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English

16 November 2023

<p align="center">Why Fiction? Why Shakespeare? Response</p>

One of the reasons why we read literature is for the experience of making interpretations of literary works that go beyond the face value of what a text is explicitly stating. A prime example of this is in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing,* where one could argue that Benedick's and Beatrice's romance is forced or only to satisfy the people surrounding them. In act 2 scene 3, Leonato, Prince, and Claudio have a discussion about Beatrice's feelings for Benedick while knowing that Benedick would overhear. Similarly, later in act 3, Hero and Ursula stage a conversation about how Benedick was in love with Beatrice and task Margaret with ensuring that Beatrice will hear them. The parties involved in these situations have made assumptions about Beatrice's and Benedick's feelings for one another--they did not confirm with either of them on whether they truly loved each other. After hearing Leonato's, Prince's, and Claudio's conversation, Benedick expresses "I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me because I have railed so long against marriage," and later on, "When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married" (Shakespeare 2.3.237-46). Benedick's initial thoughts after their dramatic conversation about how Beatrice may love him do not suggest that he shares the same feelings. He still maintains is telltale arrogant, joking nature without much obvious realization that he may love her too. However, characters that he is constantly around are pushing for or encouraging a relationship between the two, making pressure from his surroundings a catalyst for his and Beatrice's romance. This claim is debatable and one could also argue that it simply took more time for Benedick to actually realize he has

feelings for her. This is an example of how different interpretations of literature are what make studying and reading literature enticing--and Shakespeare's literary ability is what makes this possible.