|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Characteristics** | **Point** | **Quotation** |  |  |
| **Brothers from another mother** | They share a father, but Don John’s illegitimacy means he is on the margins. Don Pedrp *could* reject him entirely, but clearly feels he owes him something | Don Pedro brings him to Leonato’s house even though John tried to overthrow him. Leonato says: **Let me bid you welcome, my lord, being reconciled to the prince, your brother** (I,i) | **Context**Nowadays illegitimacy has no stigma but in Shakespeare’s time it did. Kings and other nobles often had children out of wedlock and would provide well for them but would usually keep them secret. John, then, seems quite lucky in that he is openly Pedro’s brother.Royal dynasties can be threatened by ‘bastard’ children claiming their rights and this idea is explored through John and Pedro.Pedro means Peter, and Elizabethans would have been reminded of Saint Peter, the ‘rock’ Jesus built his church upon. | **The Dons *The Rock and the Bastard*** |
| **A goodie and a baddie?** | It’s easy to hate **Don John** because what he does to Hero is horrific. BUT he has been isolated and rejected all his life: that’s gotta hurt**Don Pedro** is a gentleman and, it seems, a good leader, but his judgement is terrible. Despite having nearly lost his power to his brother, he easily falls for John’s trick | **I cannot hide what I am…I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchised with a clog** (I,iii)**Only to despite [Pedro and Claudio] I will endeavour anything** (II,ii)He tells Claudio **As I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her** (III,ii) |
| **Don John is unlikable and disliked** | Interestingly, people take against John not because he is a bastard but because he is a misery guts | **I am not of many words** (I,i)Bea: **How tartly [John] looks, I never can see him but I am heart-burned an hour after** (II,i) |
| **Don Pedro is admired and respected** | Even when his judgement and behaviour have been shown to be terrible, the good folks of Messina quickly forgive and forget | He calls Hero a **common stale** (IV,i)Once he realises his mistake he promises to **bend under any heavy weight** Leonato can devise (V,i) yet he is invited to the wedding and everyone is nice to him |
| **Language**Like Hero, he does not say much in public, but talks freely about his loathing for Pedro and Claudio around his henchmen. |
| **Don John gets away with it?** | Certainly he is not punished for his crimes during the course of the play, but there is no doubt that he will get his just desserts once the party’s over | Borachio says **If you would know your wronger, look on me** (V,i) but Ben has already sussed out that **the practice of it lives in John the bastard** (IV,i)Interstingly, when the news breaks that John has been captured it is Benedick (not Claudio or Pedro) who says: **I’ll devise…brave punishments for him** (V,iv) What a guy! |
| **Stagecraft**Unlike the similar villain, Iago, in ‘Othello’, John does not get his comeuppance during the action of the play. It’s easy to see why: this is a comedy and no-one wants an evil bastard spoiling their wedding! |