespeare-goes-summer-camp-bard-multimedia/](http://theshakespearestandard.com/shakespeare-goes-summer-camp-bard-multimedia/) (accessed 10 August 2017); and ‘A Bit Much’.
- 28 ‘Much Ado About Shakespeare in Film | Bard in Multimedia’.
- 29 ‘Shakes on Snap’. Available online: <https://www.facebook.com/ShakesOnSnap/> (accessed 10 August 2017).
- 30 I have discussed these genres in ‘Paying Attention in Shakespeare Parody: From Tom Stoppard to YouTube’, *Shakespeare Survey* 61 (2008): 227–38; ‘YouTube Shakespeare, Appropriation, and Rhetorics of Invention’, in *OuterSpeares: Shakespeare, Intermedia, and the Limits of Adaptation*, ed. Daniel Fischlin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 53–72; and ‘The Economics of (In)Attention in YouTube Shakespeare’, *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* 10, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016). Available online: <http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/783210/show> (accessed 10 August 2017).
- 31 Patricia Lange, ‘Videos of Affinity on YouTube’, in *The YouTube Reader*, ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 2009), 71.
- 32 Abigail Keating, ‘Video-making, Harlem Shaking: Theorizing the Interactive Amateur’, *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 11, no. 2/3 (2013): 99–110, 99.
- 33 Thomas Elsaesser, ‘Tales of Epiphany and Entropy: Around the Worlds in Eighty Clicks’, in *The YouTube Reader*, ed. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 2009), 169.

## Chapter 8

- 1 Russ McDonald, *Shakespeare and the Arts of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 122.