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Male and Female Ways of Engaging in Dialogue in "Much Ado About Nothing"

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I. Introduction

In *Much Ado About Nothing* Shakespeare portrays a common society in which a common role model of male and female ways of behaviour exists, and contrasts it with a deviant role model. It is Beatrice and Benedick who "misbehave". Beatrice's behaviour and Benedick's reactions are odd because they constantly work against society's decorum. Shakespeare portrayed the common and the deviant behaviour in a way which is reflected in the characters' engaging in dialogue. Men and women engage in dialogue differently and this can be seen in the composition of the staged dialogues as well as in the stage directions, which indicate body language.

In the following analysis of selected dialogues the attempt is made to find a relation between the role model presented on stage and the way the particular characters engage in dialogue. A further analysis is aimed at verifying dialogicity and monolocicity in the particular character's remarks. To examine these phenomena the main focus is directed at the way Hero, Claudio, Beatrice and Benedick engage in dialogue and in monologue.

To present the way of engaging in dialogue according to, or differing from contemporary role models an introduction to Elisabethan men's and women's roles is given. The key scene 4.1. will be shortly analysed and an overall view over general construction and deconstruction of gender is given. Then follows the analysis on the dialogues and monologues themselves. Any of the dialogues and monologues is examined concerning accordance with common gender roles or the deviation thereof. The study on dialogicity and monolocicity is based on Manfred Pfisters treatise on dialogicity in his book "Das Drama".

II. One-Sex Model, Romantic Love and Marriage

Today man and woman are seen as being two different sexes; the so called two-sex model. Shakespeare's contemporaries had a different view on gender. They believed in the *one-sex model*, a concept that originated from Aristotle's philosophy and lived on in Galen's medical and philosophical tracts. Their thoughts were rediscovered and translated in the late Middle Ages and participated in the initiation of the Renaissance period. Galen (129-199) is the most influential physician of his time.¹ Galen's role model is based on the assumption that there are not two separate sexes but one perfect sex- man – and a less perfect one - woman. Whereas man is perfect a woman is only a lesser man lacking male virtues. Femality is characterised as *immature humanity*².

Galen wrote medical treatises about the body fluids – the *humours* – and their influences on human behaviour. There were four fluids: namely blood, phlegm, red and black bile. Each of these body fluids represented four qualities: heat, cold, moist and dry. Heat and dry were connected with activity and energy whereas moist and cold were related with dumbness and passiveness. Galen's findings were that women had too much cold and moist phlegm in their bodies. "The male differs from the female in that he is hotter and more dry; she, on the contrary is colder and more moist."³

In the Elisabethan age Galen's theories had entered everyday language, they were common knowledge and directly influenced the gender roles taught by moralists. "The honourable lady must be modest and chaste"⁴ obedient to her father or husband, patient and quiet. Furthermore, a husband who was not capable of controlling his unruly wife was seen as incompetent. There were public accusations and punishments for both men and women, as Ina Schabert states.⁵

¹ "Galen," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2001, <http://encarta.msn.com> © 1997-2001 Microsoft Corporation.

"Galen was the authority for about 1400 years. Galen's medical observations remained his most enduring contribution. His medical writings were translated by 9th-century Arab thinkers and became highly esteemed by medical humanists of Renaissance Europe."

² Schabert, I. *Shakespeare Handbuch*, p. 26, Schabert; Schabert, I. *Englische Literaturgeschichte*, p. 24

³ Edward Grant ed; *Source Book in Medieval Science*, § 90

⁴ Brown, J. R. *Much Ado About Nothing and As You Like It – Casebook Series*, p. 134

⁵ Schabert, *Shakespeare Handbuch*, p.26, a public ritual that was called "Charivari" helped to maintain Elisabethan time's firm structures of role models

Romantic love should be present in marriages. The ideal of romantic love was that of a mutually felt love.⁶ The Protestant church even proposed a marriage among equal partners, the *companionate marriage*.⁷ As Ina Schabert mentions, wooing women of the Old Testament were allowed to break with the social decorum following characters. The so called *Virago* was a woman that had manly behaviour and wit. But this behaviour was limited to the timespan of wooing⁸.

Marriage ended this unruly behaviour. The gender roles had to be reinstalled and all the liberties enjoyed had to be abandoned again⁹. In Shakespeare's time "marriage was the *sine qua non* of social acceptance."¹⁰ Women could gain honour by making a *good* match; that is by marrying a husband of name.¹¹ His honour then contributes to hers as well. "[...] Society had a firm structure, and it enforced rules of conduct; as a result, inclusion and exclusion [through marriage] were decisive events."¹²

III. Gender Construction and Deconstruction in *Much Ado*

"Shakespeare seems particularly interested in the workings of gender in society in *Much Ado*."¹³ In the play there are two different types of characters. One

⁶ Zitner S. P. ed; The Oxford Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, p. 137

⁷ Novy, M. *Love's Argument, Gender Relations in Shakespeare*, p 4; "evidence suggests that both patriarchy and mutuality were ideals for marriage in Elisabethan England."

⁸ ibidem; p 7; "Shakespeare allows women to criticize, [...] But their condition is courtship and not marriage."

⁹ Schabert, *Shakespeare Handbuch*, p.27

¹⁰ Levin, R. A. *Love and Society in Shakespearean Comedy*, p. 26

¹¹ ibidem, p. 114 [...] honour is not achieved by making any marriage but by a "good" marriage.

¹² Levin, R. A. *Love and Society in Shakespearean Comedy*, p. 27

¹³ Gay, P. *As She Likes It, Shakespeare's Unruly Women*, p. 144

follows the traditional role model, where observance or deviation from the rules are the benchmarks by which people judge each other. It is Hero's and Claudio's; a world of conformism to social pressures. The other type is artificial and has other rules which only the two "players" Beatrice and Benedick know; it is a world of playfulness, cheerfulness and merriment. Beatrice and Benedick emulate the Renaissance ideal of *homo rhetoricus*.¹⁴ Priority is given to wordplay and the manipulation of language. To speak in sociological terms Messina is the main culture and Beatrice's and Benedick's world is the *subculture*¹⁵. In other words a world and a counter-world.

The play focuses on four characters or two couples. When one looks closer a pattern on the level of dominance over the respective partner emerges. Man dominates over woman reflecting the common gender roles; woman dominates man reversing the gender roles. Claudio dominates Hero and thereby reflects the common role model of man and woman. His dominance over her is justified in the above section. Beatrice's dominance over Benedick is due to her superior verbal skills.

The climax of the gender topic is in 4.1. Hero's and Claudio's as well as Beatrice's and Benedick's actions mirror each other. Beatrice and Claudio come to a peak of dominance over their partners whereas their partners' inferiority forms a negative extreme. Claudio dominates the scene by defending his male honour. He rises above Hero, supported by male superiority institutionalized in society's rules and gender roles. Hero on the other hand has to "die" a mock death because of the enormous impact of Claudio's accusation. Beatrice rises above Benedick with her immense verbal skills by which he is silenced. Interestingly enough the place and the setting contribute to this outburst of emotion. They are on holy ground and there is a marriage at stake. Claudio, who had no objections to marriage, breaks with Hero during their wedding; whereas Beatrice, whose opinion is negative towards marriage, becomes angry about Claudio's refusal during the holy ritual.

¹⁴ Greiner, N. *Studien zu Much Ado About Nothing*, p. 112; "Homo rhetoricus" represents an Italian-influenced ideal at the Tudor Court. The aim was to control language and manipulate it in an elaborate way. Mostoften style outdid information.

¹⁵ "subculture has its own rules but is aware of main culture's rules at the same time." Der Brockhaus in Text und Bild Edition 2000/2001

All kinds of sexual innuendoes are present in this particular scene: Claudio is at the peak of his manhood. He most probably uses physical violence to push Hero away from him, saying: "There Leonato, take her back again"¹⁶ (4.1; 31). Promiscuity, the opposite of chastity as one of female virtues, is a prominent topic in Claudio's enraged monologues. Hero's virtues seem to have disappeared; she is no longer a woman because she has violated Elisabethan women's ideals.

More of this can be found in the parallel scene 4.1. after the unsuccessful wedding: Beatrice is weeping at the beginning which makes her very feminine. She asks the Lord to forgive her (4.1; 281) because she had almost breached "the convention that deters the woman from being the first to declare herself in love."¹⁷ She then consciously reverses the gender roles to an extreme degree by cutting his speech. However, in her monologues she realises that she "will die a woman" because she "cannot be a man with wishing." (4.1; 322-323) She has to accept being a woman, and having accepted this, she leaves the sphere of physical dominance which she cannot rule to Benedick. She knows that she is more eloquent, but just as much, she knows that she cannot duel a man. By way of contrast Benedick is initially the *man* in the scene. He offers Beatrice his help; thereby he embodies the old knight's ideal - to help the weak and helpless. A "sword"¹⁸ appears by which he swears his love; the swearing itself on holy ground resembles the promise of marriage. Her wish "that he had boarded"¹⁹ her becomes reality. Benedick uses violence to hold Beatrice back. Up to this point he has represented manhood to its full extent. But when he gives himself away to Beatrice's love, his manhood breaks down because of her verbal superiority. Only at the end of 4.1. does he regain his manhood. He takes his sword and is willing to perform that which she cannot.

To sum up, both inferior characters lose ground and for a short time become even more inferior. That is becoming less manly in Benedick's case and more womanly in Hero's; whereas both superior characters gain superiority at the same time. Shakespeare separates the couple that wants to marry and unites the couple that does not want to.

¹⁶ In Kenneth Brannagh's movie version of *Much Ado* Claudio does use violence to express his disgust and his rejection

¹⁷ Zitner S. P. ed; The Oxford Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, p. 172

¹⁸ Partridge, E. *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, p. 199; "sword" alludes to penis or phallus

¹⁹ "I am sure he is in the fleet. I wish he had boarded me." (2.1; 142-143)

After the dramatic events of 4.1. everything settles again, and at the end of the play one has the impression that almost nothing has changed. Only Beatrice's and Benedick's attitudes towards marriage have altered. But nothing of substance like a wedding has taken place. The outcome is left open. At least Benedick gains superiority once: at the end he silences Beatrice with a kiss (5.4; 97).

IV. Dialogicity & Monologicity in Dialogues between Men and Women

IV.I Dialogicity & Monologicity in Dialogues between Hero and Claudio

Interestingly enough Hero and Claudio hardly talk to each other. They only exchange words three times. They prefer "silence as herald of perfectest joy" (2.1; 303) to speaking to each other. All of their conversations take place publicly; they never meet privately. No *real dialogue*²⁰ ever develops between them.

Their first verbal encounter takes place in 2.1; lines 305-309: "Lady, as you are mine, I am yours: I give away myself for you and dote upon the exchange." Claudio addresses Hero without getting a reply. His lines are designed to evoke either a rejection or an approval of his marriage proposal. Instead of answering him verbally she stops his mouth with a kiss. That she "tells him in his ear that he is in her heart" (2.1; 313) is only guessed by Beatrice and afterwards confirmed by Claudio. No evidence can be found that there is any *real dialogue* between them at all. But this scene fits the common picture. The man is the active part by offering his marriage to the modest and quiet woman.

Their second attempt to speak to each other is the church scene 4.1. where Claudio takes his case to court at the wedding. The dialogue turns out to be a monological prosecution against Hero. After questioning Hero if she knew any reason against the marriage Claudio engages in a dialogue with the bystanding men instead of talking to her; then he starts to monologize about her feigned virginity.

²⁰ Cox, V. *The Renaissance Dialogue*, p.2; "The essential distinction becomes that between "true" dialogues and "false" ones: dialogues which are genuinely dialectical and those which are monologues in disguise."

When she says "And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?" (4.1;55) he relates his following monologue to her "seem'd" and takes the opportunity to accuse her directly. But he never intends to engage in dialogue with her because he is enraged and wants to recite his speech. He wants to make his point and leave afterwards. He wants to demonstrate society's moral judgement that condemns Hero for her unchaste behaviour.

There is a link between Claudio's relating to "seem'd" and his following monologue. On the other hand her silence and her passiveness throughout the accusation as a whole make it easy for Claudio to slander her. Her second interjection (4.1; 62) leads to nothing because Leonato interjects to save what can be saved of his and her honour.

Directly addressing her by "thy" and "you" are signs of dialogicity. But no *real dialogue* takes place because in the few lines where they relate their words to each other no *dialectical*²¹ structure can be seen. No *change of semantic direction* can be found.²²

Claudio: I never tempted her with word too large
 But as a brother to his sister showed
 Bashful sincerity and comely love.
 Hero: And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?
 Claudio: Out on thy seeming! I will write against it. [...]
 Hero: Is my lord well that he doth speak so wide?
 Leonato: Sweet Prince, why speak you not? (4.1; 52-63)

Claudio portrays himself as the embodiment of virtues and contrasts it with Hero's behaviour. The declaration "I will write against it" (4.1; 56) shows that he is not willing to speak to her but to speak to the world. When he says: "To make you answer truly to your name" (4.1; 79) he relates to the name "Hero" which is related to faithfulness²³. She is faithful in answering him but he does not care any more. Her two attempts to calm him down and to engage him in dialogue are a waste of effort.

²¹ Cox, V. *The Renaissance Dialogue*, p.2; dialogues which are genuinely dialectical can be considered as *true dialogues*

²² Pfister, M. *Das Drama*, p. 182; one indication for dialogicity in dialogues and in monologues is the frequent and abrupt change of semantic direction.

²³ Zitner S. P. ed; *The Oxford Shakespeare*, p. 164; "Answering to the name of Hero meant upholding the faithfulness attributed to the heroine of the Hero and Leander story and thus deserving of the name."

When she tries to provoke a response from him his dialogue turns out to be a masked monologue. Her first and second provocation remain unanswered. She is not worth his attention any more because of her sins. In this case the *role conflict* leads to social exclusion. She has turned unmarriageable through Claudio's accusation. They both hide behind exaggerated conventional conformity to their roles; Claudio as the active part Hero as the suffering passive part.²⁴ Even Leonato her father is not talking to Hero but asks a man, Prince Pedro for support.

Later in the scene when he cross-examines her the dialogic structure is dominated by him and therefore tends to be monological, too. It is not only his dominance but also the lack of semantical change that makes it monological. It is a question and answer situation as it is usual in a court. But she has no one to defend her. Instead of addressing Claudio she refers to an imagined third person, "God" (4.1; 77). She is helpless under his attacks and left without support.

He constructs his speech to the question "What man was he talked with you [...], (4.1; 83) "If you are a maid, answer to this." (4.1; 85) It is evident that there can be no dialogue in a sense that there are two equal partners. He is dominant by society's conventions. He only wants to prove her dishonourability. When she denies having talked to no man he is convinced of her wickedness. His insisting on "*maid*" which is connected to virtue leaves her no chance of escaping his trap. She indeed is a "maid" and therefore answers him; but by denying his accusation she is proved to be no maid at all in his eyes. She walks into his set trap. Don Pedro concludes: "Why, then you are no maiden" (4.1; 87). Her defence is weak and unheard because it is a woman's and her word is against that of two men of honour. She has not the verbal skills to defend herself against men. Consequently the dialogic structure reflects the gender roles. Claudio as the dishonoured future husband feels no need to engage in dialogue with a fallen woman. After all she is *only* a woman. His aim is to defend his honour and not to believe in Hero's words. For she is a proven sinner by confirmed evidence and therefore not worth talking to no more. So his pleading is not aimed at her but at the other men and therefore not dialogical but designed to monologize upon his hurt honour and her dishonourability.

When Claudio marries the daughter of Antonio in the final scene he is honourable enough to marry an unknown woman. He has repented his fault and takes the consequences. Their third and last exchange is very formal and adequate

²⁴ Schulz, V. *Studien zum Komischen in Shakespeares Komödien*, p. 84;

to the solemn atmosphere of a wedding. His words sound like a wedding oath; unpersonal words addressing an unknown person. Then it is her turn to monologize upon her transformation from "other wife" (5.4; 60) and "Hero died defiled" (5.4; 63) to her newly gained status: "And surely as I live, I am a maid." (5.4; 64) Her honour is reinstalled again by his repentance and by the uncovering of Don John's plot. Her blotted name is cleared from all stains. She is proved not guilty and her status of virginity is restored again. Only his interjection "Another Hero!" (5.4; 62) that is related to in her answer "Nothing certainer, one Hero died [...]" (5.4; 63) shows signs of dialogicity but it would be far too exaggerated to speak of *real dialogue* in any of the examined cases.

IV.II Dialogicity & Monologicity in Dialogues between Beatrice and Benedick

Whereas Hero and Claudio never meet privately the most interesting and relevant dialogues between Beatrice and Benedick do actually take place in intimate situations or without interference from outside. The only exception is the final scene where Hero and Claudio produce the lover's sonnets. Beatrice and Benedick have six dialogues out of which I chose four for my study. Contrasting Hero's and Claudio's poor and seldom dialogical attempts Beatrice and Benedick do engage in dialogue in great extent. This can be measured in the number of dialogues as well as in the length of any single dialogue. In their encounters a *real dialogical structure* can be found. But their dialogues are sometimes highly monological, too.

They "face each other in a courtship which is part dance, part duel."²⁵ Their merry war arises out of sexual antagonism and the fact that their exchange takes place in a world of play. They are blessed with outstanding intellectual and verbal faculties which makes them the embodiment of "*homo rhetoricus* who cannot be serious."²⁶ Hazlitt sums it up: "There is no answer to a jest but another."²⁷ Statements given are received, varied, deliberately misunderstood and returned changed completely. This contributes to their joy as well as to the audience's. Their constant

²⁵ Brown, J. R. *Much Ado About Nothing and As You Like It*, p. 55

²⁶ Lanham, A. *The motives of Eloquence*, p. 4; "Purposeful striving is invigorated by frequent dips back into the pleasurable resources of pure play...."

²⁷ Hazlitt, W. *The Complete Works*, p. 27

fear is to be overmastered by the opponent and therefore they both struggle constantly to win mastery over the other. This leads to a constant flow of puns and deliberate misunderstandings which characterizes an aspect of Beatrice's and Benedick's way of talking to each other.

Their first dialogue in scene 1.1. is as playful as it is showing us the way Beatrice and Benedick engage in dialogue. They are predestined to each other by their telling names²⁸. Watzlawick's *theory of communication* helps to explain their behaviour when Beatrice says:

I wonder that you will still be talking, Signor Benedick; nobody marks you. (1.1; 112-113)

They have a subtle arrangement, a *quid pro quo*, an unconscious agreement among themselves. They both need each other to play their game because no one else is able to play it. The phenomenon is called *collusion*.²⁹ One person needs the other to be confirmed in one's behaviour. It is an "ambivalent partnership in which insults show mutual dependence."³⁰ In remarking "Nobody marks you" (1.1; 113) and "marking" him at the same time she contradicts herself. But considering that she needs his participation her behaviour makes sense. Without Benedick's participation Beatrice's role would seem pointless. He must play his role to make her role *real*³¹ and vice versa; and he is a willing partner to her game:

Ben: What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?

Bea: Is it possible disdain should die while she has such meet food to feed on as Signor Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain if you come in her presence.
(1.1; 114-119)

"[...] Shakespeare deconstructed the gender-ideology [...]; and offered in Beatrice and Benedick an image of the merry-war that may exist between two strong-willed characters resistant to the behavioural restrictions of conventional gender

²⁸ "beatus", lat, blessed with a gift or talent.

²⁹ Watzlawick, P. *Anleitung zum Unglücklichsein*; p. 109

³⁰ Novy, M. *Love's Argument, Gender Relations in Shakespeare*, p. 26

³¹ Watzlawick, P. *Anleitung zum Unglücklichsein*; p. 110 ff

roles."³² *She* is the one who attacks him at the beginning. *She* is the one who starts the fight. *She* thereby is the active part that is normally ascribed to men. But he knows how to play the game very well. By calling her "Lady Disdain" (1.1; 114) "this paradoxical pattern continues as he greets her quick though mocking alertness [...]"³³ "Are you yet living" (1.1; 114) might be a reference to her age. Shakespeares contemporaries considered Beatrice as too old to be of interest for marriage. She on the other hand ignores his innuendo and continues by relating her words to "disdain" linked to "die" and carefully playing upon it by contrasting it with "living". She accuses him of not being courteous although she knows that her game would end when he would turn courteous. When Benedick says:

Then is courtesy a turncoat. But is is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted. And I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none. (1.1; 120-123)

he protests his independence. As "a professed tyrant to their sex" (1.1; 163-164) he is neither dependent on Beatrice nor on any other woman. And he mockingly refers to "courtesy" that is not true to itself and is thereby not honourable. She comments on that by saying:

I thank God and my cold blood I am of your humour for that. I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me. (1.1; 126-128)

By the declaration of his independence she feels provoked to state her own independence. Interestingly enough she agrees with him in that respect. Both know that they are dependent on each other but need to ignore that to maintain their merry war. He has taken up her game and knows how to continue by slandering her verbal skills as mere repetition. But she outdoes him by twisting his words and give it a double meaning:

Ben: Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Bea: A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours. (1.1; 134-135)

By relating to "tongue" she not only relates to women's weapon but by contrasting an agile bird to a dumb beast she has turned his argument into hers. Whereas he

³² Gay, P. *As She Likes It, Shakespeare's Unruly Women*, p. 144

³³ Novy, M. *Love's Argument, Gender Relations in Shakespeare*, p. 26

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strikes once she strikes twice. Her wit is overwhelming and by leaving the place he is the game's loser. But surprisingly he acknowledges her verbal superiority while withdrawing:

I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. [...] I have done.
(1.1; 137-139)

Her disappointment about violating the game's rules can be clearly seen. The answer to a jest is another and he refuses to keep that pattern up. Even her last words are meant as an insult. To escape "with a jade's trick" attributes cowardice to the proud and selfconscious Benedick. Untouched by her last attack he just leaves her standing alone because he seems to be strained by her quick tongue. To do justice to her counter-role she not only starts the discussion but also has the last word.

A high degree of dialogicity can be found in their encounter. Both partners are portrayed as equals and therefore have equal time and space to talk. They constantly relate their answers to the other's. A change in semantical direction takes place frequently because of their infinite inventiveness in word plays but in one part: their agreement on their independence.

Beatrice is the active part who incites the dialogue and has the last word. She even dares to do that publicly. Beatrice thereby contradicts the common role model which ascribes modesty, quietness, even silence and obedience to an ideal Elisabethan woman. Calling Benedick a coward is a heavy attack to a man. Men or soldiers like Benedick are brave and apt to defend their honour. But he prefers to leave.

In 2.1. the dialogue between Beatrice and Benedick starts *in medias res*. The masked Benedick seems to have talked to her about his attitude towards Beatrice before the actual staged dialogue starts. The dialogue has a lot of monological characteristics. For not giving up his disguise Benedick keeps his answers as short and as empty as possible. He thereby has no chance to defend himself without giving away his real identity. In the course of the dialogue the audience gets to know that Benedick has commented on her "good wit" being taken "out of the *Hundred Merry Tales*." (2.1; 130) According to Zitner Beatrice must have been outraged to

hear that the source of her wits was a collection of crude anecdotes.³⁴ But she takes advantage of her chance to pay him back in a situation where he cannot defend himself because he is masked. When he asks "I pray you, what is he?" (2.1; 136) she strikes back in two monologues:

Why, he is the prince's jester: a very dull fool;
 only his gift is in devising impossible slanders:
 none but libertines delight in him; and the
 commendation is not in his wit, but in his villany;
 for he both pleases men and angers them, and then
 they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in
 the fleet: I would he had boarded me. (2.1; 136-143)

"Prince's jester" and "dull fool" hurts Benedick deeply as he proclaims in his soliloquy in 2.1; 202-207. His verbal wit and intelligence reduced to the level of an ordinary jester's! That is a double insult to Benedick. It questions his independence³⁵ by calling him a servant to the Prince which contradicts Benedick's image of himself as an independent man; at the same time she puns on male bonds she derogatorily dealt with earlier in 1.1; 68-69, and in lines 81-86. "He both pleases men and angers them" also questions Benedick's relation to his friends. In other words they are no true friends when they laugh because they laugh at him instead of laughing about his witty remarks.

Her last line (2.1; 143) is a sexual innuendo³⁶ which hints on their pre-war acquaintance. interesting is that she says "I wish he had boarded me" which would be the conventional way in Elisabethan time; the man woos the woman. This seems not to fit the role she plays in *Much Ado*. But she might just want to provoke him to give up his masquerade.

Because of the situational context Benedick is forced to hold his tongue. This

³⁴ Zitner S. P. ed; *The Oxford Shakespeare, Much Ado about Nothing*; p. 117

³⁵ Novy, M. *Love's Argument, Gender Relations in Shakespeare*, p. 22; "the lover and the jester both seek mutuality. [...] The behaviour is therefore incomplete until it meets with a response from the other." See also Benedick's "for truly I love none" (1.1; 123) which is a sign that he sees himself as an independent person who needs not others.

³⁶ Partridge, E. *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, p. 76; "to board" someone: "To accost as a preliminary to wooing or to love-making; (of a man) to coït with."

leads to a lower degree of dialogicity. She uses her chance and takes her time to slander Benedick. She not only dominates the dialogue by the time and space she employs but also by paying him back. Another argument for a monological tendency in that dialogue is the existence of two monologues. Once again she plays the active role whereas he is doomed to inactivity. His masking prevents him from counter-attacking and thereby the dissent present in the dialogue cannot find expression in him. Furthermore Shakespeare seems to have deliberately started the dialogue in *medias res* because it gives him the chance to portray Beatrice as the dominant being. Had he staged the whole dialogue the effect would have lost its effectiveness. The connection between questions and answers lacks dialogicity too because Benedick is not able to answer in his own name.

The most interesting dialogue between the two unconventional lovers takes place in the chapel after Claudio's trial in 4.1. Benedick starts with asking for her well-being because she weeps (4.1; 255). He then says:

- Ben: Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.
 Bea: Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!
 Ben: Is there any way to show such friendship?
 Bea: A very even way, but no such friend.
 Ben: May a man do it?
 Bea: It is a man's office, but not yours.
 Ben: I do love nothing in the world as well as you. Is that not strange? (4.1; 259-267)

By relating to Hero being "wronged" Benedick wants to reassure her that he is on her side. He wants her to stop weeping because he wants to talk about their relationship. He wants to confess his love. She takes up his "wronged" and contrasts it with "right her." When she says "deserve of me" Zitner speaks of verbal concealment that only

hides her love towards Benedick.³⁷ It also serves as incentive for Benedick because two lines later he thinks himself to be the man she mentions. But first he talks with restraint of "friendship" and asks if he can be of help in "any way." She points out that she knows a way but she has no *friend* who might do it. When she uses "friend" she seems to be testing on the outer semantical limits of the word which is *lover*.³⁸ He might realise this connotation and withdraws. He sees no way in insisting on "friend" and turns back to "man." If he cannot be her *friend* he at least might win her by being a *man*. She turns his offer down which has two connotations: on the one hand she casts doubt on his manhood to provoke him into participating in her plot. On the other hand she has "not earned the right to ask"³⁹ him for doing it because their connection is still too loose. The latter makes him confess his love to Beatrice.

That he asks her after his confession "is that not strange?" shows that he has made the decision with his heart whereas his rational logic is still afraid of her reaction. As Novy points out "the lover and the jester both seek mutuality. [...] The behaviour is therefore incomplete until it meets with a response from the other."⁴⁰ And as wanting to confirm his fears she concealingly says:

It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you:
but believe me not; and yet I lie not. (4.1; 269-271)

He is left helpless by her words and his exaggerated swearing that she loves him (4.1; 274; 276) expresses the urgent need to get a response towards his confession. Beatrice's confession of her love causes Benedick to offer doing "anything for thee" (4.1; 288) which she quite deliberately takes advantage of by demanding to "kill Claudio" (4.1; 289). From now on the dialogue becomes monological. Benedick tries to make her stay by "barring her way" (4.1; 292) when she bids him "farewell" (4.1; 292) but his verbal qualities are lost in her fury. Male violence seems to be a last resort but a useless instrument against a woman like Beatrice. In the following part Beatrice interrupts Benedick no less than four times. His interjections drown in her raging words against Claudio.

Benedick is helpless and not capable to stop her until she has uttered "O that I

³⁷ Zitner S. P. ed; The Oxford Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*; p. 172

³⁸ *ibidem*, p. 171

³⁹ *ibidem*; p. 172

⁴⁰ Novy, M. *Love's Argument, Gender Relations in Shakespeare*, p. 22

were a man" (4.1; 303; 306; 317) three times and realises that she "cannot be a man with wishing; therefore I will die a woman with grieving" (4.1; 322-323). After she has drawn her conclusion that she *is* a woman and thereby cannot perform a man's role in all respects by being dominant, they are now able to regain a new equilibrium. Finally he can be the *man* again and proves his will to fulfil the man's role by declaring to duel Claudio.

She needs a man for avenging Hero and the whole dialogue or at least the second part is designed to talk Benedick into Beatrice's revenge plot. She cleverly manipulates him by leaving him with the uncertainty if his love will be answered; finally she reluctantly admits her love (4.1; 283). From his point of view he has to wait for her return which increases his tension and makes him more vulnerable. When he is relieved from his tension and offers his help she demands something incredible: the killing of a friend. He at first is shocked but after her speech she delivers on manhood he is ready to do anything for Beatrice as he had promised before (4.1; 288).

She rages against manhood that "turned only into tongue [...] as valiant as Hercules that tells a lie and swears it" (4.1; 320; 322). "Tongue" has two meanings: obviously she alludes to promising something and not standing by his words afterwards. The underlying connotation might be that "tongue" is the female weapon and she thereby reproaches him as not being manly. Once again honour and remaining faithful to one's words is taken as a theme. Because Benedick sees himself as a man he has to keep his promise not to lose his honour.

It is not only the longest dialogue among them but it stands out for its abrupt change from merry wooing to deadly seriousness; from equality to inequality, from dialogical to monological. In the first part dialogicity is clearly present. Their remarks are equally distributed; there is a constant change of the semantic direction. The frequent change of sender and receiver and the shortness of the statements point at stychomythia. At the beginning she is frail by weeping. She starts very *female*. But this changes parallel to the dialogical structure. Her dominance is at its peak when she cuts his words four times and he is doomed to silence. The role model is completely turned over. It is Benedick's most "unmanly" moment in the play, because "the ornament of a *woman* is silence."⁴¹ and he as well as she contradict the role

⁴¹ Novy, M. *Love's Argument, Gender Relations in Shakespeare*, p. 5

models. Woman dominates man, an impossible thought in these times.

Her first monologue is highly appealing to Benedick and his manhood because signs of dialogicity can be found in it: To incite Benedick she poses the question if Claudio is a villain (4.1; 301-303) only to answer the question herself that he is. The calling upon God (4.1; 304) adds a third person to her imagined dialogue which makes the dialogical structure even more complex and adds to her persuasiveness. At the same time the semantical direction changes abruptly. On the other hand there is no dissent in her monologue which makes it less dialogical.

In scene 5.2. Beatrice and Benedick have nearly regained their balance again. The fierce spirit of scene 4.1. has disappeared and Benedick greets her as "sweet Beatrice" (5.2; 42). His aim is to win mastery over her by silencing her with a kiss. If he had managed to silence her, her most dangerous weapon would have turned useless. But she has not lost her wits. She still twists his words as she may.

Bea: [...] and depart when you bid me.

Ben: O, stay but till then.

Bea: "Then" is spoken. Fare you well now. [...] (5.2; 43-45)

Applying Watzlawick to their relationship, she might fear that he leaves their state of collusion⁴². Her play might come to an end by his denial of the game. On the other hand she seems to be afraid of their being in love and tries to once again escape into their world of "merry war", but he intends to become serious⁴³. She takes up his "only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss thee" (5.2; 50) and varies proverbially on "foul words," for she wants to "depart unloved" (5.2; 53). She might see his kissing her as a victory over her by closing her mouth. He is the one who then again starts talking about their relationship. He wants to get to the point for he is the *love fool* dependent on her. He is casual and obeyfully reports his exchange with

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⁴² Watzlawick, P. *Anleitung zum Unglücklichsein*, p. 110

⁴³ Ben: "Gallants, I am not as I have been." (3.2; 15)

He seems to have lost some of his eloquence in that dialogue. His answers are short and rather unwitty in that dialogue.

Claudio. He then *metadiologically* accuses her of frightening "the word out his right sense [because] so forcible is" her "wit" (5.2; 55-56) for she still has a loose and sharp tongue:

- Ben: I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou fall in love with me?
 Bea: For them all together, which maintained so politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good part to intermedie with them. - But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?
 Ben: "Suffer love" - A good epithet. I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.
 Bea: In spite of your heart, I think. Alas poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours, for I will never love which my friend hates.
 Ben: Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably. (5.2; 59-70)

Interestingly enough he asks for his "bad parts" whereas she asks for her "good parts." This again contradicts the common view on man and woman; man being equipped with more virtues and woman with less or worse qualities. The roles are still reversed for he is modest whereas she is aggressive. Moreover he uses "fall in love" whereas she says "suffer love." He seems to be the *woman* and she the *man*. To "suffer love" creates an image of weakness that is much stronger than her "falling in love." While she attacks he is in the defence. He feels the need to justify his love which happens against his will. This takes responsibility away from him.

According to Galen's doctrine love-sickness was seen as an illness of the brain in Elizabethan time. Especially first time lovers were endangered to get that disease. When she starts talking about his heart and mentions that she will not love what her friend hates she still is inventive in creating puns but seems to agree on their love in her way. It can be seen in her last word concerning their love in that dialogue; and her eloquence once more shines through the double chiasmus she uses (5.2; 68-69). He too takes the opportunity to end this talk by summing up their relationship (5.2; 70).

Benedick is very reflective on the way they engage in dialogue. He has understood the structure lying underneath but at the same time has changed to a new way of thinking. He wants to stop their merry war. When they depart Benedick once again reassures his love and seems to be very content with the outcome of that dialogue. He has not mastered her but is sure that she loves him, too. He even regains his wit and sexual self-confidence as a man relating to their future:

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I will live in your heart, die in thy lap⁴⁴, and be buried in thy eyes; moreover I will go with thee to thy uncle's. (5.2; 98-100)

He is highly rhetorical now: the anticlimax "live - die - bury" relates to his view on their merry war: it is to be buried and settled. His last words sound merry and without the tension he felt before. His turning to so unwitty words as "moreover I will go with thee to thy uncle's" adds a comic element. He has performed his difficult task - the wooing for Beatrice quite well.

A high degree of dialogicity can be found all throughout this dialogue. The relation of question and answer is balanced well, an exception are the lines where Benedick defends his calling himself "wise" (5.2; 71-86). They constantly relate their answers to the other's and a change in semantic direction takes place frequently. A high degree of *dialogicity* is thereby achieved.

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V. Dialogicity & Monologicity in Monologues

V. I. Dialogicity & Monologicity in Benedick's second soliloquy

Benedick's soliloquy in scene 2.3. (218-240) is dialogical in a way that he imagines two characters' opinions that are quarreling with each other. It is a discussion between "I" and "they" and the two conflicting souls in him. The reaching of a conclusion is done *en pensée*. His way of talking conveys the impression of irrationality which is contrary to the common model of man as the superior and logic being. But a rhetorical structure of narratio-argumentatio-refutatio-conclusio can be found. The equal distribution of both sides add to a *true dialogicity* evolving in his speech. Furthermore there are questions like "Love me? Why, it must be requited" (2.3; 221) or denials to these questions (2.3; 239). The two imagined subjects are dissenting from each other which makes frequent changes in semantical direction

⁴⁴ Zitner S. P. ed; The Oxford Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*; p. 194; "Dying" was a common euphemism for an orgasm, also called "la petite mort"; Partridge, E. *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, 138; "lap in the ordinary sense, but with an implied localisation in the pudend."

possible. The distress he is in through the recently learned intelligence also contributes to the weighing up of pros and cons and therefore to dialogicity.

At first he verifies the information by locating the source as the innocent Hero. He poses himself the question "Love me? Why, It must be requited" (2.3; 221) reproducing the ideal of romantic love.⁴⁵ It is still unreflected, a mere reflex. Then he relates to his behaviour as he has heard it from his friends (2.3; 222-225) to interject "Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them into mending" (2.3; 227). He seems willing to change his mind but his heart is not ready yet. Because of that he sums up all the positive things about Beatrice commenting on each of "their" opinions in a question and answer style. To his surprise he can only agree upon their findings except for the third one. The structure is dialogical by the question and answer schema but on the other hand the lacking dissent lessens that impression:

They say the lady is fair; 'tis true, I can bear them witness. And virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot
reprove it. And wise, but for loving me. (2.3; 228-230)

But he "will be horribly in love with her" (2.3; 232) and at the same time confirms that her love felt towards him neither lessens nor heightens her wits. He sees her as an equal that has to be treated as an equal. Novy remarks that "Shakespeare saw men and women as equal in a world which declared them unequal."⁴⁶

Benedick then asks himself if there will be any consequences regarding his companions when his "appetite has altered" (2.3; 235). This is denied allegorical. The next question concerns with his socialized "I" and his image-change which is of great importance to him:

Shall [...] sentences [...] awe a man from the career of his humor? No. The world must be
peopled. (2.3; 237-239)

As he still lives in a world of male bonds and comradeship he has to include their opinions and their reactions into his considerations. More than her decision towards getting married his one has great consequences following in the wake. By approving of marriage he has to give up his former male friendship's ideals. But he does that

⁴⁵ Zitner S. P. ed; *The Oxford Shakespeare*, p. 137; "a cardinal rule of romantic love, as in Dante, *Inferno* 5.103: "Love which frees no one loved from the obligation of loving in return."

⁴⁶ Novy, M. *Love's Argument, Gender Relations in Shakespeare*, p. 3

deliberately. For that reason the answer is simply "no" and the quarrel in his head is thereby ended. He has to bear the burden of mockery without lament. The sentence (2.3; 239) deriving from the Bible and directly relating to marriage and moreover procreation shows his air of determination. The conclusion is drawn in the last lines:

When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. (2.3; 240)

By his last words he shows his will to get married but at the same time relativizes his former misogynistic attitude as mere play that he has temporarily turned away from.

V.II. Dialogicity & Monologicity Beatrice's soliloquy

Beatrice's soliloquy (3.1; 107-116) parallels Benedick's (2.3; 218-240) in some aspects but differs in others. Both soliloquies are related to mock dialogues to make them fall in love with the other. Both characters are flattered by the news but consciously accept the other's love and want to respond to it. They both accept marriage as their relationship's aim. Both relate to others' opinions and reflect on their own "pride and scorn" (3.1. 108).

But their style and structure differ to some extent. Whereas he needs 22 lines to come to a conclusion she only needs 10. "She outdoes him, as usual, by speaking all but a quatrain of a sonnet, rather than mere blank verse as he does."⁴⁷ Her language is much more eloquent and metaphoric than his. She uses a diverted form of a sonnet, a formal courtly way to express one's love poetically. The structure of her soliloquy is clearly marked and consists of three parts: two quatrains and two single lines (3.1; 307-110; 111-114; 115-116). After all her soliloquy portrays her as a rational person capable of thinking structurally. Before speaking she has made up her mind. This contradicts the common image of woman as a not rational being.⁴⁸

Their main focus and the order of topics is distributed differently. He uses much time on verifying the information and needs a lot of persuasion by constantly quoting "their" opinion. He is deeply involved into male friendships and soldier's life. Consequently he has to devote a lot of space to "their" concerns. She on the other hand is much more independent than he is. She has no equivalent of his male world

⁴⁷ Zitner S. P. ed; *The Oxford Shakespeare, Much Ado about Nothing*, p. 143

⁴⁸ Novy, M. *Love's Argument, Gender Relations in Shakespeare*, p. 4

or it is at least not taken as a theme in *Much Ado*. So she only mentions "others" once (3.1; 115). Not taking other's reactions into account she more sensibly thinks about him (3.1; 111). Her name does not appear a single time in his soliloquy whereas she directly addresses him by name (3.1; 111).

Dialogicity is achieved by addressing Benedick directly in the second part (3.1; 111). She imagines her lover to be present and talking with her which is present in the personal pronouns "thee", "thy", "thou" and even "our" :

And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,
 Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand:
 If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
 To bind our loves up in a holy band;
 For others say thou dost deserve, (3.1; 111-115)

But her carefully considered way of speaking makes the soliloquy turn monological. Where Benedick's soliloquy reflects a torn character who speaks and thinks at the same time she has made her decisions before opening her mouth. Quite interesting is the change of attitude towards Benedick in a highly metaphorical way: "Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand" (3.1; 112) and towards marriage referred to as "holy band" (3.1; 114).

The first quatrain is cut in halves. In the first line she expresses her astonishment about the unexpected news. She then reflects upon her behaviour only to swear off contempt and pride. The last line is a conclusion she draws from her reflections.

What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
 Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
 Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!
 No glory lives behind the back of such. (3.1; 107-110)

She too shows signs of dependence on people's opinions when she briefly refers to "others" that "say thou dost deserve" (3.1; 115). But compared to Benedick's long part on his friends (2.3; 232-238) she is much more independent than he is.

Only at the end in scene 5.4. their relation is balanced again. Both partners have an equal number of lines to speak and in the end Benedick is able to silence her with a kiss:

(kissing her) Peace, I will stop your mouth. (5.4; 97)

She does not answer to his peace offer which can be understood as an agreement. For the first time she has not the last word. The order is reinstalled and the gender roles seem to be in place in both couples.

VI. Conclusion

Shakespeare has portrayed the conventional role model and confronted them with the unconventional Beatrice and Benedick. This is evident in the way man and woman engage in dialogue. It is reproduced in the dialogic structure to depict these two different roles. Hero and Claudio represent the conventional role model and thereby talk and behave in accordance to society's rules. Society gives men the possibility to rule over women. This is reflected in Claudio's behaviour and the way he engages in dialogue with Hero. In agreement with contemporary decorum she is obedient and quiet. She is not apt to defend herself against Claudio's accusations. Whereas he rages she is silent. He uses male violence to push her back. He is justified to do so because he is a man. She on the other hand remains unheard because she is a woman.

By turning over the conventional gender roles in Beatrice and Benedick Shakespeare portrays a world upside down. Beatrice, a woman is verbally superior to any man in Messina. By talking she dominates anyone around her. She might force a man into a temporarily submissive attitude by cutting words or mere eloquence. She is dominant by the number of lines she talks more than Benedick. This contradicts common Elizabethan ideals. Benedick's attempt to answer her verbal superiority with violence leads to nothing.

In her monologues she outdoes Benedick in style and eloquence. She contradicts the opinion that women were inferior to men regarding intelligence. This too is reflected in dialogicity, first in Benedick's evasive actions and second in her way of "putting Benedick down" as Don Pedro says. The constant rejection of male

dominance is one of *Much Ado's* appeals. By turning over the conventional gender roles and constantly questioning manhood Shakespeare casts doubt on the reality of gender roles and uses role reversal for criticism and comic effect at the same time. Shakespeare deliberately has not staged the weddings to leave the open end to interpretation.

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