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Joyce Boro

“Lame Humour” in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Love’s Pilgrimage*

By focusing on the character of Don Sanchio, this paper investigates the link between disability and comedy in *Love’s Pilgrimage*. Don Sanchio is a disabled war veteran whose nonstandard body is a potent site of ridicule, of “lame humour,” and of topical critique. This paper asks the questions: why do we, and how can we, laugh at someone’s physical infirmities? And more specifically, why is Sanchio himself so risible? In order to respond to these queries, the play’s humour will be situated within early modern theories of laughter, which root laughter in scorn, mockery, and feelings of superiority. I then turn to Sanchio, contending that he evokes sentiments of fear, derision, schadenfreude, and superiority in audiences of *Love’s Pilgrimage* because of: 1) his disability; 2) the disability’s etiology, which may be a sexually transmitted illness or a military injury; 3) and his Spanishness. In order to make this argument I explore the representation of Sanchio’s lameness in *Love’s Pilgrimage* within the context of contemporaneous moralistic and nationalistic attitudes towards syphilis, the social status of disabled veterans, and the pervasive ideological connection between disease and foreignness.

Andrew Bretz

***Bonduca*: A Modern Spelling Edition**

What I propose to present at the SAA is a section of my introduction to a new edition of *Bonduca*, outlining both the need for a new edition and the unique textual history of the play.

The only modern edition of *Bonduca*, John Fletcher’s (ca.1613) play relating the story of the Boudiccan revolt against Roman rule, is from Fredson Bowers’ *Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon* edited by Cyrus Hoy. As Suzanne Gossett [has noted](#), the choices of that edition, including maintaining old spelling and the relatively limited introductory materials, has limited the exposure of Fletcher to students of early modern drama to this day. For Gossett’s students, Fletcher seems “more remote” than Shakespeare and this remoteness may well have contributed to the scholarly neglect of Fletcher in recent decades. The traditions of popular Shakespearean editing and those of editing his contemporaries have only begun to align in the period since Bowers’ edition was published. The publication of the *Oxford Collected Works of Middleton* (Gary Taylor, John Lavagnino), the Arden Early Modern Series (Suzanne Gossett, John Jowett, Gordon McMullan), and the Digital Renaissance Editions (Brett Hirsch-Greatley) have aligned the editorial practices of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, making available a host of new texts for students around the world and allowing us to rethink the relationships between Shakespeare and the other playwrights of the time.

Bonduca will be a particularly fruitful text to reconsider and re-edit because its textual history intersects with the performance history in such unique ways. It not only exists in the 1647 First Folio of Beaumont and Fletcher, but it is a rare example of a play

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where a manuscript copy (ca. 1630) still survives. The relationship of the manuscript, a fair transcription by Edward Knight, book-keeper for the King's Men, both to the printed text and the foul papers, has been discussed for many years (Gurr, Greg, Werstine), yet no one has yet properly edited the text for modern audiences. My paper will outline the major textual criticism on *Bonduca* in the past century and argue for the need for a new edition.

José A. Pérez Díez

Fletcher Re-imagines Spain: *Love's Pilgrimage* and *Las dos doncellas* by Miguel de Cervantes

The 1613 publication in Madrid of Cervantes's collection of twelve stories under the title *Novelas ejemplares* (*Exemplary Novels*) was an important point of inflection in the dramatic career of John Fletcher. As many as seven plays in his corpus of just over fifty were partially based on these stories. Fletcher was the greatest English literary Hispanophile of the period in terms of his continuous engagement with Spanish contemporary fiction: he used Spanish themes and literary models in over a third of his sizeable canon of plays, written as a solo dramatist or in collaboration with others. His interest in recent Spanish works of fiction is well attested from the earliest stages of his career: in 1609 he wrote *The Coxcomb* with Francis Beaumont, which they based on the Cervantian novella of *El curioso impertinente* (*The Curious Impertinent*), interpolated in the first part of *Don Quixote* (1605). In 1612, still dazzled by Cervantes's masterpiece, he was clearly the driving force behind the partially extant *Cardenio*, which he composed with the ancillary collaboration of William Shakespeare. In 1615 he premiered *Love's Cure*, a comedy based on a very recent play by Guillén de Castro, *La fuerza de la costumbre* (*The Force of Custom*; c. 1610). Some months later, in the climacteric year of 1616—when Fletcher's two frequent collaborators, Beaumont and Shakespeare, as well as his main Spanish influence, Miguel de Cervantes, were on their deathbeds—he turned his attention to the *Novelas ejemplares*, producing a remarkably faithful adaptation of *Las dos doncellas* (*The Two Maids*) in *Love's Pilgrimage*. This paper will examine the process of adaptation of the Cervantian original into its English recreation, paying close attention to verbal, thematic, and structural parallels, illustrating the importance of Fletcher's Spanish influence in the wider pan-European conversation of the early seventeenth century.

Jennifer Drouin

Queer Looks in Shakespeare and Fletcher's *The Two Noble Kinsmen*

Shakespeare and Fletcher's *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is a play of ocular excesses, multiplicity and divided subjectivities. Set in polytheistic ancient Greece under the watchful eye of conflicting gods, the complex web of celestial gazes overseeing the play's action resembles the multiple and overlapping erotic gazes within it—homoerotic, narcissistic, mimetic, heteronormative, and in the mind's eye. The play's three-tier layout

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on stage contributes to this web of gazes in which the gods Mars, Venus, and Diana look down on the action, Palamon and Arcite look down from their prison window on Emilia, and, conversely, the Jailer, his Daughter, and her Wooer look up at the prison window, while various characters look up to the heavens. Hippolyta, Emilia, her waiting woman, and her dead lover Flavia all engage in homoerotic gazes at each other, as do Palamon and Arcite, and Pirithous and Theseus. Often at the same time, Palamon's and Arcite's gazes become narcissistic, mimetic, and heteronormative as well, sometimes in relation to the same object. Emilia and Arcite gaze in their mind's eye at characters in the past and future. The Jailer's Daughter embodies the problem of excessive erotic gazing; "her eye hath distempered the other senses," which divides her subjectivity and drives her mad (4.3.69-70). The Jailer's Daughter's multiple personalities are not unlike the multiple personalities of the deities who cannot coexist without producing madness, resulting in the play's absurd ending that mirrors its beginning by mixing a wedding with a funeral. The excessive, overlapping gazes and resulting divided subjectivities that characterize *Two Noble Kinsmen* are not surprising given that the text was composed under the eye of two different author-gods—with Shakespeare and Fletcher operating much like the Greek gods, as puppeteers pulling the strings that determine their character's fate as they compete to rewrite Chaucer's history.

Sonja Kleij

Fletcher and Republican Thought

The Tragedy of Sir John Van Olden Barnevelt (1619), which John Fletcher wrote in collaboration with Philip Massinger, has mostly received scholarly attention for being an early news play about the Truce Conflicts (1609-21) and its preserved censorship. However, this paper will research how the drama participated in the public sphere. It will investigate how the play examines contemporary republican thought and critiques James I's relationship with parliament through the narration of the downfall of the Dutch politician Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. The paper will give an analysis of the text as well as the censorship the play received, as this provides insight into the debates that authorities wanted to silence. It will further study the influence of Dutch resistance theory and classical republican sources on English republican thought.

Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich

“Literary Networking in Stuart England: The Countess of Huntingdon and Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*”

This paper investigates the influence of Fletcher's patron, Elizabeth Stanley Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon. Her literary dedications and surviving letters (both authored and received) reveal the broad extent of her political and theatrical patronage, but what precisely is the nature of her influence? I analyze Fletcher's first solo play, *The Faithful Shepherdess* (ca. 1608), and its intertextuality with several archival documents, including Fletcher's verse letter to Elizabeth, Elizabeth's extant letters to her husband,

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her commonplace books, and John Marston's and William Skipwith's pageants at her estate at Ashby (1607). I contend that the Countess's patronage network shaped multiple moments in *The Faithful Shepherdess's* performance and publication history.

I focus especially on the play's ambivalence, which is deeply connected to Elizabeth's political and religious concerns. *The Faithful Shepherdess* functions as an experiment in pastoral eclogue, a form that investigates opposing philosophies without attempting to resolve them and thus teaches its audience to judge the results independently, as it attempts to bring elite pastoral pageantry to the commercial stage. It presents two principles, neither of which is fully appealing or unattractive: chastity (especially a virgin's frustrated desires) and erotic desire (tied alternatively to fruitfulness, pleasure, and sinful lust). Its representation of nobility as rooted in piety and integrity but not in money alludes to Elizabeth's self-representation, as does its emphasis on the ways women shape their households and communities by fulfilling the conventional roles of housewife, mother, and religious devotee. Like other literature patronized by the Stanley women, the play venerates feminine authority without challenging conventional ideals.

Stephanie Kucsera

John Fletcher's Drama of Encounter: Exploring Intercultural Relations in the Undergraduate Classroom with *The Island Princess*

It has been recently suggested that the canon of early modern dramatic texts "subject to and available for scholarship, pedagogy, and appreciation" has "shrunk considerably" since the eighteenth century (Lopez 18). At the same time that our attention is drawn toward this steady narrowing of regularly examined material, many departments press for increased diversity in undergraduate course offerings, either seeking to expand upon (or replace) canonical texts with works by authors belonging to marginalized groups or asking for classes that dedicate a significant portion of their attention to texts that explore social identity categories such as class, gender, race, religion, and/or non-Western cultures. Criticism has experienced a burst of activity centered on early modern drama's interest in the non-uniformity of cultural experience, but to what extent has this critical response made its way—purposefully and comprehensively—into our classrooms? What could that look like?

If John Fletcher may be pointed to as a comparatively under-represented figure in current scholarship, he is most definitely an under-studied figure in the undergraduate classroom and his 1621 *The Island Princess* an under- (if ever) read text. But can we, as instructors, afford to keep overlooking it? As global citizens of the 21st century, our students are deeply aware of the conflict that arises from religious fanaticism, racial prejudice, and political expediency. Could an earlier era's drama of intercultural encounter offer them a set of tools with which to explore their own complex questions about tolerance/intolerance, unity/diversity, and the messiness of identities that are always multifaceted? This paper will offer a pedagogical rationale for using this sort of approach with undergraduates, provide suggestions for supplementary texts to be read alongside *The Island Princess* (as well as suggestions for other complementary course

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texts), and propose teaching strategies for positioning the composition of Fletcher's play in its own historical and literary context and its reception in ours.

Jeremy Lopez

Who is John Fletcher?

Considering his social position and his flourishing reputation from about 1620 to the end of the century, the paucity of information about the career of John Fletcher is very curious, much more unaccountable than the obscurity of Shakespeare which the anti-Stratfordians find so satisfactorily mystifying.

G. E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, Volume III, 306

Bentley's sardonic sentence is emblematic: John Fletcher is the cipher who allows us to be certain of Shakespeare. We don't know exactly where Fletcher lived, whether he was married, what his precise arrangement was with the King's company, or anything about the social and financial business (theatrical or non-theatrical) that might have preoccupied him when he was not writing plays. In terms of the mundane details of daily life it is easier to conjure a picture of Shakespeare than it is of Fletcher. On the other hand, we know a fair amount about Fletcher's social and political milieu, and what we know allows us to see many of his plays as consciously topical, engaging with ongoing debates about the sovereign power in the age of James I. In terms of ideology, it is easier to confine Fletcher than Shakespeare to a more or less consistent, historically particular perspective. Fletcher is, then, both easier and harder to see than Shakespeare—as a person, as a professional playwright, and as an artist. Only compare the frontispiece of the 1647 Beaumont and Fletcher folio with that of the 1623 Shakespeare: in the much more realistically drawn head of Fletcher, crowned with laurels, fixing the reader with an alert, circumspect gaze, there is a real feeling of poetic authority; there is no unsettling sense, as there is in the Shakespeare portrait, that the image has been tentatively or hastily cobbled together and thrust rather oddly into the layout of the page. And yet, even as Fletcher's head rises out of the twin peaks of Parnassus and is watched over approvingly by the figures of Tragoedia and Comoedia, it also sits beneath a banner proclaiming not only his artistic identity but his lineage: "Poetarum Ingeniosissimus ... Anglus Episcopi Lond[iniensis] Fili[us]," that is, "The most ingenious of poets ... son of the bishop of London." Unlike the folio Shakespeare who, according to the English poem that accompanies his portrait, exists in an eternally self-regenerating loop with his "book," Fletcher is always defined by his history.

My slightly (but only slightly) exaggerated premise in this essay is that no one reads Fletcher; my somewhat quixotic project is to make reading Fletcher, broadly as well as deeply, seem more possible and more worthwhile. To the extent that my premise is accurate, it is so in part because a prevailing certainty about who Fletcher was has rigidly circumscribed who he is, or might be, for modern criticism. To the extent that my project can be successful, it must change who Fletcher is, and might be, for modern

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criticism by expanding the possibilities for understanding who he was. My central questions in undertaking this project are: Who is, or was, John Fletcher, and what is the story we most want to tell ourselves about him? I attack this question from multiple angles, discussing the stories that criticism has told about his dramatic work since the seventeenth century; the old stories that have been and the new stories that might be told about his life; and the stories Fletcher himself tells in his plays.

Marie H. Loughlin

Women's Homoerotic Relationships and the Nature of Political Resistance in the Fletcher Canon

In keeping with recent treatments of the Fletcher canon that connect gender and desire with other early modern discourses, ranging from imperialism, colonialism and mercantilism to nationalism, sovereignty, and Petrarchan aesthetics, I propose to explore the political valences of female homoerotic and homosocial relationships in this body of work. My paper will focus on how these relationships engage with the erotic and sexual expression of the normative and violated political compact between the early modern sovereign and subject. When the sovereign violated the mutually experienced obligations and duties of this compact, early modern political subjects turned, according to Melissa Sanchez, to a pair of powerful eroticized discourses—Petrarchan love and Protestant martyrdom—to figure their legitimate and non-anarchic (i.e., non-armed-conflict, non-usurping) resistance. For the political subject, however, the pleasure that is often associated in Petrarchan poetry and Foxean martyrdom narratives with pain and abjection—and with a problematic, traditionally feminine subjection—posed the danger of undermining this resistance, as male subjects might move from principled opposition to complicity in and collaboration with this pleasure-inducing oppression and tyranny (Sanchez 21-22). Using the work of Sanchez, Theodora Jankowski, and Valerie Traub, this paper will examine “the sexualisation of politics” (Sanchez 1) in the Fletcher canon by exploring the roles played specifically by “virgins, lesbians and queers of all types” (Jankowski 1). If early modern political theory emphasizes the mutual and reciprocal love between sovereign and subject as figuring and underpinning the constitution of the state, and if this body of theory as a result recommends implicitly and explicitly passive, even masochistic subjection when this reciprocity is violated by the absolutist sovereign, then Fletcher's various representations of female same-sex love, desire, and impassioned friendship deserve attention as different types of resistance; Fletcher's threatened virgins, femme-femme lovers and chaste friends (Traub, *Renaissance* 230-32), cross-dressed women and the women who love and/or desire them, ‘lesbian’ orgiastics, and female procuresses, panders, and go-betweens multiply both the pleasures and dangers of political resistance.

Andrew Mattison

Oh, Do Not Ask, “What is It?” The Genre of *The Faithfull Shepheardesse*

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John Fletcher instructs the reader of the 1610 edition of *The Faithfull Shepheardesse*: “If you be not reasonably assurde of your knowledge in this kinde of Poeme, lay down the booke or read this, which I would wish had bene the prologue.” He goes on to define the work as “a pastorall Tragic-comedie,” and explains that its hybrid genre was one of the reasons for its unpopularity on stage. That notion was echoed in commendatory poems by Jonson and Chapman for the second edition (Chapman calls the work “a Poeme and a play too!”).

I take Fletcher at his word, and thus propose a paper arguing that generic hybridity does indeed lend itself to reading and presents an obstacle to viewership on stage (albeit conceding that the play was more successful in a later run as revised by Davenant). *Shepheardesse*, with its reliance on lyric form and on pastoral mode, allows for a fascinating glimpse of a three-way relationship that helps determine, but also muddies, the disposition of genre: between literary form, medium, and readership. A fourth point in that geometry is introduced in the early editions by emphasis on Fletcher’s authorship. That emphasis raises an additional question, for to ask whether *Shepheardesse* is a poem is also to comment (as Jonson and Chapman acknowledge in their commendatory poems) on the possibility that Fletcher is a poet, a topic I suggest is particularly of concern to Jonson (who once said that Samuel Daniel, sometime Poet Laureate, was “no poet”—so he had exceptionally high standards). In turn, then, the genre of *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* has much to contribute to the recent critical debates about the nature of Renaissance authorship, in which Fletcher has been a controversial figure.

Gordon McMullan

“An ale figure”: rhetoric, authority and the individual in Fletcher’s *Tamer Tamed*

Who is ‘John Fletcher’? Does he have a distinguishable writerly identity? Can such a wilfully collaborative writer be said to be in any way ‘individual’? In my paper, I offer a case study – based on a very small and puzzling crux in one Fletcher ‘solo’ play, *The Tamer Tamed* – to reflect on what is clearly a key question for Fletcherians, one that arguably cannot be addressed simply through methodologies of authorial attribution. The crux in question is the dual reference in Act 2 scene 5 of *The Tamer Tamed* to a trope, ‘an ale figure’, and to a mysterious person, ‘Susan Brotës’, whose identity no editor has successfully glossed. My paper seeks to understand this mildly baffling moment in the play obliquely in relation to the mid-seventeenth-century reception of Fletcher’s plays and to redefine the ‘unease’ that, twenty years ago, I argued was characteristic of Fletcherian drama by turning our attention to Fletcher’s conscious relationship with rhetoric and in particular to his use of tropes of inversion. In the process I aim both to establish and to undermine Fletcherian individuality.

Rachel E. Poulsen

Reading *The Island Princess* Through Ecological Time

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One challenge in teaching early modern drama is that students approach texts not only as forbiddingly difficult on a formal level, but also as unquestionably authoritative on a historical one. New Historicism as a critical framework checks that impulse somewhat, but it tends to entrench conventional periodizing boundaries that take the Enlightenment as a reference point, as the very term ‘early modern’ attests. In the case of English “island plays,” an ecological awareness can help students gain critical traction, and possibly debunk received ideas about European exceptionalism.

Early seventeenth-century London playwrights repeatedly staged public fascination with global exploration and the project of empire. Unsurprisingly, the island nation figured as a potent topos for the English, both as a reference point for real geographical reportage and as a limitless space for fantasizing alternative constructs of intercultural encounters, marginal subjectivities, and power. John Fletcher’s *The Island Princess* functions as a continuation of sorts of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* in considering such themes. Drawing on foreign sources as well as contemporary travel literature, the plays couch anti-colonialist ideas in a standard narrative frame in which a feminized, wild island population is subdued by the masculine, civilizing influence of seafaring travelers.

While ecological readings of early modern literature are not new, they are not standard procedure in average college classrooms. Yet it is crucial to acknowledge the centrality of local, environmental concerns—in this case, botany and the microclimates that supported unique varieties of trees that produced commodities such as cloves and nutmeg—to the makings of modernity, both in geopolitics and in the arts. When it comes to *The Island Princess*, what is the literary effect of staging this Jacobean experiment in tragicomedy and romance in a location fraught with not only bitter religious (for the play pits Muslim and Christian characters against one another) and mercantile strife, but also environmental conflict?

Michael Wagoner

Fletcher’s Theatrical Interruptions and *The Humorous Lieutenant*

While several early modern playwrights including Shakespeare embraced the potential of the interruption, John Fletcher particularly used the dramaturgy of this quotidian structure. Fletcher’s interruptions occur both in dialogue and in the plot structures, engaging conventional theatregrams and interrupting his audience’s expectations. Interruptions themselves, whether micro or macro, consist of a tripartite structure: premise, break, continuation. To illustrate: an idea begins, or a line is started, and an audience has an expectation of where it will go. The interruption occurs as someone speaks out of turn, arrives when they should not, or reveals unexpected information. The dialogue or plot then continue, either diverting from its original course, synthesizing the information into a new course, or ignoring the interruption and continuing. For this paper, I will specifically examine Fletcher’s play *The Humorous Lieutenant* (1619) to explore his use of interruption starting at the micro level of the dialogue and moving to the macro in considering the plot. The abundance of dashes in the 1647 Folio (107 total) indicates the many dialogic interruptions found within the text. These micro-interruptions color the aural and oral landscape of the play by producing a

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world in which characters do not always complete thoughts or ideas and where characters rapidly engage each other's speeches. So too, these iterations reflect the plot interruptions where Fletcher reverses audience expectations of identity and connects the subplot to the main plot. These subversions disrupt the role of the soldier or of the devoted lover or of the princess in disguise, consistently breaking an audience's expectations of these characters. By examining Fletcher's deployment of interruption at both micro to macro levels, we can begin to understand his dramaturgy of interruptions and how it ultimately engaged his audiences through naturalistic dialogue and unexpected situations.