JOHN FLETCHER: GENDER AND ROMANCE

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Abstract

The role of the Jacobean romance mode has been undervalued and misunderstood, not least because of what it has been seen to symbolise politically, and perhaps also because it was seen as beginning to be associated with a female audience. I suggest that gender and sexuality were often represented in romance in a radical way which was frequently empowering for women. Among dramatists, Fletcher and his collaborators in particular were freed by their use of romance to experiment with representations of gender in a radical way.

The thesis is divided into four sections, all of which address the way that gender and sexuality are represented in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. The first section has a chapter on Fletcher's debt to Shakespeare in Bonduca, and another on the two romance plays on which Fletcher and Shakespeare collaborated -- The Two Noble Kinsmen, and the lost Cardenio. The second section discusses Fletcher's The Faithful Shepherdess, first giving the context of English Jacobean pastoral tragicomedy and explaining its special significance for women, and secondly comparing Fletcher's play with Lady Mary Wroth's Love's Victory, a rare example of a Jacobean play by a woman. Section three explores the debt to prose romance of four plays -- Philaster, Valentinian, Love's Cure and The Island Princess -- focusing on the possibility that Fletcher may have been influenced by French précieux ideas. The final section investigates the part that women played in masques in the second half of the Jacobean period, and the way that Fletcher and his collaborators use masques and masque-like elements in their plays to exploit the dramatic potential of the Jacobean female masquer's unusually public and self-affirming role.

By exploring the impact of Jacobean feminocentric romance forms on the plays of Fletcher and his collaborators I offer a fuller understanding of the ways in which they regarded gender and sexuality, and contribute to the wider project of rediscovering a history of women in the Jacobean period.
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Introduction

'Beaumont and Fletcher': A Loose Canon

Whenever I'm asked about my research, having first explained a little about what the Beaumont and Fletcher canon is, the next question tends to be 'Are the plays any good?'. It's a difficult question to answer, partly because I'm not sure what it means. Is there beautiful poetry to be found in the plays? Do they have exciting plots and interesting characters? Do they convey what it was like to live at the time they were written? Do they say anything profound about the human condition? Though I would answer yes to all of these individual questions, it would be quite a cautious affirmation, partly because I feel that though present these elements don't appear frequently enough for me to be more confident (especially when the plays are compared to Shakespeare's, which they inevitably are), but also because I feel uncomfortable at the assumption which lurks behind the question, the assumption that aesthetic criteria should be the basis of whether or not we should study texts. When reading for pleasure I'm the kind of person who readily leaves a book aside simply because I don't like it, and I'll even go so far as to admit that I would never have settled to the research I've undertaken here if I hadn't enjoyed reading the texts. But at the same time I feel that the purpose of the study of literary history as an academic discipline should be to further the understanding of our culture, and this is something which can't be achieved with any degree of accuracy by jumping from one 'masterpiece' lily-pad to the next. We need to get our feet wet.

Who decides which texts should be classed as lily-pads anyway?

Unfortunately for the Beaumont and Fletcher canon there are no widely recognised masterpieces in it, despite the best efforts of some of the most notable poets and playwrights of Fletcher's day who clubbed together in an attempt to establish The Faithful Shepherdess (1608-9) as such when it was published after its failure on the stage. Many of the plays of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon were immensely popular throughout the seventeenth century, not only (unlike The Faithful
Shepherdess) with theatre audiences, but also with men of letters who are still respected today such as Jonson and Dryden. How can the society which produced and applauded the works of Shakespeare, which we still know and love, have also produced and applauded with even greater enthusiasm the Beaumont and Fletcher canon, now neglected and often despised? How can we account for the disjunction between what we expect from drama and what Fletcher and his collaborators served up to high acclaim for seventeenth-century audiences?

There are two possible answers. The older one, which still lingers, suggests that our modern tastes are somehow more discerning and mature than those of our seventeenth-century ancestors. Until comparatively recently many critics seem to have thought of the pre-Civil War audience of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon as being in the grip of an endemic moral and political laxity, to which the playwrights pandered. This view is epitomised in an essay published in 1980 by Arthur Kirsch, who quotes approvingly from a lecture published in 1945 by F.P. Wilson:

[O]f the twenty plays acted at court by the King's players between September 1630 and February 1631 only one was Shakespeare's -- and that one A Midsummer Night's Dream -- while ten were Beaumont and Fletcher's. Amusement and entertainment are important and essential to any theater, but when audiences seek these alone, when the serious aspects of life are excluded, or are touched on superficially to make a mere emotional titillation, the theatre becomes their dope.¹

Significantly (given the subject of my thesis) this view of Beaumont and Fletcher's audience as having effete tastes often seems to extend to the audience of seventeenth-century romance as a whole. Writing of prose romance in the seventeenth century, Gillian Beer quotes Pope's couplet from the Rape of the Lock (1712) 'But chiefly Love -- to Love an Altar built/ Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt'. She comments Pope's "neatly gilt" beautifully captures the element of display and safe

frivolity which undermines, if not the works themselves, at least the way they were regarded and used. They were part of the exclusive world of money and leisure.\(^2\)

Like Kirsch and Wilson, Beer seems to see romance after Shakespeare as essentially a frivolous diversion of the leisured classes rather than a serious art form.\(^3\)

This explanation of the seventeenth-century popularity of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon combines a belief in a 'let-them-eat-cake' coterie audience and a reading of the plays which sees them as politically reactionary. It has been suggested that the First Folio of 1647 was published with the idea of appropriating the plays and their writers as cultured royalists, antithetical to the philistine interregnum,\(^4\) and many critics have since formed the view that Beaumont and Fletcher were 'the most servile jure divino royalists' (Coleridge's phrase).\(^5\) However, since the Restoration some of the plays have been read as subversive of traditional ideas of kingship, and in particular recent criticism has tended to show that the Beaumont and Fletcher canon was much more radical politically than has often been assumed. Rebecca Bushnell, Philip Finkelpearl and Gordon McMullan (all writing in the 1990s, and all addressing directly the politics of the plays) might be thought of as a new school which has convincingly shattered the old view of Fletcher and his collaborators as servile royalists.\(^6\) Philip Finkelpearl has pointed out that 'neither Beaumont nor Fletcher can


\(^3\) I discuss this at more length below, pp.155-159.


\(^5\) See Sandra Clark's discussion of this phenomenon in the introduction to *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: Sexual Themes and Dramatic Representation* (Hemel Hempstead, 1994), especially pp.3-5.

be found in the glamorous circle of London courtiers and aristocrats' and that 'there is no evidence during the Jacobean period of a unity of taste among the courtiers or of any "courtly coterie"' (p.52). Gordon McMullan emphasises the (often neglected) importance of Fletcher's connections with the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon, as well as his upbringing, which were unlikely to have left him with absolutist sympathies.

So if the pre-Civil War success of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon wasn't because the plays were comforting 'dope' for a complacent coterie about to meet their nemesis, how are we to account for it? Why were the plays so highly regarded then when they are not now? Some critics insist that we take the plays much more seriously now than seventeenth-century audiences would have: the plays and their writers should be seen as self-consciously and wittily playing with generic expectations. Gordon McMullan ends The Politics of Unease by suggesting that 'Fletcher found a prose correlative to his own generic experiments' in 'the self-consciousness and anti-romance of certain Spanish texts', and he criticises studies of Fletcher which have failed 'to recognise the essential ironies of Fletcher's writing' (p.260). He and Annabel Patterson see Fletcher's first solo (and arguably his most 'artificial') play, The Faithful Shepherdess (1608-9) as Jacobean 'camp'. There are undoubtedly humorous moments in the play, though whether these amount to an attempt to burlesque pastoral tragicomedy remains a matter for interpretation (see my discussion below, pp.158-9). Whereas Beaumont's The Knight of the Burning Pestle signals its parodic intentions unequivocally, the notion that Fletcher's plays were conceived or received as anti-romance can only be hypothetical. There is no evidence that contemporary audiences understood them in this way nor is there any modern tradition of performing the plays (they are rarely staged at all) that would sustain this view.

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Moreover, apologists for the Beaumont and Fletcher canon who rely on
supposed ironies and self-consciousness in the plays as a justification for their
'artificiality' are not necessarily providing an adequate defence. Arthur Kirsch agrees
that the plays are self-conscious and parodie (as becomes clear from his discussion of
a passage from *Philaster* (1608-9)) but he sees this as all the more reason to condemn
'Beaumont and Fletcher's' work:

[...] it draws upon the energy of romantic form only minimally and essentially
parasitically, and the eventual effect of its parody is to belittle not only its
romantic material but the theatrical medium itself. Beaumont and Fletcher and
their audience are joined in self-conscious condescension. [...] this kind of self-
consciousness is endemic in Jacobean drama and is a mark not of parodie
growth and development but of exhaustion and a lack of substance. [...] In the
1930s and 40s as Christopher Ricks has remarked, it was common for scholars
like Muriel Bradbrook to counter objections to some of the faults of
Renaissance drama by saying 'That's not a fault, that's convention.' I think we
are endangered now by critics who are inclined to say, 'That's not a fault, that's
self-conscious.' (p.11)

Perhaps the value of self-consciousness in art comes down to individual taste.
However, this doesn't get us away from the problem that there's little reason to think
that contemporary audiences shared the view that the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher
were ironic, nor much explicit evidence in the texts that they should be read in this
way.

Another answer to the vexed question of how we are to understand the lack of
appeal of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon to modern tastes (and one which is more
congruent with the aims of the re-evaluation of the literary canon as a whole which
has taken place over the last twenty years) might be found by returning to some of
those questions with which I began, by thinking again about the criteria by which we
evaluate texts.

In the introduction to *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: Sexual Themes
and Dramatic Representation* (Hemel Hempstead, 1994) Sandra Clark discusses the
way in which the plays resist 'humanist criticism' (she borrows the term from
Catherine Belsey's *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London, 1985). This criticism insists on the illusion of 'unified' protagonists: Shakespeare's characters, for example, give the 'illusion of a personal consciousness, an individuality' (p.8). Alongside this, critics have found an 'organic unity' and 'moral profundity' (p.7) in Shakespeare's work which is often absent in the plays of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. Clark remarks that in contrast to Shakespeare's characters, Beaumont and Fletcher's 'seem to "posture"; that is, to adopt attitudes not natural to them' -- this is because they have no 'nature', there is no 'real meaning' hidden behind their speeches, their speeches 'mean' what they say (p.8). Whereas even many minor characters in Shakespeare's work give the impression of being more than the sum of their parts, it is much more difficult to imagine this is the case with many of Beaumont and Fletcher's protagonists.

Though Clark skilfully identifies one of the major differences between what we expect from drama and what Fletcher and his collaborators gave to us, she doesn't go on to offer an explanation of why they failed to give us what we want now, whilst so successfully giving audiences what they wanted then. The arguments of McMullan and Patterson would suggest that the 'artificiality' of some of the characters in the Beaumont and Fletcher plays should be put down to an attempt to parody weary romantic genres which we no longer understand fully, because we are no longer immersed in the same literary context. But this way of reading the plays shares with the 'old' school of criticism the idea that they came in at the tail end of a romantic movement which culminated with the Elizabethans, and which had gone off the boil with the demise of Shakespeare.⁸ Though with hindsight, this view is understandable, it's an oddly teleological way of reading the development of this period of literary

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⁸ For example, J.F. Danby in his *Poets on Fortune's Hill: Studies in Sidney, Shakespeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher* (London, 1952), begins his work by citing Lamb's comment 'After all, Beaumont and Fletcher were but an inferior sort of Shakespeares and Sidneys'.

history. Fletcher and his collaborators would have had no way of knowing that their work was to be viewed as the end of an era.

Though I would not deny the importance of Elizabethan romance, the influence of new forms of romance which were available to Fletcher and company also deserve investigation. Taking new forms of romance into consideration as sources permits the plays to be read not as self-consciously and/or cynically recycled old-fashioned romance but as serious attempts to develop a new style.

Another way of understanding the 'artificiality' of some of the characters and situations in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon was convincingly put forward by Eugene Waith in *The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher*, published in 1952. He suggests that the playwrights made use of classical traditions of rhetoric and oratory which were still current in the seventeenth century, thus rendering their work 'an extreme of dramatic formalism'. He suggests that 'Shakespeare has survived the changes of dramatic taste because his was never so narrowly a triumph of technique as was the triumph of Beaumont and Fletcher' (p.201). Whatever Shakespeare's 'triumph' actually was based on (Waith does not seek to answer that question), his works give the impression of being founded on an understanding of human nature which has much in common with how we still think about ourselves. Unlike Shakespeare's the success of Fletcher and his collaborators lay primarily in the manipulation of textual material. One of the aims of this thesis is to explain more fully this 'triumph of technique' by examining in some detail some hitherto neglected areas of the textual material available to the playwrights.

The 'triumph of technique' in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon not only explains the success of the plays in the seventeenth century (and their lack of

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popularity now), but also accounts for their lack of realism and psychological depth in characterisation. These are aspects which they share with the long prose romances to which they were often indebted and whose attraction critics are also frequently at a loss to explain.\(^{10}\) The nearest modern equivalent of seventeenth-century romance, I think, is *Star Trek* (particularly *The New Generation* and its off-shoots): anyone who enjoys these series knows that reworking upon reworking of (unrealistic) character types and plot motifs in order to consider and reconsider pseudo-philosophical, political and psychological problems can have a great appeal. Though they do have a 'camp' following, these series are also taken deadly seriously by many fans, and by many of the writers and actors who have created them. To dwell on the artificiality of characterisation, inconsistencies in plot-line and lack of profundity in individual episodes is to miss the point. Without some familiarity with the conventions of the series, much of the significance of any individual episode will be lost; in the same way a single play from the Beaumont and Fletcher canon can't be understood without knowing something of its literary context.

For this reason I'm pessimistic about a revival of interest in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. To appreciate it requires fairly detailed knowledge of a mass of literature which is now considered second rate. Moreover, the canon is unattractive for many other reasons. There are sporadic revivals of the plays on stage, but these have not gathered momentum and are not likely to, which means that knowledge of the plays will be restricted to readers. The Beaumont and Fletcher canon is off-putting for students and lecturers alike simply because of its size. There are fifty-three plays in the canon, dwarfing Shakespeare's thirty-eight. Since there are no 'masterpieces', picking out a handful to put on undergraduates' or masters' courses seems rather arbitrary and unsatisfying. Writing something on Webster or Jonson, if one wants to address Jacobean drama is much more manageable. You could read a play from the Beaumont and Fletcher canon every week for a year and still not quite

\(^{10}\) See the fuller discussion of this below, pp.155-159.
get through them all. Then there is the ambiguous and slippery charm of tragical and comical itself, the most distinctive and successful genre of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. Though various forms of tragicomedy might be said to hold sway in modern popular culture, its value (particularly as it is incarnated in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon) is by no means so assured in academic circles.

Finally there are the interpretative difficulties thrown up by the multiple authorship of the canon. Fletcher is thought to have been involved in the writing of fifty-one of the fifty-three plays (plus three lost plays), only sixteen of which were solo efforts. Beaumont, whose only surviving solo play is The Knight of the Burning Pestle (1607), contributed to not more than a dozen plays, Massinger to twenty or so, Shakespeare to two (plus the lost Cardenio, performed Christmas 1612) and the work of other playwrights, thought to include Field, Daborne, Jonson and Chapman, is also evident in some of the plays. The First Folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's work (1647), which contained thirty-four plays and thirty-five commendatory poems, began the process by which this vast and diverse body of Jacobean drama became known under that heading, despite the fact that Massinger contributed to far more plays than Beaumont, and that Fletcher is the mainstay of almost the whole thing.

Cyrus Hoy has used linguistic analyses to attribute portions of the plays to separate playwrights, though how reliable these analyses are, and what we are supposed to do with the fragments once we have decided who has written them is open to question. Ignoring the fact of multiple authorship (as critics as respected as Jonathan Dollimore and Kathleen McLuskie have done), or playing down its importance (on the grounds

11 In addition, he wrote the Masque of Inner Temple and Gray's Inn (1613), which is included in collections of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon even though it is not a play as such, and he is thought to have written a lost play called The History of Madon, King of Britain (1605?).

12 Shirley revised a few of the plays in the Caroline era and thus might also be thought of as a contributor.

13 In the first end note to her essay 'A Maidenhead, Amintor, At My Years!', McLuskie states simply and unapologetically 'In order to avoid the minefield of the
that the process of playwriting and production was essentially collaborative even for so-called single-authored works\(^{14}\)) doesn't seem quite right either. It seems to me that the problems posed by multiple authorship are likely to be perennial in criticism of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon.

However, as the work of Finkelpearl, McMullan, Bushnell and others amply demonstrates, there has been a recent reawakening of scholarly interest in the plays, which may filter down to inspire more enthusiasm among students and theatre-audiences. Alongside the re-evaluation of the political meanings, there has been much interest in the way that gender and sexuality are represented in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. Three discussions in particular seem to be of seminal importance. These are Kathleen McLuskie's chapter 'A Maidenhead, *Amintor*, at my yeares!' in her book *Renaissance Dramatists* (New York, 1989), pp.193-223; Sandra Clark's *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: Sexual Themes and Dramatic Representation* (New York, 1994); and Gordon McMullan's *The Politics of Unease in the Plays of John Fletcher* (Amherst, 1994).

McLuskie's influential essay emphasises the 'new relationship between the production and consumption of drama' and the consequent 'definition and construction of a new audience', through prefaces, epistles and prologues in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. This resulted in 'a shift in artistic taste' which 'involved, among other changes, a particular focus on the sexual dimension of the actions portrayed' (p.206-7).

\(^{14}\) See Jeffrey Masten's essay 'Beaumont and/or Fletcher: Collaboration and the Interpretation of Renaissance Drama', *English Literary History* 59 (1992), 337-356, and the discussion below, p.71 ff.
She discusses a selection of plays in the following order: *The Maid's Tragedy* (1610); *The Custom of the Country* (1619); *Faithful Shepherdess* (1608-9); a brief mention of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607); *Philaster* (1608-9); *The Woman Hater* (1606); *The Woman's Prize* (1611); and *The Scornful Lady* (1613). She concludes that a shift took place in which

sex was significantly more important than honour and where relations with women had to be renegotiated, unfettered by older conventions of chastity and service and the smooth passage of women from fathers to husbands. The humanised patriarchy of Shakespearean comedy is transferred to a world of competitive individualism which was liberating for those women with the wit and resources to survive within it. However, the release from the familiar narrative and moral patterns of the *querelle des femmes*, the contest between misogyny and adulation, was only a release into patterns of wit and urbanity in which women could as often be the victims as the heroines of the action.

(p.222)

The witty woman who manages to 'renegotiate' her relations with men is much more a feature of the final three plays in her discussion than the others, which indicate very old-fashioned attitudes to women's sexuality (i.e., the central dynamic is not about renegotiations of relations between the sexes, but chaste women as the victims of powerful men). All the plays in her discussion were written in the same early period (with the exception of the *Custom of the Country* (1619)), and plays of both kinds continued to be written through to the 1620s. Thus the 'shift' is not the development of a style which becomes dominant in Jacobean theatre (as McLuskie implies, focusing towards the end of her chapter on those comedies by Beaumont and Fletcher which anticipate Restoration comedy in the way that they represent relations

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15 *The Pilgrim* (1621), *The Little French Lawyer* (1621) and *The Elder Brother* (1625), for example, could be said to be representative of the 'new' kind of drama, as McLuskie defines it, written towards the end of Fletcher's life. But *The Humorous Lieutenant* (1619), *The Custom of the Country* (1619) and *A Wife for a Month* (1624) are all examples of late plays which victimise chaste women. *The Maid in the Mill* (1623) is an interesting case, in that the plot concerning the Maid is of the old-fashioned type (she is kidnapped by a tyrannical ruler and threatened with rape) whereas the subplot concerns courtly ladies who wittily negotiate the terms of their relationship with men of their own class.
between the sexes) but the development of one strand which runs alongside other very different -- if no less 'new' -- strands.

On the specific question of whether women formed a significant part of the audience of Fletcher and his collaborators, McLuskie suggests that it seems likely from the many prologues, epilogues and dedicatory verses which either address women directly or mention them as an important component of the audience, that the texts did indeed suit the tastes of contemporary women. She goes on to say that 'The problem for a feminist reading [...] is how to connect the varied treatment of women as heroines with the construction of women as an audience' (p.212). Ironically, the very plays which she identifies as depicting unusually assertive women characters -- comedies, such as Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize* (1611), a sequel to Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593-4) in which Petruchio's second wife attempts to 'tame' him -- seem to be those which are most clearly addressed to a male (and rather misogynist) audience. McLuskie concludes her discussion of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon by quoting G.Hill's commendatory verses which claim that Fletcher taught (so subtly were their fancies seized)

To Rule a wife, and yet the Women pleas'd.

These lines '[confirm] that the terms by which sex acted as the narrative and social dynamic of these plays had shifted to include a more pleasing image of women, but that the rule of the father, the tyranny of the lustful king, was replaced by the rule of the witty men even over the women who consented to become their partners in wit' (p.222). Thus, even if one accepts that there is a shift towards women facing witty men rather than lustful kings as their adversaries in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon (an argument which needs more clarification), the plays did not necessarily reflect a more positive attitude towards women, despite inevitably echoing in some way the social and economic developments which were taking place during this period.
Sandra Clark, in her book-length study of the subject, takes an even darker view of the representation of gender and sexuality in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon:

Women who attempt to take over male roles or to regard themselves as self-sufficient, like the Amazonian community in *The Sea Voyage* become objects of satire and ridicule. Women who expose the workings of patriarchal ideology, like Martia or Rosellia [from *The Double Marriage* (1620) and *The Sea Voyage* (1622), respectively], are demonised, and women who are too powerful, such as the Queens Bacha, Bonduca, and Brunhalt [from *Cupid's Revenge* (1607-8), *Bonduca* (1609-14) and *The Tragedy of Thierry and Theodoret* (1613) respectively], are readily co-opted into the stereotype of the monstrous woman, and either tamed or eliminated [...] Even in comedy female sexual energy requires severe regulation [...] There is no contradiction between the ubiquity in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher of women who are depicted as virtuous in the face of trial and persecution, resistant to tyranny, witty and intellectually resourceful, and the ubiquity of misogynist attitudes. [...] When women lay claim to [political power, financial independence, active sexuality], by virtue of high social standing, wealth, energy, or intellectual resourcefulness, they constitute a threat. In comedy marriage is the main means by which this threat is neutralised in the interests of preserving patriarchalism [...] In tragedy, transgressive women are demonised and eliminated. (pp. 156-7)

Clark doesn't offer any formulations for tragicomedy, the most distinctive genre of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon, and the genre which I am most concerned with because of its affinities with romance: like romance, it seems to be a rather protean category. She goes on to offer the 'caveat' that in a few comedies (*The Scornful Lady* (1613), *Wit Without Money* (1614) and *The Wild-Goose Chase* (1621)) 'couples negotiate between themselves for terms on which marriage can be made acceptable' (a statement which echoes McLuskie's idea that 'relations with women had to be renegotiated') without making the claim that this represents a shift in gender relations across the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. Her concluding point is that '[t]he critique of absolutism offered in *The Maid's Tragedy* and *The Tragedy of Valentinian*, amongst other plays, does not necessarily extend to a critique of the patriarchal structures of society' (p. 158).
Clark is undoubtedly right to draw attention to the limitations in the radicalism of sexual politics in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. It would be surprising if the plays showed no trace of misogyny given the nature of the masculinist culture in which they were produced. However, she sometimes seems to ignore elements in the plays which are more surprising and experimental in the way that they represent gender, particularly in the ways that the plays end.16

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16 Rosellia in *The Sea Voyage*, though 'demonized' for her behaviour during the course of the play (she thinks that men who have been shipwrecked on the island have murdered her long-lost men-folk and those of her followers, and tries to punish them in a ritualized way), is nonetheless swept up into the 'happy' ending. The fact that the women in *The Sea Voyage* are not punished for their murderous intentions towards the men is surely significant, but it is not remarked on by Clark.

Martia in *The Double Marriage* is undoubtedly punished for her misdemeanours, as Clark says. However, one of the interesting things about the play which Clark doesn't mention (even in her discussion of the play at some length in Chapter 2), is that Juliana, the long-suffering and saintly wife of Virolet, stabs him to death at the end of the play. This is a mistake (she thinks she is stabbing someone else to protect him), but nevertheless, this act hardly makes her the passive victim (the 'female saint' who is juxtaposed with Martia as 'Amazonian virago' -- p.77) that Clark suggests. Clark's theory about this play -- that "masculine spirit" in women is allowable only if it serves to reinforce masculine dominance, not to challenge it -- is made much more complicated by Juliana's murder of her husband at the end of the play.

Her appraisal of *The Tragedy of Valentinian* (1610-12) also follows this pattern: though she discusses at some length the victimisation of Lucina, she doesn't mention that another woman, Eudoxa, commits a murder in order to restore order at the end of the play. Eudoxa is undoubtedly a powerful woman, and the morality of her actions is open to question, but the men who surround her at the end of the play see her as the saviour of the state, and she is applauded as a heroine. For a fuller discussion of Clark's analysis of the play and my own conclusions, see below p.178 ff.

Bacha and Brunhelt are especially fearsome anti-heroines, though whether Bonduca ought to be grouped alongside them is open to question (for a discussion of Bonduca, see below pp.26-62, and for a description of the plot of *The Tragedy of Thierry and Theodoret* see p.84, n.25). However, there is at least one important exception to Clark's statement that 'women who are too powerful [...] are readily co-opted into the stereotype of the monstrous woman, and either tamed or eliminated'. This is Fletcher and Massinger's *The Prophetess* (1622), a bizarre play in which the eponymous heroine, Delphia, gradually becomes more and more powerful with the aid of supernatural powers which include black magic, until at the end she appears to be omnipotent, yet the play ends on a harmonious note. See Gordon McMullan's appraisal of the play in *The Politics of Unease*, pp.183-196, and my discussion of the way Delphin figures her power through masque below p.254. Clark seems unaware of this play. Hippolyta in *The Custom of the Country* and the Dutchess of Florence in *Women Pleas'd* (1618) also could be seen as 'too powerful' and yet are not 'co-opted
Gordon McMullan in *The Politics of Unease*, which was published in the same year as *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher*, regards the plays as much more liberal in their attitude to gender and sexuality. He goes so far as to identify two types of 'feminist' in 'the Fletcherian world': the witty woman (after McLuskie) who 'matches men at their own game', and 'the outsider who remains external to closing symmetries and looks to women's utopia as the only alternative' (p. 164). Whereas Clark sees 'difficulties for those wishing to uncover evidence of radical politics or to discern distinctive, let alone consistent, positions on questions of gender-relations' (pp. 158-9) McMullan's aim is to 'provide a coherent analysis of Fletcher's political plays' (p. xii). Throughout his book he explores the way that Fletcher's treatment of gender and sexuality is essential to his representation of politics, and he focuses specifically on the issue of gender in chapter 5. This chapter ends by drawing attention to 'the reconciliatory powers and the darker possibilities present in the woman's voice' (he has been discussing *The Prophetess* (1622)) 'powers and possibilities that Fletcher had insistently explored as part of what I have called his politics of unease' (p. 196). The radical (gender and state) politics which McMullan identifies often depend on elements of characterisation and plot which are not necessarily explained or reconciled within the texts, but are nevertheless not to be overlooked.

This seems to me a valuable way of reading the plays: it is often the awkward, anomalous and seemingly unexplainable moments of the plays which are of most interest to me in this study. Taken cumulatively they may amount to a challenge to Clark's persuasive, but disparaging, view of the way that the plays depict gender politics.

I will argue that the way in which the playwrights of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon were influenced by Jacobean romance forms also suggests more radical possibilities in the way that gender and sexuality are represented than Clark into the stereotype of the monstrous women', but partake in the happy endings of the plays (for a brief discussion of *Women Pleas'd* see below, pp. 259-260).
and McLuskie are willing to concede. Because of their debt to and affinity with narrative romance I class pastoral tragicomedy and masque as a kinds of romance for the purposes of this thesis.\textsuperscript{17} Romance was increasingly being seen as a 'feminine' genre at the beginning of the seventeenth century, written with the idea of pleasing privileged, literate women (though whether women actually constituted the majority of the audience for romance is questionable, given the extremely high rates of female illiteracy\textsuperscript{18}). As well as often being the intended audience for prose romance, aristocratic women were important members of the audience for court masques and private productions of pastoral tragicomedies, and on occasion they commissioned and performed in these events themselves. There are, of course, limits to the radicalism of this literature: modem women's magazines and harlequin novels are also


In Romanticism (London, 1969, repr. 1987), Lilian R. Furst summarizes the way that the definition of the word changed up until the Romantic period, pp. 11-14. Stanley Wells (op. cit.), E.C.Pettet in Shakespeare and the Romance Tradition (London, 1949, repr. 1976) and Howard Felperin in Shakespearean Romance (Princeton, 1972) give useful information on those aspects of romance traditions which influenced English literature up until Shakespeare's last plays. In their introduction to Romance: Generic Transformation from Chrétien de Troyes to Cervantes (New England, 1985) Kevin Brownlee and Marina Scordilis Brownlee (eds.) supply a broader historical and pan-European over-view of the history of the development of romance from medieval to the early modern period. They see romance as a 'genre' (could something so varied be called a genre?), which culminated with works as different as Don Quixote and L'Astére. A useful indication of the relationship between early modern tragicomedy and romance is provided by Lois Potter in Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature 1641-1660 (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 74-83. I do not attempt to provide a definition of the term, instead I use it pragmatically, accepting it as an umbrella term encompassing a plurality of related forms.

'feminocentric' in the sense of being written with the intention of pleasing a female audience, but they have hardly been a great force for women's liberation in our own century. Moreover, the masques, pastoral plays and romances for the elite of literate women in the seventeenth century were inevitably underwritten by classist presuppositions which restrict the possibilities of their 'feminism'. But on the other hand the importance of this new element in seventeenth-century culture ought not to be underestimated: its influence on the Beaumont and Fletcher canon provided a cross-current to the prevailing tides in the intensely masculinist institution of the theatre.

Before investigating Fletcher's involvement with Jacobean romance forms, I spend some time exploring the way that he echoes some of Shakespeare's ideas of gender and politics in an early solo play, *Bonduca*, and in the representation of gender in Shakespeare and Fletcher's *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613) and the lost *Cardenio* -- the two romances on which they collaborated. *Bonduca* may seem very different from Shakespeare's work, but it is indebted to *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606) in that the central dynamic of the play is concerned with the way that women fit into men's power struggles. Some of these ideas about sexual politics were reworked again by Shakespeare in *Cymbeline* (1610), and by examining the relationship between this play and *Bonduca* as well as that between *Coriolanus* (1608) and *Bonduca* (whose main male characters bear striking resemblances to each other) I attempt to shed light on the politics of Fletcher's play.

I develop the theme of male rivalry in the subsequent discussion of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Cardenio* (or rather what can be gleaned about *Cardenio* from Theobald's adaptation of it, *Double Falshood* (1728)), drawing on the psychoanalytic theories of Otto Rank on the phenomenon of the 'double'. The odd doubling up of male characters which is evident in some of Fletcher's plays written in the same period might also be the result of exigencies of casting in the King's Men. The final part of this section investigates the way that contemporary medical theory was used in the subplot of the Jailor's Daughter. Though it isn't clear if Shakespeare or Fletcher was
responsible for this plot line, it does anticipate Fletcher's later use of romance source material to add interest to his plays by exploring the boundaries of acceptable sexual and gender behaviour.

My investigation of the influence of Jacobean romance forms on Fletcher and his collaborators begins with a discussion of pastoral tragicomedy. I compare Fletcher's first solo play, *The Faithful Shepherdess*, with another Jacobean pastoral tragicomedy (unpublished until 1988) by Lady Mary Wroth, *Love's Victory* -- a unique example of a play by a woman written to be performed in the early seventeenth century. The discussion opens with a section which contextualises pastoral tragicomedy in England at the time, paying particular attention to its appeal to aristocratic women. Fletcher's use of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* helps him to anglicise this Italianate literary form, fashionable among the culturally and socially elite. A comparison with Wroth's play helps determine how radical Fletcher's representation of gender and sexuality was for its time.

The failure of *The Faithful Shepherdess* at the Blackfriars didn't prevent Beaumont and Fletcher from turning to pastoral tragicomedy again in order to construct certain elements of plot and characterisation in their first successful collaboration *Philaster*, which is the subject of the next section. As well as taking another look at the use of source material (in particular, questioning the extraordinary emphasis which has been put on Sidney's *Arcadia* (1580, revised 1593) as a source) this discussion raises some of the issues in the way that gender and sexuality are represented in many of the plays under discussion in this thesis: the part women play in male rivalry and ambition; the meanings of both male and female lust and chastity; the importance of slander; and the degree to which women are allowed power and autonomy.

By contrast with *Philaster* little work has been done on the sources of *Valentinian* (1610-12), another solo play by Fletcher. I compare Fletcher's version of the story with those by Procopius and Honoré d'Urfé. As with Beaumont and Fletcher's use of source material for *Philaster*, rather than slavishly adapting prose
sources into drama, Fletcher appropriates certain elements of plot and characterisation for his own ends, and though he shares certain feminocentric characteristics of plot development with d'Urfé, in this instance he is more radical in the way he represents women than his romance source.

My discussion of Love's Cure (thought to have been an early collaboration of Beaumont and Fletcher's, revised by Massinger c.1625) reconsiders the question of how conservative the play is in the way that it represents gender. I link Lucio as a man who comes to be valued for his feminine qualities with Armusia in The Island Princess (Fletcher and Massinger, 1621). I compare this play with Dekker and Massinger's The Virgin Martyr (1621-22), written at around the same time and dealing with some of the same issues as The Island Princess. However, The Virgin Martyr seems to be untouched by the attitude to gender that is evident in Love's Cure and The Island Princess, one that I argue is influenced by contemporary French précieux ideals.

The final section of the thesis examines the way that Fletcher and his collaborators may have used masques and masque-like moments in their plays partly to satisfy the desires of audiences to see masques which celebrated femininity and anti-absolutist politics, elements which were lacking from the court masques of the later years of James' reign. Before going on to discuss specific masques within plays in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon, I address the role of women in the court masques of the later period of James's rule, and the way in which they became increasingly male-dominated, in spite of exciting innovations, such as the first speaking and singing roles for aristocratic women in a masque staged for Queen Anne in 1617. The plays of Fletcher and his collaborators provided an alternative to the court in which a variety of masques with different political meanings could be seen and in which women (played by female impersonators, of course), took leading parts, allowing the tradition of celebrating femininity through masque to continue.

The central purpose of the thesis is to examine the extent to which Jacobean romance influenced the plays of Fletcher and his collaborators. My particular concern
is to establish whether Fletcher might be seen as more radical in his representation of
gender and sexuality, and more sympathetic in his treatment of women characters as a
result of his interaction with these literary forms. My broader aim is to rediscover
some neglected aspects of literary history. The work of Fletcher and his collaborators,
since it is so often directly concerned with the mores of gender and sexuality, is an
exciting and largely untapped resource for feminist critics interested in the early
modern period. Much of the source material which I investigate is little known and
less discussed. To appreciate how literature develops we need to take into account
not just those texts whose importance is obvious today, but those which were central
to the literary movements of their own times: we need to read literary history
historically rather than teleologically.
1. Two Noble King's Men: Fletcher and Shakespeare

Bonduca, Coriolanus, Antony and Cleopatra and Cymbeline

Fletcher's Bonduca (1609-14) and Shakespeare's Cymbeline (1610) are plays about early Britain which were written within a few years of one another, by playwrights interested enough in each other's work to collaborate. Much of their work of this period seems similar, not so much in subject matter (as with Bonduca and Cymbeline, which are unusual in this respect) but in terms of the representation of sexual politics and also broader politics. This might not seem very obvious in the case of Bonduca and Cymbeline: the former is a very bleak and pessimistic play, and one of Fletcher's most misogynistic; and the latter has often been seen as politically optimistic and complimentary to James, and has one of the largest and most attractive female parts (that of Imogen) in the Shakespeare canon. However, both playwrights seem to have reworked some of the ideas in Antony and Cleopatra (1606) in these plays about early Britain, and by comparing them not only with each other, but also with Coriolanus (1608) and Antony and Cleopatra I hope to draw some similarities between the ways that politics and gender are represented.

Jacobean plays which deal with the history of early Britain fall into the seemingly anomalous position of belonging to two groups of literature which have different (one might say contradictory) implicit political agendas. On the one hand they form part of a broad range of literature dealing with myths of early Britain, which followed James I's accession to the English throne.¹ Many of these were panegyric, celebrating his self-proclaimed title of King of Great Britain. On the other hand, these

plays can be seen as a sub-group of the Jacobean history play, a genre which was largely critical of James's pro-Catholic and pro-Spanish tendencies. One of the aims of this section will be to present an assessment of the relative positions of *Cymbeline* and *Bonduca* in the Jacobean political spectrum. Spenser had already established romance as one of the means by which the nation might define itself. Plays which brought to life myths of early Britain were bound to have political resonances.

*Bonduca*, generally accepted as a solo play by Fletcher, was first printed in the 1647 Folio. A manuscript, 'evidently prepared for a private patron' was written 'some ten to twenty years before' from Fletcher's foul papers. The date of authorship is uncertain, though the list of principal actors, if correct, provides some clues. The actors are listed as follows:

- Richard Burbadge
- Henry Condel
- William Eglestone
- Nich. Toolie
- William Ostler
- John Lowin
- John Underwood
- Richard Robinson

It has been suggested that Richard Burbage, who would have been 33 in 1606 (when *Antony and Cleopatra* was produced) and 40 in 1613 (the latest likely date for *Bonduca*) played Antony, Coriolanus, Posthumus, and Caratach (in *Bonduca*). This has obvious relevance to this section, which attempts to draw parallels between these plays, though how Burbage played these roles, and to what extent they were written

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3 This information comes from Cyrus Hoy's introduction to the play, Bowers 4, p.151. For bibliographical details of Bowers see p.268 and Bibliography.

for him will no doubt always remain a matter for speculation.

E.K. Chambers points out that the above names are from the actor-list of the King's Men between 1609 and 1611 and between 1613 and 1614, 'as these are the only periods during which Ecclestone and Ostler can have played together.'

Ecclestone was in the King's company in 1610 and 1611, and though documents of 1611 and 1613 indicate that he transferred to Lady Elizabeth's company, it seems likely that he returned in 1613-14.

A date of 1613-14 may be more likely in view of the fact that all of the cast listed above also had parts in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* in 1613, except for Ecclestone. Moreover, it is possible that the death of Hengo in *Bonduca* is a reference to the death of Prince Henry in 1612.

Both these pieces of evidence suggest the later dating of the play (1613-14).

However, this is by no means conclusive: it isn't impossible that the same actors appeared in plays which were produced within three or four years of each other. There seems to have been a surprising stability in the actor-list: for example, many of the cast of *The Duchess of Malfi* seem to have had roles eight years later in

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6 Bentley, 2, p.429.

7 Also, Robinson may not have been in the original production of *The Duchess of Malfi*. The names given of actors for the cardinal's part are 'I.H.Cundaile. 2.R.Robinson' in the 1623 quarto: it seems likely that Condell took the part of the cardinal first, and then Robinson took over some years later, though he may have played the Duchess in the original production. Robinson was the leading boy actor for the King's men, and took women's roles from 1611 to 1616 (see John Russell Brown's introduction to his edition of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613) (Manchester, 1974, repr. 1990), p.xx). Richard Sharp is listed as the Duchess, but was probably too young in 1613 when *The Duchess* was first performed, so the part may have been taken by Robinson. If Robinson was taking leading female roles in 1611, it seems quite likely he was old enough to play the boy Hengo in 1609 or 1610, which is when I would date *Bonduca*, see below.

Fletcher's *The Island Princess* (1621) (see below, p.209). Moreover, the death of Hengo isn't an obvious reference to the death of Henry, in spite of the similarity between their names. The boyishness and helplessness of Hengo is emphasised, whereas when he died, Henry was a young adult who had already been created Prince of Wales, acted in masques, had his own court and a considerable political following. Hengo has more in common with Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale* (1611) (another boy martyr, created before the death of Henry) than with the Prince of Wales.

Fletcher seems to have been much more heavily influenced by *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* (written 1606-08), than by Shakespeare's late plays in the writing of *Bonduca*. This would seem to confirm that the play couldn't have been written earlier than 1609, though it doesn't cast any light on the latest possible date, which is at issue here. However, my own feeling is that the play was indeed written shortly after *Coriolanus*, in 1609 or 1610. This is because I feel that *Bonduca* is not influenced by *Cymbeline*, or any of Shakespeare's later plays: Fletcher seems to be enmeshed in Shakespeare's plays of the 1606-8 period, and was particularly interested in some of the political issues that *Coriolanus* raises.

Though *Bonduca* and *Coriolanus* are very different plays in many respects there are some striking similarities between Caratach in *Bonduca* and *Coriolanus*. Both are uncompromising soldiers, though as we shall see, their codes of honour vary in some important ways. One of the most striking passages linking the two plays is Caratach's speech near the beginning of *Bonduca* which echoes what Aufidius says about Coriolanus at their meeting in Aufidius's house:


Clifford Leech states that 'we can take it as certain that *Bonduca* is a derivative of *Cymbeline*' (*The John Fletcher Plays* (London, 1962), p.168). I would argue that there is far more textual evidence to suggest that *Bonduca* was written before *Cymbeline*. 
Aufidius: Let me twine
Mine arms about that body, where against
My grained ash an hundred times hath broke,
And scarr'd the moon with splinters. Here I sleep [clip]
The anvil of my sword, and do contest
As hotly and as nobly with thy love
As ever in ambitious strength I did
Contend against thy valor. Know thou first,
I lov'd the maid I married; never man
Sigh'd truer breath, but that I see thee here,
Thou noble thing, more dances my rapt heart
Than when I first my wedded mistress saw
Bestride my threshold. (IV.v.106-118)

Caratach:
Witnessse these wounds, I do; they were fairly given.
I love an enemy: I was born a soildier;
And he that in the head on's Troop defies me,
Bending my manly body with his sword,
I make a Mistris. Yellow-tressed Hymen
Ne'er ty'd a longing Virgin with more joy,
Then I am married to that man that wounds me:
And are not all these Romanes? Ten struck Battels
I suckt these honour'd scars from, and all Romanes:
Ten yeers of bitter nights and heavie marches,
[...]
[...] have I wrought thorow,
And all to try these Romanes. Ten times a night
I have swom the Rivers [...
[...]
And still to try these Romanes [...]] (I.i.56-69)

The similarities between the passages seem almost too obvious to point out: the
eroticism of the bending and entwined manly bodies is extended with a metaphor
comparing the meeting of two enemies with much longed-for marriage; the ash
breaking on Coriolanus' body a hundred times is echoed in the incantatory repeating
of the ten years of war, 'Ten struck Battels' (and so on), which inflict similar wounds
on Caratach's body. Both passages emphasise night as a time for these seemingly
never-ending conflicts, giving them both a surreal tone -- the battles are like recurring
anxiety dreams in which there is constant striving and struggle which achieves nothing
in the darkness and confusion of sleep.
Caratach reverses some of what Aufidius says. In Aufidius's speech he begins by twining his arms around and 'clip[ping]' the body of Coriolanus, which is represented as impregnable and unyielding as an 'anvil'. He thus seems to assume a feminine position to Coriolanus's masculine one in the eroticism of the image. As the speech progresses, this is reversed and he becomes the husband to Coriolanus's bride. By contrast, Caratach starts off by making his opponent 'his mistress', but becomes the 'longing Virgin' bride himself as his metaphor progresses. It is as though Fletcher fits Caratach into Coriolanus's position in Aufidius's speech, rather than merely repeating Aufidius's words in his own way.

Other moments in the play also seem to recall the characterisation of Coriolanus. The singularity of Caratach is emphasised in a similar way to Coriolanus. Images of the latter's 'aloneness' cluster around his exploits at Corioles. The herald announces in Act II 'Know, Rome, that all alone Martius did fight/ Within Corioles gates[...]’ (II.i.162-3). Coriolanus boasts of his exploits at Corioles himself near the end of the play 'Alone I did it' (V.vi.116). Even the way in which the tribunes condemn Coriolanus emphasises his aloneness:

Where is this viper
That would depopulate the city and
Be every man himself? (III.i.262-264)

Similarly, at the end of Bonduca Caratach is hailed as 'the onely Souldier' (V.iii.192) by Suetonius, who earlier in the play gives him the following tribute:

I'll tell ye all my fears, one single valour,
The vertues of the valiant Caratach
More doubts me then all Britan [...] (I.ii.253-5)

Moreover, Caratach spends much of the play on his own: though he overrules Bonduca successfully, he seems always to be at odds with her and her daughters. After the death of Bonduca he seems even more isolated, and after the death of Hengo, one wonders if he is literally 'the onely Souldier' on the British side. His words
at his reconciliation with the Romans 'Ye have had me a brave foe;/ Make me a noble friend [...] '(V.iii.184-5) echo Aufidius describing Coriolanus as 'more a friend than e'er an enemy' (IV.v.146) at his defection to the Volsces: changing sides in a war is inevitably an anomalous and lonely business.

Perhaps a more important similarity between the two plays is the concern they share with the political issues surrounding food shortage. Shakespeare shows sympathy for the plebeians who are short of food by allowing them to voice their grievances:

We are accounted poor citizens, the patricians good. What authority surfeits {on} would relieve us. If they would yield us but the superfluity while it were wholesome, we might guess they reliev'd us humanely; but they think we are too dear. The leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularize their abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them. Let us revenge this with our pikes, ere we become rakes; for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge. (I.i.15-25)

Despite the rather laboured juxtapositions, the speech has an efficacy to match the power of the rhetoric of the patricians: the play engages with the problem of the distribution of power in society. When the First Citizen opens the play by asking the other plebeians if they 'are all resolv'd rather to die than to famish?' (I.i.4-5) he presents their plight with a grim desperation that the much cleverer rhetoric of the patricians later fails to cancel out. Fletcher, in Bonduca, also allows starving Roman soldiers to reveal the full extent of their misery, trying to live on a ration of 'twenty Beans a day':

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Judas}: & \quad \text{A Bean? a princely diet, a full banquet,} \\
& \quad \text{To what we compasse.}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
1. \text{Souldier}: & \quad \text{Fight like hogs for Acorns?}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
2. \text{Souldier}: & \quad \text{Venture our lives for pig-nuts?}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Petillius}: & \quad \text{What ail these Rascals?}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
3. \text{Souldier}: & \quad \text{If this hold, we are starv'd.}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Judas}: & \quad \text{For my part, friends,}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
& \quad \text{Which is but twenty Beans a day, a hard world}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
& \quad \text{For Officers, and men of action;}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
& \quad \text{And those so clipt by master mouse, and rotten:}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
& \quad \text{For understand 'em French Beans, where the fruits}
\end{align*}
\]
Are ripen'd like the people, in old tubs.
For mine own part, I say, I am starv'd already,
Not worth another Bean, consum'd to nothing,
Nothing but flesh and bones left, miserable:
Now if this mustie provender can prick me
To honourable matters of achievement, Gentlemen,
Why there's the point.

4. Soldier. I'll fight no more. (I.ii.72-86)

It's difficult not to have sympathy with Judas (though his name anticipates the
treachery he is involved in later in the play). Both the First Citizen in *Coriolanus* and
Judas are already somewhat undermined even before the verbal attacks by their social
superiors: Judas simply because of his name; the First Citizen because of the stupidity
of some of what he says (what sort of choice is it that he offers his comrades, to
starve or die?). However, the mouldy mouse-nibbled beans remain an image as
potent and (literally) irreducible as the pike and rake of the First Citizen in
*Coriolanus*: starvation in both plays heralds the threat of the disintegration of
authority.

In Shakespeare's play hunger and disobedience belong to the lower-class
characters, and condemnation of them to the upper classes. In *Bonduca* the political
issues are made more complicated by Caratach who saves a party of starving Roman
soldiers (including Judas) from Bonduca and her daughters who caught them
'harrying for victuals' (II.iii.3). They are brought on stage with halters round their
necks, about to be whipped and hung. Caratach asks

what's their offence?
Stealing a loaf or two to keep out hunger,
A piece of greazie bacon, or a pudding?
Do these deserve the gallows? They are hungry,
Poor hungry knaves, no meat at home left, starv'd:
Art thou not hungry? (II.iii.45-50)

True nobility in *Bonduca* shows itself in mercy, as it does at the end of *Coriolanus*,
though significantly Coriolanus's mercy is not for the poor. Indeed, Coriolanus makes
his feelings on the subject of mercy for the starving and rebellious known at various
times early in the play, perhaps most strongly at I.i.196-200:


By contrast Caratach's defence of the starving soldiers qualifies the class conflict which at first seems to run in parallel with the politics of Coriolanus.

In Bondyca, Petillius does not take his verbal counter-attack from the patrician Menenius's 'belly' speech in Coriolanus, as perhaps might be expected if Fletcher had intended to develop political meanings in the same way. Instead of hunger being seen as a metaphor for the draining effect of the poor on the state, the inability to go without food is couched in terms of lack of honour in a soldier:

Petillius. How long is't since thou eat'st last? wipe thy mouth,
And then tell truth.

Judas. I have not eat to th' purpose --

Petillius. To th' purpose? what's that? half a Cow, and Garlick?
Ye Rogues, my Company eat Turf, and talk not;
Timber they can digest, and fight upon't;
Old matts, and mud with spoons, rare meats. Your shoes, slaves,
Dare ye cry out of hunger, and those extant?
Suck your Sword-hilts, ye slaves, if ye be valiant [...] (I.ii.102-109)

This is very reminiscent of a passage from Antony and Cleopatra. Caesar laments that Antony's ability to undergo terrible hardship in war has been exchanged for Cleopatra's 'lascivious wassails':

Caesar. Antony,
Leave thy lascivious {wassails}. When thou once
Was beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st
Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel
Did famine follow, whom thou fought'st against
(Though daintily brought up) with patience more
Than savages could suffer. Thou didst drink
The stale of horses and the gilded puddle
Which beasts would cough at; thy palate then did deign
The roughest berry on the rudest hedge;
Yea, like the stag, when snow the pasture sheets,
The barks of trees thou brow'st. On the Alps
It is reported thou didst eat strange flesh,
Which some did die to look on [...] (I.iv.55-68)

The eating of unwholesome and unusual food while on a military campaign is seen as
the ultimate test of warlike valour by Caesar, whereas for Petilius it is what is
expected of Roman soldiers. Either way it's a bleak image of what valour and
manliness is all about: and it is echoed in the way that feeding and starvation are used
as metaphors in Coriolanus.11

In Act II, iii Caratach puts forward the belief that feeding the soldiers will
make them worthy adversaries, that they will be able to prove their valour more
effectively if they have enough to eat. However, later, in IV, ii when Caratach and
Hengo are starving, they too are reduced to eating 'strange flesh': Caratach offers
Hengo a Roman's head which is accepted as 'Good provision' (79) by the boy to stave
off hunger. Hengo also says he is willing to eat moss and even anger (87) (a line
which echoes Volumnia's infamous 'Anger's my meat' at IV.ii.50 of Coriolanus12), and

11 See Janet Adelman "'Anger's my meat": Feeding, Dependency, and Aggression in
Coriolanus' in Murray M.Schwartz and Coppélia Kahn (eds.), Representing
Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays (Baltimore, 1980), 129-149 and Stanley
Cavell 'Coriolanus and the Interpretations of Politics' in Patricia Parker and Geoffrey
Hartman (eds.), Shakespeare and the Question of Theory (New York, 1985,
repr.1993), pp.245-272, for their discussions of this phenomenon in Coriolanus.

12 When Menenius asks Volumnia if she will dine with him after Coriolanus has been
banished, she replies 'Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself'. Adelman comments 'We
might suspect her of having been as niggardly in providing food for her son as she is
for herself; or rather suspect her of insisting that he too be self-sufficient, that he feed
only on his own anger' (op. cit., p.130). Stanley Cavell also discusses the line:

I take Volumnia's vision of supping upon herself to be a picture not simply of
her local anger, but of self-consuming anger as the presiding passion of her life
-- the primary thing, accordingly, that she would have to teach her son, the
thing he sucked from her, of course under the name of valiantness. If so, then
if Volumnia and hence Coriolanus are taken to exemplify a Roman
identification of virtue as valor, they should further be taken as identifying
valor with an access to one's anger. (Op. cit., p.249)
and is congratulated by Caratach for being a 'compleat souldier' (81) for this attitude to food, or rather, to starvation.

At the end of the play, when Caratach and Hengo are weak with starvation, Judas and another soldier repay their earlier hospitality by setting out food as a bait. Caratach dangles Hengo down from the rock on which they are hiding to fetch the food and he is shot by Judas. Like Antony, Caratach and Hengo prove themselves to be valiant when faced with hunger; but in addition to this, the point that humanity and mercy are desirable whatever the boundaries of class or nationality emerges from the play. Killing anyone who is desperate for food is nasty, even if he is your enemy, but the ultimate treachery is in killing a hungry child.

It seems likely that Shakespeare was influenced in some respects by the events of the Midlands Revolt of 1607-8 when he wrote Coriolanus. 13 Gordon McMullan argues that Fletcher was also 'aware of the local effects' of the Midlands disturbances of 1607-8:

I argue that in several of his plays, Fletcher seeks ways to explore the complexities of government in the context of local unease and unrest, representing the possibility that mismanagement of the ramifications of changing property relations could lead to serious destabilization in the country. 14

McMullan discusses the ways in which this criticism of mismanagement can be seen in Fletcher's first solo play, probably written in 1608, The Faithful Shepherdess. In

It seems to me that Fletcher was as struck by these lines and others pertaining to feeding and starvation as Shakespeare's twentieth-century critics. The bleakness of Shakespeare's vision in Coriolanus is to some extent replicated in Bonduca through the borrowing of some of these images.

13 This view was first noted by Brents Stirling in The Populace in Shakespeare (New York, 1949) and developed by E.C.Pettet in 'Coriolanus and the Midlands Insurrection of 1607', Shakespeare Survey 3 (1950), 34-42.

Bonduca a simpler message comes across: that there are certain absolute social responsibilities which ought to be observed even in times of conflict. That the starving should be given mercy might not seem like a very radical message ordinarily, but in the aftermath of the 1607 Midlands revolt (the play may have been written as early as 1609), perhaps it was. The revolt was not only about the disappearance of common land but also the shortage of corn, and there was evidently some debate between James I and the Privy Council on the one side, and the Earl of Huntingdon who had been sent to sort out the rebellion on the other, about what degree of punishment or leniency should be shown to the rebels considering the extremity of their plight. Like Caratach (and contrary to the wishes of Bonduca in the play, and the Privy Council in real life) in one incident the Earl of Huntingdon set some 'very poore creatures' free after they had been threatened with hanging and had had halters put round their necks.

The contrast between the attitude of Earl of Huntingdon and orders from James I and the Privy Council can be seen very clearly in the documents that McMullan cites, ibid., pp.44-46:

James I to the Earl of Huntingdon -
Although we can be content that for sparing of blood some special persons should be made example to others, yet in the case of any resistance you are to use the force of our county and the assistance of our subjects to invade, destroy and disperse them.

The Privy Council to the Earl of Huntingdon -
[... ] somewhat must be done sharpelie, and if it had bin done before there had bin neede of lesse labour now: with sharpnes in verie deedee, wilbe the truest waie of clemenzie, because if they be forborne, they will rumm headlonge more and more into daungere...Wch would be prevented by the example of some few, that might justifie in the act of their disobedience suffer the paine of death due to them; Wch yoLp: had neede weel consider and take care of; if yoL looke that either yoLsevles shall have an ende of the troble and businesse there, or we heere.

The Earl of Huntingdon to the Privy Council -
Before my cominge to the place where I heard they weare assembled they were all gone, havinge done little or nothinge, whereupon I sent some of my horsemens several ways and of that number could take not above viij or xth persons, wch were very poore creatures yet nevertheless I caused iij or iiij of them to be brought noe tree being near unto a wyndmyline, where I comanded
Bonduca also reflects broader political concerns. In a brief mention of the politics of Bonduca Gordon McMullan writes that 'it is difficult to avoid hearing the voice of the English Reformation in her [Bonduca's] glorification of the "chaste and simple puritie" of the Britons' (p.95). Although this seems true of this specific speech, which begins 'If Rome be earthly, why should any knee/With bending adoration worship her?' (IV.iv.15-16) it should be set in the context of the play as a whole. The religion of the Britons takes on Christian overtones after their defeat in battle, but up until then the British are presented as being very superstitious compared to the rather secular Romans. As Simon Shepherd comments,

Britain is seen as a country ruled by women and priests [...] What seems to be going on is that the values of the women's prayer, often associated with a Protestant attack on the Roman Church, are here themselves translated into a religion that is mystical, fretful, incense-ridden.  

Early in the play Petillius gives the impression that the country is overrun with priests (I.i.203) and the British perform sacrifices and rituals addressed to a vengeful god with ominous consequences before battle in Act III (the Romans make do without religious inspiration for the battle, but win it nevertheless). The 'voice of the English Reformation' can still be heard, but what it says is altogether more puzzling and contradictory than is suggested by that one speech of Bonduca.

Moreover it should be noted that Bonduca is not seen as very heroic in the play, except at the moment of her death. In fact the opposite is true: Caratach contradicts the orders of Bonduca and her daughters all the way through the play, and his criticism of them culminates when the British are losing the battle:

halters to be put about there neckes. Finding them so penitent for there fault and submittinge themselves unto his ma.  

Why do you offer to command? the divell,
The divell, and his dam too, who bid you
Meddle in mens affairs? (III.v.132-134)

Even after her death, which impresses the Romans, Caratach continues to curse her;
'O thou woman, / Thou agent for adversities, what curses/ This day belong to thy
improvidence?' (V.i.3-5). Caratach himself ends the play in harmony with the
Romans: 'Ye have had me a brave foe; / Make me a noble friend [...]’ (V.iii.184-5).
Throughout the play Caratach is shown to share many of the moral and political view­
points of the Roman military leaders, so perhaps it is less than surprising when he is
united with them at the end.

Fletcher might have made Bonduca a virtuous, self-sacrificing queen, making
an heroic attempt to stave off the attacks of Rome with reference to the imagery
surrounding Elizabeth I, but he has done something very different. The impression
we get of her is very different from the way that Jonson, for example, used her in the
Masque of Queens (1609), in which Queen Anne and eleven of her ladies dressed as
mythical queens from around the world. Jonson quotes the following from Spenser in
his notes to the masque:

Bunduca Britonesse,
Bunduca, that victorious Conqueresse,
That, lifting vp her braye heroiique thought
'Boue womens weakenesse, wth the Romanes fought;
Fought, and, in field agaynst them, thrise preuayled: & c.

To wch, see her Orations in story, made by Tacitus, and Dion: wherein is
express'd all magnitude of a spirit, breathing to the liberty, and redemption of
her Countrey. 17

Paul Green, in his essay 'Theme and Structure in Fletcher's Bonduca' suggests that it
was surprising that Fletcher chose to represent Bonduca so unsympathetically, since

17 C.H Herford and Percy Simpson (eds.), Ben Jonson (Oxford, 1925-1952), vol.7,
p.310.
she 'was traditionally lauded in England as a national heroine'\textsuperscript{18} Since the British and the Romans are portrayed as having both good and bad qualities, he goes on to argue that the central dramatic opposition of the play may be men against women, rather than Rome against Britain. However, as he himself points out

\begin{quote}
Here, too, the antithesis is not wholly precise; the presence on the British side of masculine Caratach with his Roman principles undermines any such precision. (p.309)
\end{quote}

In his essay 'Bonduca's Two Ignoble Armies and The Two Noble Kinsmen' Andrew Hickman argues that this very resistance to easy solutions is the whole point of the play. Like The Two Noble Kinsmen (1613), Bonduca is a

\begin{quote}
[...] drama [...] of choice that set[s] up an antithetical structure in order to express the problematic nature of discrimination.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

However, Hickman continues to see the struggle in the play as essentially one between the 'factions of Britain and Rome' (p.169), each side showing balanced virtues and vices.\textsuperscript{20} Simon Shepherd points out that 'The world becomes only male [...] at the end of the play:\textsuperscript{21} the women, rather than the British, are defeated. The suicides of the women are presented triumphantly, but, as I will argue, this is because they are able to prove by the manner of their deaths that they have removed their

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\textsuperscript{18} Paul D. Green, 'Theme and Structure in Fletcher's Bonduca' Studies in English Literature 1500-1900 22 (1982), p.307. As well as Jonson and Spenser, he also cites Thomas Heywood and Robert Burton as contributors to this tradition.
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\textsuperscript{20} Some critics see Coriolanus as setting up an irresolvable situation too (particularly in the way that the politics of the play are laid out) (See Cavell, p.247, for example). From her psychoanalytic standpoint, Janet Adelman also remarks 'the nature of our involvement in the fantasies embodied in this distant and rigid hero [Coriolanus] does not permit any resolution' (opus cit., p.144).
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femininity. However, I am not trying to suggest that the central conflict of the play is men against women. The conflicts are essentially between men, but the way in which women become the inspiration and/or site for conflict is an important structural element not only in *Bonduca*, but also in *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Cymbeline*.

In spite of the many differences between the plays, the way both men and women are represented in *Bonduca* owes much to *Antony and Cleopatra*. They share the premise that if soldiers fall in love with women they will become effeminate and incapable of fighting.22 This is clear from the first speech in *Antony and Cleopatra*, in which Philo describes how the great soldier Antony has become ‘the bellows and the fan’ To cool a gipsy’s lust’, and the first speech in *Bonduca* in which Bonduca accuses the conquered Roman soldiers of being fit only for love, not battle:

Shame, how they flee! Caesars soft soul dwells in ‘em;
Their mothers got ‘em sleeping, pleasure nurst ‘em,
Their bodies sweat with sweet oils, loves allurements,
Not lustie Arms. (I.i.7-10)

The fact that this statement comes from a female warrior at first seems paradoxical: however, misogyny is expressed by both men and women in this play. When Bonduca celebrates her achievements here, she does it by insulting the weakness of the Romans whose inadequacy has resulted in this astounding reversal of the proper order of things:

A woman beat ‘em, Nennius; a weak woman,
A woman beat these Romans. (I.i.15-17)

22 Also see *Troilus and Cressida* (1602). As a result of having fallen in love, Troilus is

[...] weaker than a woman's tear,
Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance,
Less valiant than the virgin in the night,
And skilless as unpractic'd infancy. (I.i.9-12)
An odd mixture of self-hatred and triumph is evident in these words. Bonduca acts out her ‘weakness’ as the scene develops and she is twisted this way and that by Caratach’s rhetoric, finally conceding that he is completely right (and implicitly that she has been wrong) in what almost seems like a male fantasy of how arguments with women should go.

Neither Bonduca nor her daughters are able to counter any of Caratach’s remarks. Perhaps the most painful example of this occurs when the daughters of Bonduca have an argument with Caratach over some Roman prisoners whom they have captured through trickery. Caratach wants to release them so that he can fight them honourably. The daughters want revenge for the rapes that they have suffered before the beginning of the play:

2. Daughter. By — Uncle,

We will have vengeance for our rapes.

Caratach. By —

You should have kept your legs close then [...] (III.v.69-71)

This is tantamount to blaming the daughters for their own rapes: it puts a slur on their sexuality which might have been avoided if Fletcher had wanted to make these women martyrs. This dynamic occurs periodically throughout the play: Caratach prevails and the women have to leave the stage defeated.

The mixture of self-hatred and triumph in the women which is manifested by Bonduca at the opening of the play can be seen most clearly in the speeches she and her daughters give before committing suicide in Act IV, scene iv. Most strikingly, Bonduca tries to bully the second daughter into committing suicide by suggesting that if she lives on she will remain ‘[a] whore still’ (IV.iv.86 and 99). Whether the daughter is supposed to be a whore because she wants to live even though she has been raped and defeated in battle, or because she is frightened to die, is left ambiguous. The grim precedent set by Lucrece would suggest that her tarnished sexuality would be redeemed by suicide. The second daughter is eventually convinced she must commit suicide when her sister tells her that after death there will
be no 'lustful slaves to ravish' them (IV.iv.112). This is moving in the light of Caratach's earlier quip that they ought to have kept their legs closed if they hadn't wanted to be raped. Their sexuality will remain vulnerable to verbal and physical abuse for as long as they remain alive, and thus remaining alive is seen as a much more profound annihilation than committing suicide.

The scene of the women's suicide has some parallels with the suicide of Cleopatra in *Antony and Cleopatra*. The Romans in both plays try to bargain with the queens to stop them from committing suicide. Suetonius tells Bonduca 'Make up your own conditions' (IV.iv.139) and Caesar tells Cleopatra 'we intend so to dispose you, as/Yourself shall give us counsel' (V.i.186-7).

Cleopatra fears being taken to Rome in triumph:

Mechanic slaves
With greasy aprons, rules, and hammers shall
Uplift us to the view. (V.i.209-11)

The first daughter echoes these fears:

we were not born for triumphs,
To follow your gay sports, and fill your slaves
With hoots and acclamations. (IV.iv.59-61)

In both plays the Romans give brief tribute to the queens and order that a funeral should be given to honour them:

*Suetonius.*
Give her fair Funeral;
She was truely noble, and a Queen. (IV.iv.156-7)

*Caesar.*
Bravest at the last,
She levell'd at our purposes, and being royal
Took her own way. (V.i.335-337)

It's interesting that Suetonius doesn't include the daughters when he praises Bonduca. It is more understandable that Caesar doesn't mention Cleopatra's attendants (the two women who accompany her in her suicide). Is it possible that Suetonius doesn't think
that the daughters are 'truly noble' because they have been raped?

In addition to the verbal similarities between the two plays, the way in which Cleopatra redeems her tainted sexuality by committing suicide is echoed in *Bonduca*.

Prior to taking the asps from the clown Cleopatra states

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My resolution's plac'd, and I have nothing
Of woman in me; now from head to foot
I am marble-constant; now the fleeting moon
No planet is of mine. (V.ii.238-241)
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The woman in her has been replaced by marble-constant, in preparation for her heroic death. It is reminiscent of Lady Macbeth's 'unsex me here' in that both women deny their femininity as a prelude to acting in a way which is supposedly unfeminine.

Bonduca and her first daughter are also 'unsexed', as it were. The former protests that her 'onely beautie is the hate it bears' (IV.iv.53) for the Romans and encourages them to join her in 'fling[ing] off/This case of flesh' (IV.iv.128-9). Bonduca ignores appeals from her daughter to her maternal instincts when she orders her to commit suicide, and is called an 'Unnatural woman' by Suetonius (IV.iv.93). There is a moment of tenderness between the two women -- 'That's a good wench, Mine own sweet girl, put it [a sword?] close to thee' (IV.iv.108-9) -- but it is tenderness which is called up in order to help her daughter kill herself.

The women in both plays are enacting an almost ritualistic renunciation of their femininity as a prelude to regaining some 'honour' as women by destroying themselves. This can be seen most clearly in *Bonduca*: the women can only vindicate themselves in the masculinist society of the play by proving that they 'have nothing/Of woman' in body or soul. Whereas Cleopatra keeps hold of some of her femininity,\(^{23}\)

\(^{23}\) Abbe Blum observes that Cleopatra's claim that she has changed into 'marble-constant' is a denial of her femininity, and therefore also of everything else we expect of her, but goes on to say that it hardly rings true:

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This passionate hyperbole ironically depends upon an image of stone to deny the changeable feelings associated with the feminine; Cleopatra ventriloquizes a masculine notion of the feminine while her monument emphasizes her public,
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the women in *Bonduca* divest themselves of all aspects of feminine behaviour -- maternal instincts, tenderness, gentleness as well as their dangerous sexuality. The woman-hating Petillius falls in love with the first daughter at the same moment as she divests herself of her femininity through death: women become attractive as soon as they are unattainable to men who find their sexuality threatening.

There are of course, many differences between the two plays. Cleopatra brings to bear an immense grandeur and dignity in her final moments. *Bonduca* and the first daughter adopt an extremely aggressive, almost hysterical, tone in their final speeches, whereas the second daughter is simply frightened of dying. Cleopatra seems to become a worthy mate for Antony in death and they are to have a solemn joint funeral attended by the Roman army. By contrast the suicide of *Bonduca* and her daughters is juxtaposed with the suicide of Penyus -- but only he is mourned by both Romans and Britons, and it is his funeral alone that we see in the next scene.

Geoffrey Bullough has pointed out that the suicide of Penyus is reminiscent of Enobarbus's suicide.24 Both occur after they have refused to take part in battle. It may be significant that Fletcher revised and amplified this scene considerably: he evidently wanted to get the tone of this reasoned, calm, masculine suicide right.25

In contrast to Cleopatra, the women in *Bonduca* are only partially successful in redeeming themselves through suicide. Suetonius gives Bonduca a eulogistic line or political fame. It is no accident that a marble-constant Cleopatra seems improbable.


so, and the Roman captain Petillius falls morbidly in love with one of the dead daughters because of her heroism. However, Caratach continues to condemn Bonduca roundly and by the end of the play the women seem to have been almost forgotten.

The similarities between Cymbeline and Antony and Cleopatra are perhaps less obvious than those between Bonduca and Antony and Cleopatra. There are few direct parallels in characterisation, plot or poetry. Antony and Cleopatra are mentioned once, by Iachimo when he describes Imogen's bedchamber to Posthumus:

First, her bedchamber
(Where I confess I slept not, but profess
Had that was well worth watching), it was hang'd
With tapestry of silk and silver; the story
Proud Cleopatra, when she met her Roman,
And Cydnus swell'd above the banks, or for
The press of boats, or pride. (II.iv.66-72)

The brief reference echoes Enobarbus's speech describing Cleopatra meeting Antony for the first time (II.i.190-218). Moreover, "just as Antony was Cleopatra's Roman,

26 In addition to the ones discussed here, there are echoes of Antony and Cleopatra in Cymbeline that aren't particularly relevant to my arguments, though they are worth noting:

1) Iachimo says of Imogen that 'She is alone th'Arabian bird'(I.vii.17), which is reminiscent of Agrippa exclaiming 'O Antony, O thou Arabian bird!'(III.ii.12).

2) Lucius parenthetically reminds Cymbeline that Caesar 'hath moe kings his servants than/Thyself domestic officers' (III.i.64-5). In Antony and Cleopatra similar terms are used to suggest the immense power that Antony used to have: Dolabella says that Antony 'had superfluous kings for messengers' (III.xii.5); and towards the end of his career Antony reminds his servants that 'kings have been your fellows' (IV.ii.13).

3) There are also soothsayers in both plays, although their dramatic functions seem to be quite different.

27 The Riverside Shakespeare spells the name Jachimo, but I have kept the more traditional spelling.
so Iachimo hints that he was Imogen's. The image of the Cleopatra meeting Antony is juxtaposed with 'Chaste Dian bathing' (II.iv.82) in the carvings over the fireplace. Posthumus must decide which image is most appropriate to Imogen.

Both Dian and Cleopatra seem to be regarded as mythic types of female sexuality, even though the tapestry describes comparatively recent events: Antony and Cleopatra had been conquered by the same Caesar who is (the absent) Augustus Caesar in Cymbeline. The events of all three plays -- Bonduca, Antony and Cleopatra, and Cymbeline -- take place within a few years of one another. Though the Emperor of Rome is not named in Bonduca, Caratach mentions Julius Caesar's landing when the wars with Rome began (I.i.140), and says that they have been fighting the Romans for ten years (I.i.65). Cymbeline mentions Cassibelan's victory over the Romans, which is ascribed by Holinshed to his brother Nennius, a character who appears in Bonduca (III.i.31). The events of Cymbeline seem to flit about, sometimes they are in ancient Britain, sometimes in a more modern Renaissance world. The deeds of Cassibelan are spoken of as recent history, but the intrigues of Cleopatra as ancient history, even though they were contemporaries.

Iachimo maligns Imogen by implicitly associating her with Cleopatra. In many ways Cymbeline's queen is a more obvious candidate for comparison with Cleopatra, and there are indeed certain similarities in their characterisation and function in the plot. They are both said to have experimented with poison: Cleopatra to kill herself; Cymbeline's queen to kill others. They both seem to be the cause of the enmity between their husbands and Octavius/Augustus Caesar. In Cleopatra's case this is evident as soon as Antony abandons his wife -- Caesar's sister Octavia -- for her.

Near the end of the play Cymbeline tells Caius Lucius:

28 Both of these facts are mentioned in the Arden edition of the play, edited by J.M. Nosworthy, (London, 1955, repr.1979), notes to II.iv.70-2 (p.65-6) and II.iv.70 (p.66).

29 Nosworthy, note to II.i.31, p.76.
Although the victor, we submit to Caesar,
And to the Roman empire, promising
To pay our wonted tribute, from the which
We were dissuaded by our wicked queen,
Whom heavens, in justice both on her and hers,
Have laid most heavy hand. (V.v.460-465)

Cymbeline sees his wife as being at the centre of the confrontation between the British and the Romans (indeed she and Cloten get the some of the most aggressively patriotic and anti-Roman speeches of the play in Act III, scene i). This echoes the other main plot line, in which another woman is at the centre of a confrontation between men: Imogen becomes the site on which Posthumus and Iachimo fight things out. Imogen and her step-mother are the two poles of good and bad femininity on which the structure of the play depends. It could be said that they represent a separation of attractive and threatening elements of femininity which are combined in Cleopatra, and in a very different way, in Bonduca and her daughters.

In all three plays under discussion here -- Antony and Cleopatra, Bonduca and Cymbeline -- there are broad structural parallels: women are caught up in the conflicts between one set of men and another. Much of literature could be said to follow one sort of 'cherchez la femme' type plot or another. However, there are more specific parallels between these plays. Imogen is a princess who is heir to the throne at the beginning of the play (Bonduca and Cleopatra are queens). She is caught up in the conflict between a man who is supposedly on her side in a national conflict (but who vacillates), and a Roman (as are Bonduca and Cleopatra). There is a spirit of reconciliation and harmony between the men at the end of the plays, whereas the women are disinherited (instead of becoming queen, Imogen becomes the relatively humble wife of Posthumus), or dead (Cleopatra), or both (Bonduca and her daughters). In both Cymbeline and Bonduca British rulers, disadvantaged by having queens on their side, first fight and then are reconciled with the Romans. It would be surprising if Antony and Cleopatra hadn't had an effect on these plays. By drawing
attention to how this basic plot type was worked and reworked by Shakespeare and Fletcher, I hope to cast more light on how they represented the interaction between the genders at this stage in their careers.

Imogen's part in the play is unusual in that, like Hamlet, she dominates to such an extent that the other parts seem like bit-parts. Unlike Hamlet, who makes himself most unpopular with many characters in his play, she is loved -- perhaps 'needed' is a better word -- in a selfish and dependent way by most of the men in the play. In the opening scene we are told that Cymbeline 'purpos'd' Imogen in marriage 'to his wife's sole son'. He needs her to make his wife's son heir -- it is the only way of legitimising an extremely unpopular policy. Posthumus, Cloten and Iachimo all need to prove their self-worth by attempting to use her in various ways. Her long-lost brothers love her intensely almost as soon as they meet her: it seems that their natural inclination towards her is further proof of how 'an invisible instinct' has 'frame[d] them/ To royalty unlearn'd' (IV.ii.177-8). Even Lucius seems to need her love (and takes it for granted) as soon as he meets her.

Cymbeline's queen also exerts great power in the plot: she not only causes the war with the Romans, but also the rift between Imogen and her father, and therefore the separation of Posthumus and Imogen. The combined power of the women drives the plot.

When he hears of Imogen's secret marriage to Posthumus, Cymbeline tells her 'Thou took'st a beggar, wouldst have made my throne/ A seat for baseness' (I.i.141-2): he evidently sees whoever becomes her husband as eventually succeeding to the throne. This situation also provides the dramatic opening for Philaster (1608-9). In the opening scene Dion comments on a royal proclamation:

'[...] it is plaine about the Spanish Prince, that's come to marry our Kingdomes Heire, and be our Soveraigne."

The King of Sicily and Calabria in Philaster wants to legitimise the succession of Pharamond in the same way as Cymbeline evidently intends to make Cloten a sovereign. Memories of the unpopular marriage of Mary Tudor to Philip of Spain in 1554, who was styled king jointly with Mary as queen during her lifetime, may have been one reason why these successions through marriage were still an interesting subject for Jacobean playwrights.
In her discussion of *The Winter's Tale* (1611), Valerie Traub suggests that 'The anxieties of Leontes are the anxieties of a masculinist culture in which women's bodies possess enormous powers of signification'. Similar 'anxieties of a masculinist culture' at the power of women can be seen at work in the plays under discussion here. Traub goes on to argue that

[...] Leontes must experience a reprieve from the exigencies of female erotic life before he can re-enter marriage with any degree of psychic comfort; and, most importantly, [...] Hermione's "unmanageable" sexuality must be metaphorically contained and psychically disarmed. (p.45)

Imogen, like Hermione (and for that matter Hero, in *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598), and Desdemona in *Othello* (1604)), is suspected of and falsely condemned for adultery. Hero, Imogen and Hermione are thought dead by their husbands, forgiven (even though Posthumus still believes Imogen is guilty), revived and finally reconciled to their spouses. Death, whether it is faked by those women who are deemed innocent, or genuine for those women who are more sexually threatening, is a way of metaphorically containing or eliminating the power that they have over men.

Cleopatra is unusual in that she has fake deaths (which give more power over men, not less) as well as a genuine death at the end of the play. Enobarbus teases Antony about Cleopatra's fake deaths in the first act:

Cleopatra, catching but the least noise of this [Antony's plan to leave Egypt], dies instantly; I have seen her die twenty times upon far poorer moment. I do think there is mettle in death, which commits some loving act upon her, she hath such a celerity in dying. (I.i.137-144)

Enobarbus links death with a 'loving act', and, no doubt, there is a pun intended in 'dying'. When Cleopatra commits suicide at the end of the play, death does in a sense 'commit [...] some loving act upon her'. The asp, as it is presented by the clown, is a

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31 *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (London, 1992), p.44.
metaphor for the penis. He describes the 'death' of another woman bitten by 'the
pretty worm of Nilus' (V.ii.243):

    I heard of one of them [someone who has died] no longer than yesterday, a
very honest woman -- but something given to lie, as a woman should not do
but in the way of honesty -- how she died of the biting of it, what pain she felt.
Truly, she makes a very good report o' th' worm [...] (V.ii.250-255)

'To lie' could mean that she has made up the story, or that she has lain (that is, had
sexual intercourse) with someone. She either died from the bite of the asp (in which
case, it would be impossible for her to report it) or she has had an orgasm as a result
of 'biting' it herself (which is, of course, an allusion to sexual penetration).

This association of sex and death recurs in Cymbeline. Pisanio, announcing
Posthumus's accusation to Imogen exclaims

    What shall I need to draw my sword, the paper
Hath cut her throat already! No, 'tis slander,
    Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile [...] (III.iv.32-35)

It is this slander (figured in terms of a poisonous and lascivious worm) which makes
Imogen decide that she must die: in a sense she too is poisoned by 'the pretty worm of
Nilus'. Pisanio's image of the sharp sword recurs twice in Imogen's appeals for him to
kill her, saying that the sword will meet no resistance if it penetrates her heart
(III.iv.66-69 and 78-80). This imagery is juxtaposed with the overtly phallic image of
Posthumus being 'disedg'd' (III.iv.93), blunted,32 by the woman she supposes he is
now seeing, in more word-play with sexual overtones in the same scene.33

32 C.T.Onions, A Shakespeare Glossary (enlarged and revised by Robert
D.Eagleson) (Oxford, 1986, repr. 1994) and The Riverside Shakespeare (note to lines
93-94, p. 1540) both take 'disedg'd' to mean to 'have the edge of your appetite taken
off', but I think it could also refer to the blunting of Posthumus's metaphorical 'sword'.

33 The idea of lack of resistance inviting physical or sexual attack is echoed by
Posthumus in Act II, scene v: '[Iachimo] found no opposition/ But what he look'd for
should oppose and she/ Should from encounter guard.' (II.v.17-19). In Act III scene
iv Imogen not only lacks resistance, but invites Pisanio to attack her. The following
The overlapping and contradictory nature of these metaphors surrounding the deaths of women are complex. Though the act of dying is linked metaphorically with the sexual act, death also enacts a containment and disarming of sexuality, as Valerie Traub points out in her discussion of Hermione. Cleopatra and the women in Bonduca become 'unsexed' -- or ungendered -- as a prelude to their suicides (though their deaths are sexualised). Similarly, though the language about her stabbing is sexualised, Imogen's fake death in Act III also involves removing her femininity. Pisanio tells her that she 'must forget to be a woman' (III.iv.154) in order to disguise herself as a man. Once Imogen has warmed to the idea she declares that she is 'almost/ A man already' (III.iv.166), as though it is a physical transformation. Taking the role of a man is a way of escaping 'the woman's part' which Posthumus so bitterly condemns in his infamous anti-feminist speech at the end of Act II. Escaping her female identity is also a way of escaping the self-annihilation which seems to be the only other solution for the problems faced by the female characters in each of these plays.

Like Cleopatra -- though perhaps not to the same degree -- Imogen has a certain 'celerity in dying'. In the first act she anticipates a time '[w]hen Imogen is dead' and Posthumus will 'woo another wife' (I.i.113-4). In Act III, Pisanio offers to pretend that she has died, until she can clear her name. In Act IV, after taking the Queen's poison, she undergoes another temporary death, and this time is given a funeral (when she refers to this in Act V, she says 'for I was dead' as though she had really died, and then come back to life (V.v.259)). In Act V, when Posthumus attacks Imogen, Pisanio tells him 'You ne'er kill'd Imogen till now.'(V.v.231) -- but luckily, observation in Abbe Blum's essay has obvious relevance to this discussion:

A woman's lack of response also signals her virtue, a quality that, paradoxically, can promote her victimization -- as in the cases of Lucrece, Imogen, Desdemona, and Hermione. (Op. cit. p.103)

As a virtuous woman, Imogen seems to need to reject her female identity before she can overcome her passivity.
again, she is not really dead. Cleopatra's 'deaths' are designed by her to manipulate Antony, whereas Imogen's 'deaths' are for the most part inflicted on her and seem to take her from one tricky situation to another. The deaths of Bonduca and her daughters are an escape. In all three plays, however, women attempt to restore their tarnished reputations through death.

As well as these similarities between Cleopatra and Imogen, there are some parallels to be drawn between Antony and Posthumus. As has already been mentioned, Antony, Posthumus (and, for that matter, Caratach) may have been played by Burbage — a link between the heroes which we will never know much about. Moreover, both Antony and Posthumus 'die' in order to redeem themselves. Antony commits a bungled but ultimately successful suicide and duly receives a rather ambiguous but grand-sounding tribute from Caesar in the final speech of the play. Posthumus declares he will dress as a British peasant and fight 'For thee, O Imogen, even for whom my life/ Is every breath a death' (V.i.26-7). If he is killed it will be an anonymous death, and therefore a complete self-annihilation — but of course, he survives and is heralded as a hero instead.

It could be argued that the First Jailer's soliloquy about Posthumus in Act V of Cymbeline is a light-hearted reworking of what Antony says of himself in Antony and Cleopatra, immediately prior to stabbing himself:

First Jailer. Unless a man would marry a gallows and beget young gibbets, I never saw one so prone. (V.iv.198-9)

Antony. [...] but I will be A bridegroom in my death, and run into't As to a lover's bed. (IV.xiv.99-101)

Like the women, these men prove their nobility through their eagerness to die. These words bear some relationship to the speeches of Aufidius and Caratach (discussed above), eager to engage with their enemies in mortal combat. However, for the men a noble death is a way of re-affirming their gender identification, whereas for the
women in these plays death is a way of removing their femininity before it can be restored in a less threatening form because they are dead, disempowered or both.

Caratach, Antony and Posthumus all fight the Romans, all feel that their struggle is undermined by women, and all descend for a time into ranting anti-feminism. As already mentioned, Caratach blames the defeat of the British (and thus his own defeat) on Bonduca. Antony says to Cleopatra:

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Now I must
   To the young man send humble treaties, dodge
   And palter in the shifts of lowness [...] (III.xi.61-3)
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Antony feels outdone by Caesar's military power in the same way as Posthumus feels outdone by Iachimo's sexual power:

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Me of my lawful pleasure she restrain'd,
   And pray'd me oft forbearance [...] [...] This yellow Iachimo, in an hour -- was't not? --
   Or less -- at first? Perchance he spoke not, but
   Like a full-acorn'd boar, a German {one},
   Cried "O!" and mounted [...] (II.v.9-17)
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A large part of the humiliation of these defeated men is to do with feeling that another man has been able to get the better of them. They externalise the weakness in themselves and project it onto the women who are supposedly to blame for their humiliation.

In *Bonduca* there are no women by the end of the play, nor are there in *Antony and Cleopatra*, though Cleopatra remains the most fascinating and memorable character (not least because of the way she stages her suicide). In *Cymbeline* Imogen remains attractive and alive, but is somewhat disempowered. Valerie Traub describes a transference of power away from Hermione to Leontes in her discussion of *The Winter's Tale*. She argues that 'the final scene works as wish-fulfilment for
and a similar argument could be made for Posthumus in Cymbeline.

Imogen is restored to him, as is the favour of the king, and his arch-enemy Iachimo (who is now at his mercy) retells the rather ignominious story of the wager in terms which are more flattering to Posthumus than earlier events suggested. Imogen, on the other hand, having been displaced as heir to the throne by her brothers, is restored to a husband whose first action is to hit her so hard she momentarily passes out. This is not necessarily to deny that the play has a happy ending (Imogen characteristically makes the best of things), merely to point out who has power over whom in the final scene. She is literally, rather than metaphorically, wearing the trousers as the play closes.

Though certain men gain in power and the women seem to lose power at the end of these plays, the central conflict in them is not really men versus women. Neither is it nationalistic; Britain or Egypt versus Rome. I have already made this point for Bonduca, and I would like to make it for Cymbeline, by moving beyond a comparison with Antony and Cleopatra to examine specifically the politics of Cymbeline in more detail.

As already mentioned, the way Shakespeare and Fletcher represent politics in Cymbeline and Bonduca at first seems radically different. Fletcher's Bonduca shows a very dark picture of Britain, in which though both the British and Romans are capable of valour and self-sacrifice, they are also both treacherous. The British are


35 In her essay 'Person and Office: The Case of Imogen, Princess of Britain' in Vincent Newey and Ann Thompson (eds.) Literature and Nationalism (Liverpool, 1991), Ann Thompson argues that 'the play insists on the rightness, even the desirability, of [Imogen's] dispossession' (p.79), and concludes

Neither authentic nor happy in her role as heir to the kingdom, she can only be fulfilled by dwindling into 'this most constant wife' (V.v.450). A modern response may, however, find room for uneasiness at some of the strategies employed to bring her down to this level, and at the insistence on defining royal power as male [...] (p.76)
defeated by the Romans, and Caratach — apparently the only surviving British hero — is taken captive.

Shakespeare, however, has been seen as making complimentary references to James in *Cymbeline* and the play seems to have a very optimistic ending. *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Bonduca* and *Cymbeline* are all set shortly before the time of supposedly universal peace, the 'pax Romana' in which Christ was born, references to which were used in propaganda to promote James's non-interventionist foreign policy, epitomized in his motto *Beati Pacifici*. This in particular, seems to be celebrated at the end of *Cymbeline*.

One problem with regarding *Cymbeline* as politically optimistic and complimentary to James is that *Cymbeline* is neither a good nor a competent monarch. This doesn't seem to have been sufficiently dealt with by those critics who see political metaphors in the play.

One of the most important political metaphors in the play is that of the headless body. In a speech delivered by James to Parliament on 21st March 1610, the idea of the king as a 'head' was the last of three metaphors with which he elaborated

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The political plot of *Cymbeline*, in marked contrast to the prevailing spirit of nationalism in Shakespeare's earlier history plays, culminates in a vision of harmonious internationalism and accommodation that mirrors James's own policy. The British and Roman ensigns wave "Friendly together," the fragmented kingdom of Britain in reunited, and the nation embarks on a new and fertile era of peace. (p.141)
his beliefs about kingship:

There be three principal similitudes that illustrate the state of monarchy: one taken out of the word of God, and the two other out of the grounds of policy and philosophy. In the Scriptures kings are called gods [...] Kings are also compared to fathers of families [...] And lastly, kings are compared to the head of this microcosm of the body of man.38

Ostensibly the purpose of this speech was to put to rest worries that James planned to alter the constitution and rule as an absolute king, yet these metaphors imply that he expected absolute obedience from his subjects. However, though these parts of his speech were rather heavy handed, James was not saying anything new: this was long-established political philosophy, and reversed images of the body ruling the head, or the wife ruling the husband meant anarchy, 'the world turned upside down.' (Similar anxieties are expressed in the political body metaphors in Coriolanus.)

Because Cymbeline has allowed himself to become ruled by his wife he has lost all credibility as head of state. In Act II a Lord describes Cymbeline as 'a father by thy [Imogen's] step-dame govern'd' (II.i.58); in Act IV Cymbeline is unable to act without 'the counsel of my son and queen' (IV.iii.27); and in the final act -- as we have seen -- he blames the war entirely on his wife. In Act III, the body is shown to rule the head when Cymbeline declares war on Caesar because his subjects '[w]ill not endure his yoke' and it would '[a]ppear unkinglike' '[t]o show less sovereignty than they' (III.v.5-7). During the dumb show depicting the war, Cymbeline is a very passive thing, being taken prisoner by the Romans and then rescued by Posthumus, Belarius, Guiderius and Aviragus, who are all unknown to Cymbeline and dressed as poor country people. Finally, without any explanation Cymbeline announces to Lucius 'Although the victor, we submit to Caesar' (V.v.460), the conqueror submitting to the conquered seems like another example of the 'world turned upside

Cymbeline attempts to show his strength through threats which are not realised (with the exception of the banishment of Belarius who says he was 'Beaten for loyalty', many years before the play begins). In the first act he curses Imogen: 'let her languish/ A drop of blood a day, and being aged/ Die of this folly!' (I.ii.156-8). Pisanio and Iachimo are threatened with torture at IV.iii.12 and V.v.133. He threatens to kill Posthumus in the opening scene, to put all the Romans to death in the last act, and to have Belarius executed. He tells his son 'thou'rt dead' at V.v.298 before realising who he is. He finally pardons everyone because of Posthumus's example; 'Nobly doom'd!/ We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law:/ Pardon's the word to all.' (V.v.420-422) which could be seen as another example of being led by his subjects rather than ruling over them. These threats of torture and death provide the necessary tensions in the romance but it does Cymbeline little credit that they come from him. They make him seem unable to exercise his power rationally and with conviction.39

Cymbeline's unpopular plans for the succession are ended when Cloten is beheaded. Cloten's incompetence and lack of moral sense is such that the state would indeed have become a headless body had he been allowed to rule. He himself threatens Posthumus, Guiderius, Arviragus and Belarius (the very four who are to rescue Cymbeline from the Romans) with beheading before being beheaded himself if he had beheaded them, the head of state would have had no defense from the Romans later in the play. Moreover, Guiderius, in confessing that he has taken off Cloten's head emphasises that if he hadn't Cloten would be 'standing here/ To tell this tale of mine [i.e. Guiderius's head]' (V.v.296-7). The false heir to the throne would have literally beheaded the true heir to the throne, and in doing so would have

39 Stuart Kurland also makes the point that Cymbeline 'is hardly the paragon of peace and justice that some commentators would have us see.' in "Here comes the Briton": Cymbeline and English Politics', a paper given at the Shakespeare Association of America seminar "What ish my nation?", Chicago, 1995, p.5.
metaphorically beheaded the body politic. The intersecting meanings of these references to headlessness are laid to rest with the joining of 'lopp'd branches' to the 'majestic cedar' (V.v.454-457). The succession problem is solved with the restoration of the true heir to the throne, the head is joined to the body and with the move towards peace at the end of the play we are left with the impression that the king's policies are acceptable to his people once again.

However, in spite of this restoration there are many unresolved tensions in the final moments of the plays. In his essay "Here comes the Briton": Cymbeline and English Politics', Stuart Kurland points out that the ending of the play is hardly flattering to Cymbeline and concludes from this that there can be no 'easy identification between Cymbeline and James:

[...this final harmonious vision seems undercut in the play by the arbitrary and even absurd politics lying behind it, from Cymbeline's weakness and inconstancy in setting and adhering to policy with regard to his most important international relations to the fortuitous aspects of the military victory, especially in the principals' lack of awareness of, interest in, or support for any specific policy goals. The play's unsympathetic treatment of Cymbeline, both as a political figure and a private character -- the Queen's husband, Imogen's father -- should undermine easy identification of Cymbeline with James, yet this has obviously not been the case with many earlier topical interpretations. (p.6)

I would agree that the play treats Cymbeline unsympathetically, but I still think there is a case for a limited metaphorical identification of him with James. The distinction that Kurland draws between Cymbeline's political and private lives is also troubling: after all, a seventeenth-century monarch couldn't have a private relationship with his wife and children in the normal way. It was of national importance that James shouldn't be ruled by his wife (Anne was a Catholic, and therefore would have been thought politically dangerous by many). His choice of marriage partners for his

40 Judith Doolin Spikes, in a discussion about Protestant anxieties over James, writes:

The peaceful accession of James appeared to lay the ghosts from the past; yet Protestant enthusiasm for James scarcely survived his arrival on English soil.
children was also a matter of national interest, for obvious reasons. James's 'pax Britannica' policy wasn't popular with those who favoured a militant Protestant foreign policy in Europe, and little support of Cymbeline's policy is given to him at the end of the play. No-one except the Soothsayer, who might be thought of as creating propaganda for Cymbeline's policies, speaks at the end of the play after Cymbeline has made his decision for peace.  

Earlier in the play Cymbeline describes Britons as a 'warlike people' (III.i.52). Posthumus predicts that there will be a war before 'any penny [of] tribute [is] paid' to Rome by 'our not-fearing Britain' (II.iv.19-20). Most importantly, Guiderius and Arviragus seem almost suicidally eager to engage with the Romans in battle earlier in the play. Belarius describes how warlike they are:

Jove!
When on my three-foot stool sit and tell
The warlike feats I have done, his [Guiderius's] spirits fly out
Into my story; say, 'Thus mine enemy fell,
And thus I set my foot on's neck,' even then
The princely blood flows in his cheek, he sweats,
Strains his young nerves, and puts himself in posture
That acts my words. The younger brother, Cadwal,
Once Arviragus, in as like a figure
Strikes life into my speech, and shows much more
His own conceiving. (III.iii.88-98)

The reactions of the brothers is reminiscent of the warlike fury of Coriolanus's young

His Catholic queen pointedly refused the Anglican Communion at her coronation, sought offices for English Catholics, corresponded warmly with the Spanish Infanta.

41 In an adaptation of the play by William Hawkins for the Theatre Royal in 1759 'Cymbeline celebrates victory over Rome rather than reconciliation and promises to demand ransom for his prisoners.' (See Ann Thompson, 'Cymbeline's Other Endings' in Jean I. Marsden The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post-Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth (New York, 1991), p.210.)
son described in Act I, scene iii of Coriolanus, and of course, the boy Hengo in Bonduca, who at one stage sees off an adult Roman in a fight. In the twentieth century bloodthirsty behaviour is seen as inappropriate for children, but in these texts it is seen as entirely appropriate for aristocratic or royal boys to behave in a murderously aggressive way when presented with 'the enemy'.

Arviragus and Guiderius know nothing of Cymbeline's 'youth [... spent/ Much under [Caesar]' (III.i.69-70), his good opinion of Lucius, or his being influenced by his wife into refusing tribute. They desperately want to prove themselves in battle, and it's difficult to imagine that they are supposed to be pleased about Cymbeline's acquiescence to the Romans whom they have just conquered. Those who wanted a more militant foreign policy in Jacobean England invested these hopes in James's heir Prince Henry rather than in James himself, a situation which is reflected in this play.

By contrast, the final moments of Bonduca don't have many political resonances. Though both Caratach and Cymbeline make their peace with the Romans, it's difficult to imagine that Caratach would have submitted if he had been on the victorious side. Moreover, he concedes to the Romans in isolation, he doesn't take the British nation with him. He is taken back to Rome as a solitary British hero, and the ending is therefore somewhat depoliticised.

In both plays there is a certain amount of British sympathy for Roman imperialism, as can be seen most clearly from the endings. As in Antony and Cleopatra the fight isn't essentially against Rome. The central conflicts in all three plays are between individual men, though the catalyst and/or site for their battles is women. Swetonius triumphs over Caratach because he is weakened by Bonduca, and Caesar over Antony because he is weakened by Cleopatra. In the 'happy' ending of Cymbeline, the men who win the power struggles (Cymbeline and Posthumus) do so in spite of having women on their side. The ways in which rival men battle things out (usually with women playing a part in these struggles) seem to be a preoccupation with both Shakespeare and Fletcher during the years after 1610 before Shakespeare died. This preoccupation will be the subject of the next section, focusing on The Two
Noble Kinsmen and the lost play Cardenio, the two romances on which they worked together.
The Romance Collaborations: Cardenio and The Two Noble Kinsmen

Two of the three plays on which Shakespeare and Fletcher collaborated have male rivalry as a central theme, and draw on romances for their plots.¹ The Two Noble Kinsmen reworked the well-worn tale of Palamon and Arcite, paying particular attention to Chaucer's version. The other play, Cardenio, which may have been their first collaborative work, took its plot from Cervantes' Don Quixote, the first part of which had been published in English in 1612. Two more disparate sources could hardly have been found. By the 1600s, Chaucer's language and many of his ideas were already considered archaic, and The Knight's Tale (which Chaucer himself had borrowed from Boccaccio's Teseida) must have been seen as quintessentially medieval.² Don Quixote, on the other hand, is often thought of as being the first modern novel: not only did it deconstruct medieval notions of romance, but it

¹ Shakespeare and Fletcher's other collaborative work, Henry VIII, probably written in between Cardenio and Kinsmen, is a history play. Its relationship to romance has been the subject of some debate (its original title was All Is True, implying distance from romance). The Arden edition (second series, edited by R.A.Foakes, 1957) and Riverside Shakespeare see a strong relationship between the play and Shakespeare's late romances. T.McBride sees it in terms of Northrop Frye's definition of romance in The Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957) and Machiavelli's ideas of the ideal prince and calls it a 'Machiavellian Romance' (Henry VIII as Machiavellian Romance', Journal of English and Germanic Philology 76 (1977), 26-39). Other critics are more wary of seeing the play as a romance (see Madeleine Doran's review of R.A.Foakes's Arden edition, Journal of English and Germanic Philology 59 (1960), 287-91 and G.R.Proudfoot's essay in Stanley Wells (ed.), Shakespeare: A Bibliographical Guide (new edition) (Oxford, 1990), pp.381-403). My own view is that the play might be seen as related to the tradition of those Jacobean plays which mythicised Elizabeth I (see Francis Yates' Shakespeare's Last Plays: A New Approach (London, 1975) for a discussion of how the play was part of an 'archaising revival' of the cult of Elizabeth), which have a strong relationship with romance. However, for the purposes of this thesis I discuss only the Shakespeare/Fletcher collaborations which can be uncontroversially called romances.

² The Canterbury Tales are believed to have been composed from 1387 to 1394, though there is some evidence to suggest that a version of The Knight's Tale was first composed in the early 1380s (see F.N.Robinson (ed.) The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer (1933; second edition Oxford, 1957, repr. 1985), p.5).
reinvented the narrative form in ways which seem precocious even by today's standards.

Fletcher's solo plays up until the collaboration with Shakespeare consisted of the following mixed bag: a pastoral tragicomedy (*The Faithful Shepherdess* 1608-9); three comedies (*The Woman's Prize* 1611, *The Night Walker* 1611 (revised in 1633 by Shirley) and *Monsieur Thomas* 1610-13); a tragedy set in ancient Britain (*Bonduca* 1609-14); and a tragedy set in ancient Rome (*The Tragedy of Valentinian* 1610-12). In addition he had collaborated on a number of successful comedies and tragicomedies with Beaumont, as well as *The Maid's Tragedy* (1610). In contrast with Shakespeare, there is no identifiable development through the writing of tragedies into the romance mode. Appropriately enough, for a playwright who was felt by his contemporaries and by audiences well into the Restoration period to have taken up Shakespeare's torch, the romance mode in all its different incarnations is Fletcher's starting point. Like Shakespeare, Fletcher found romance useful both as a source of plots, and most likely under his influence, he was eager to experiment in writing romance dramas himself.

Three of Fletcher's five solo plays before the collaboration with Shakespeare have plots which are based on intensely competitive relationships between men (*Monsieur Thomas, The Tragedy of Valentinian* and, as I have argued, *Bonduca*, although this is perhaps less obvious). In addition, many of the plays that Fletcher wrote with Beaumont before or around the collaboration with Shakespeare share this as a central theme. These plays are *Cupid's Revenge* (1607-8), *Philaster* (1608-9), *The Coxcomb* (1608-9), *The Maid's Tragedy* (1610), *A King and No King* (1611?), *The Captain* (1609-12), and *Thierry and Theodoret* (c.1613).

Plots which centre on an intense relationship between men (often with a woman as the site or inspiration for a struggle) are hardly a rarity in Shakespeare's works. In one of Shakespeare's earliest plays -- *The Comedy of Errors* (1592-4) -- the four brothers at the centre of the plot are engaged in a struggle to have their version of the truth accepted by the other characters over their twin's version, in what
could be seen as a nightmarish fight for identity. From then on reworkings of these intense relationships between men (which at times become struggles for survival) pepper Shakespeare's work. It could be argued that the following plays offer different versions of the theme (though it is certainly more apparent in some plays than in others): The Two Gentlemen of Verona (1594), 1 Henry IV (1596-7), Julius Caesar (1599), Hamlet (1600-1), Troilus and Cressida (1601-2), Measure for Measure (1604), Othello (1604), King Lear (1605), Antony and Cleopatra (1606-7), Coriolanus (1607-8), Cymbeline (1609-10), The Winter's Tale (1610-11), and The Tempest (1611). In both Fletcher's and Shakespeare's plays intense male relationships -- often depending on a mixture of emulation, affection and fierce rivalry -- recur perennially between different characters: brothers; fathers and sons; nephews and uncles; military comrades; military enemies; travelling companions; political rivals; and most importantly of all -- rival lovers.

Since my arguments in this section will centre on The Two Noble Kinsmen and the lost Cardenio, I will give a brief overview of current speculation on the vexed question of authorship of each of these plays before discussing the theme of male rivalry in more detail.

A play called Cardenio is recorded as having been played at James I's court in the 1612-13 Christmas festivities and again on 13 June 1613 by the King's Men. After these inconsequential mentions of the play, there is a forty year silence. In 1653 a play called 'The History of Cardenio, by Mr Fletcher and Shakespeare' is entered in the Stationer's Register to Humphrey Moseley, who had also acquired other unpublished manuscripts which had belonged to the King's Men. If it was ever published, this edition has not survived. After another seventy-five year silence, Lewis Theobald, apparently unaware of the previous two pieces of evidence for the play, published Double Falshood; or, The Distrest Lovers (1728), a revised and adapted version of a play which he claimed was 'Written Originally by W.SHAKEPEARE',
based on the story from *Don Quixote*.³

Theobald claimed to have three versions of the manuscript in his possession, the oldest of which was sixty years old and in the handwriting of John Downes. If this was true it would mean that the copy was made at the same time as Sir William Davenant was revising *The Two Noble Kinsmen* as *The Rivals*, which was performed in 1664. It is not impossible therefore that Theobald had acquired a Restoration revision of an original version of *Cardenio*.⁴

Stephan Kukowski, in his essay 'The hand of John Fletcher in *Double Falsehood*' defends Theobald from the charges of forgery which have been levelled at him from the eighteenth century until comparatively recently.⁵ Bringing to bear linguistic and metrical evidence, he argues very convincingly that there is much evidence of Fletcher's work in the play. He points out that the Restoration revision of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* 'left not a line of the passages most confidently ascribed to Shakespeare intact, although several of Fletcher's passages survive with only minor alteration' (p.81). Thus, if Shakespeare had a part in *Cardenio*, it may well have been much diluted by Davenant and company, long before Theobald began his revision of the documents which he said he had got from them; whereas Fletcher's lines were


⁴ This interpretation of the evidence is given by Kukowski, op. cit., who follows John Freehafer in his essay 'Cardenio, by Shakespeare and Fletcher', *PMLA* 84 (1969), 501-13 in suggesting that Theobald had a Restoration version of the play.

more likely to have survived.\textsuperscript{6}

*Double Falshood* is of interest to me because there is evidence that a fair proportion of Fletcher's work survives in it, and Shakespeare may well have been in on its inception. After looking at the dating and attribution evidence for *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, I discuss the *Double Falshood* as it survives, bearing in mind that no particular line or idea is bound to have come from either Shakespeare or Fletcher.

*The Two Noble Kinsmen* was probably first performed 1613-14. The morris-dance in Act III was taken from Beaumont's *Inner Temple and Gray's Inn Mask* which was performed on 20 February 1613. There is evidence to suggest the play was in repertory in 1619 and was being considered for performance at court and that there was a revival of it in the mid-1620s. It was published in quarto by John Waterson in 1634 as the joint work of Fletcher and Shakespeare. It was published again in the second Folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's works in 1679.\textsuperscript{7}

There is a fair amount of critical consensus that *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is the joint work of Shakespeare and Fletcher.\textsuperscript{8} Based on linguistic evidence Cyrus Hoy divides the plays up as follows:\textsuperscript{9}

\begin{itemize}
\item This information is given in the introduction to the play in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, pp.1639-40.
\item Exceptions to this are Paul Bertram (*Shakespeare and 'The Two Noble Kinsmen'* (New Brunswick, 1965)) who argued that the play is solely Shakespeare's, and Una Ellis-Fermor who, in a paper given at the *Shakespeare Survey* conference of 1949, argued that Shakespeare had nothing to do with the play, though it is a clever imitation of his style. (*'The Two Noble Kinsmen' in Kenneth Muir's edition of her writings, *Shakespeare the Dramatist and other Papers*, (London, 1961)).
\item Cyrus Hoy 'The Shares of Fletcher and his Collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon VII', *Studies in Bibliography* 15 (1962), 71-90. Hoy's evidence for Shakespeare's contribution rests principally on his use of 'hath' and 'doth' and his avoidance of 'ye'. These linguistic indications could be the work of copyists or even
\end{itemize}
An almost complete lack of consensus on the merit of the play has been a hallmark of criticism throughout its history. Whereas Charles Lamb thought that certain passages of the play 'have a luxuriance in them which strongly resembles Shakespeare's manner' (1813), William Warburton declared that 'the whole first act of Fletcher's Two Noble Kinsmen was wrote by Shakespear, but in his worst manner.' (1747). Some critics have felt that Shakespeare's artistic powers were on the wane, others that some of his poetry in the play is outstanding. Fletcher's part in the play is seen as 'ridiculous and revolting', and alternatively as 'accomplished, suave [though] sentimental'. Ann Thompson argues that Fletcher comes off worst because he would have had to fit in with Shakespeare's ideas for the plot. Frank Kermode, on the other hand, suggests that Shakespeare had to fit in with Fletcher's plan for the play. Lois Potter proposes that the playwrights may have worked separately for the most part, and thus presumably neither of them would have felt much constrained by the other. On the whole critics have been hostile to the subplot and Fletcher's part in the play,
whereas audiences and editions for stage productions and have been much more sympathetic.\textsuperscript{11}

(Continued on p.71)

\textsuperscript{11} It has already been mentioned that Davenant's version of the play, and the comparatively recent version of the play produced by the R.S.C. have tended to leave Fletcher's parts of the play much more intact than Shakespeare's contributions. The Jailor's Daughter (who is often thought to be entirely Fletcher's creation -- see the introduction to the play in The Riverside Shakespeare, for example) has been much appreciated by audiences on some of the rare occasions on which the play has been performed.

For a indication of the diversity of critical thought on The Two Noble Kinsmen see Appendix A (pp.269-271).
The degree to which criticism of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* has focused on issues of authorship reflects the understandable desire to separate Shakespeare's work from others in order to form a clearer idea of what his individual voice was trying to express. He is very important to our culture and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* — possibly his final work — an important landmark in his career.

However, linguistic methods of attributing contributions to collaborative texts have been called into question. Jeffrey Masten, in his essay 'Beaumont and/or Fletcher: Collaboration and the Interpretation of Renaissance Drama' draws attention to the fact that Cyrus Hoy is unable to include *The Faithful Shepherdess* in his statistics, even though the latter is an important, early work solely by Fletcher, because it is linguistically different from his other unaided work. Moreover, Masten and others have pointed out that the complexities involved in trying to sort out who wrote what in any given play from this period are considerably increased if one takes into account the conditions of production of these texts. The papers of

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12 'Beaumont and/or Fletcher: Collaboration and the Interpretation of Renaissance Drama', *English Literary History* 59 (1992), 337-356.

Philip Henslowe (a theatre manager and impresario) indicate that nearly two thirds of plays were written by more than one author. In addition, prompters made alterations in the original manuscripts and actors also sometimes elaborated or improvised renditions of the texts which would become accepted versions. Theatre managers would commission playwrights to write parts of unfinished plays or revise them for revivals. Copyists, compositors and editors undoubtedly had an effect on the way play-texts were transmitted, and of course, the influence of the censor throughout ought not to be forgotten.

To muddy the waters even more, it should be noted that playwrights inevitably influenced one another's style and plots. Shakespeare had a great influence on Fletcher's style and many of his plots. Stephan Kukowski points out several poetic borrowings from Shakespeare in *Four Plays in One* (c.1613), *Philaster* (1608-9), *The Woman's Prize* (1611), *The Chances* (1617), and *The Faithful Shepherdess* (1608-9) (p.84). *The Woman's Prize* and *Philaster* spring immediately to mind as early plays on which Fletcher worked, which have plots evidently influenced by Shakespeare — *The Woman's Prize* is presented as a sequel to *The Taming of the Shrew*, and there is a fair amount of critical consensus that the plot of *Philaster* has similarities with that of *Cymbeline*, which was written at about the same time. It also seems likely that playwrights would have aimed at a more homogenous style when collaborating than they might have had when they wrote separately.

Jeffrey Masten makes the related point that 'cordonning discourse off into agents, origins, and intention' is misguided, because it is suggestive of an idea of originality which doesn't take account of language as 'a socially produced (and producing) system' (p.345). He suggests that knowledge of these factors ought to change our attitude to interpretation of all texts, not just ones attributed to more than one author:

A collaborative perspective [of interpretation] forces a reevaluation of (and/or complicates) a repertoire of familiar interpretive methodologies -- most prominently, biographical and psychoanalytical approaches -- based on the
notion of the singular author. (p.345)

Divorcing the text from the individual voices which produced it seems to me a barren way forward. If we're going to keep in mind an individual or a group of individuals who produced the text, then biographical and psychoanalytic information may still be very helpful in forming an opinion of that text. A text without specific authors is as reductive a fantasy for the reader as a text which is supposed to give unmediated access to the mind of the artist.

Gordon McMullan proposes that ignoring questions of attribution could result in misreading.\textsuperscript{14} He cites the example of Jonathan Dollimore's essay 'Subjectivity, Sexuality, and Transgression: the Jacobean Connection' which doesn't take into account the fact that Fletcher seems to have preferred to write the more experimental and daring middle portions of plays, rather than their less politically exciting closures (which were contributed by other playwrights, notably Massinger).\textsuperscript{15} With regard to Dollimore's discussion of Love's Cure, McMullan argues that Fletcher had 'an interest only in the transgression and not the inevitable containment' (p.153) of the play. However, we don't know how the collaboration worked. Fletcher could very well have had a hand in suggesting or even directing Massinger in the composition of the ending, even though Fletcher himself didn't sit down to write it. It seems likely that Fletcher was the senior partner of the collaboration with Massinger, or at the very least would have been on equal terms with him, and thus it is improbable that Fletcher had no input into how the play was finished, unless it was completed after his death (see below p.192, n.18).\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} Gordon McMullan, Chapter Four on 'Collaboration' in \textit{The Politics of Unease} (Amherst, 1994).

\textsuperscript{15} Jonathan Dollimore 'Subjectivity, Sexuality, and Transgression: the Jacobean Connection' \textit{Renaissance Drama} 17 (1986), 53-81.

\textsuperscript{16} The possibility remains that Fletcher simply didn't care about the final acts of his plays, as suggested by Gerard Langbaine:
Uncertainty surrounds all attempts to attribute shares of plays to individual authors, and yet being sensitive to the possibilities of different voices in a work can be no bad thing, as long as the limitations of this approach are acknowledged. The discontinuities and contradictions inherent in a collaborative text might be more challenging for the critic than those in a single-authored text (if any such thing can be said to exist): but the critic also needs to be sensitive to discontinuities and contradictions in plays which have been attributed to a single author.

Notwithstanding the value of metrical and linguistic analysis as a critical tool where collaboration is suspected, the mere fact of a play being the result of a collaboration ought not to disqualify it from being subjected to the usual literary-critical practice. I apply some of Otto Rank's psychoanalytic theories on the double to *The Two Noble Kinsmen* -- the play seems amenable to such an approach despite its dual (or one might say, multiple) authorship. Rank's theories may also have some relevance to the way that male rivalry is depicted in *Double Falshood*, although -- as I argue here -- the phenomenon of doubling up male characters is consistent with Fletcher's dramatic practice in this early period, and may have had something to do with the exigencies of casting as much as anything else.

The names in *Double Falshood* have been changed from the story of Cardenio in *Don Quixote*. The character of Cardenio becomes Julio, Don Ferdinand becomes Henriquez, Dorothea becomes Violante and Lucinda, Leonora. The plot follows the basic story-line of the story in *Don Quixote*: Henriquez woos Violante passionately and then forces sex on her with the promise of marriage. He then abandons her to woo Leonora, who is engaged to Julio (unbeknown to their parents). Violante leaves home and goes into hiding as a shepherd boy in the mountains. Leonora is forced to

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I have either read, or been inform'd, (I know not well whether) that 'twas generally Mr. Fletcher's practice, after he had finish'd Three Acts of a Play to shew them to the Actors, and after they had agreed on Terms, he huddled up the two last without that care that behoov'd him.

agree to a wedding with Henriquez, but faints at the end of the ceremony. A letter falls out of her dress saying that she is already contracted to Julio and can't marry Henriquez. Having witnessed most of the wedding, but not Leonora's collapse, Julio flees to the mountains where he goes mad with grief at what he takes to be her betrayal. Leonora also disappears after she has recovered from her faint. Henriquez kidnaps Leonora from the convent in which she goes to hide. Julio meets Violante in the mountains and they console one another. They encounter Henriquez and Leonora in the final scene and Henriquez is persuaded to accept Violante again, and Julio is also reconciled with Leonora.

Though this basic plot-line follows that of the story of Cardenio in Don Quixote, many elements of the original have been changed. An important difference between this play and the original story is the lack of friendship between Julio (Cardenio in Don Quixote) and Henriquez (i.e. Ferdinand). In the story of Cardenio, he and Ferdinand are very close friends. Cardenio confides in Ferdinand, which is how he hears about Lucinda. In the play the two equivalent characters do not appear on stage together until the wedding scene, when they are inveterate enemies. However, we are told at the beginning of the play that Henriquez first met Julio in France, which implies a pre-history of friendship. Julio has been sent by Henriquez on an errand to the latter's brother Roderick. We learn nothing else about their supposed friendship until Henriquez betrays it by planning his courtship Leonora in Act II, scene i:

Fair Leonora reigns confest the Tyrant Queen of my revolted Heart, and Violante seems a short Usurper there. — Julio's already by my Arts remov'd. -- O Friendship, how wilt thou answer That? Oh, that a Man could reason down this Fever of the Blood, or sooth with Words the Tumult in his Heart! Then Julio, I might be, indeed, thy Friend. (II.i., p.14)¹⁷

¹⁷ All quotations from the play are taken from the following edition: DOUBLE FALSHOOD/ OR, THE/ DISTREST LOVERS. A PLAY. As it is now Acted at/ The Theatre Royal in COVENT-GARDEN. Written ORIGINALLY/ By W. SHAKESPEARE: AND REVISED/ By Mr. THEOBALD /--Quod optavi Divum promittere nemo/ Aderet, volvenda Dies, en/ altulit ulro. VIRG./ The THIRD
Like so many sections in the opening scenes, these lines seem to be patched together paraphrases of longer denser passages and pieces of plotting. The sentence 'Oh, that a Man could reason down this Fever of the Blood' etc. sounds like the ragged remains of some blank verse. The sudden reference to betrayal of friendship suggests that there is something missing from the early part of the play to indicate that they were friends in the first place. 18

Moreover, Henriquez seems to imply here that he sent Julio away even before he has raped Violante, let alone started his courtship of Leonora, since we first hear of Julio's errand to Roderick right at the beginning of the play. There are other indications that the early part of the play has been cut and the order of scenes changed. Notably, there is a very jerky transition between the end of Act I, scene iii, in which Henriquez reveals in soliloquy that he has bribed Violante's maid in order to get access to his victim, and Act II, scene i in which Henriquez again appears on stage, supposedly some time after the rape, to soliloquize about how guilty he feels.

The tension which is between the rival lovers Cardenio and Don Ferdinand in the original story has shifted into being chiefly between the brothers Henriquez (Ferdinand in the original) and Roderick in Double Falshood. Don Ferdinand's older brother in Don Quixote is hardly mentioned, but in Double Falshood the brothers are being continually compared and contrasted. Right from the beginning of the play, it seems that Roderick is the 'good' son, enlisted in his father's service against the younger 'bad' son. In the first scene of the play, the Duke asks Roderick to persuade Julio to spy on Henriquez:

EDITION. LONDON. Printed for T. LOWNDES, in Fleet-Street. MDCCLXVII.

18 Alternatively, the authors of Cardenio could have expected their audience to know the original story from Don Quixote (and thus to be able to fill in the gaps in the plot themselves) -- but this is not consistent with the way Fletcher and Shakespeare generally use their sources. It is highly unlikely that the author(s) of Double Falshood were depending on the audience to recognise the story from Don Quixote since the names of all the characters have been changed.
The younger son is excluded physically and emotionally from this opening scene between the father and elder son. The conspiratorial attitude to his son, reminiscent of that of Polonius and Claudius in *Hamlet* (and perhaps also Gloucester in *King Lear*) is suggestive of a distrustful and emotionally empty relationship between the Duke and his younger son.

In the second half of the play Roderick attempts to police the activities of his younger brother (without much success). He says in III, iii that 'the long doubtful Absence of my Brother' together with the mysterious disappearance of Julio, has trusted me with strong Suspicions, And Dreams, that will not let me sleep, nor eat, Nor taste those Recreations Health demands [...]

(III.iii., p.33)

It isn't clear why Roderick is so obsessed with his younger brother. We don't see the two brothers on stage together until Act IV, when far from reigning in Henriquez's excesses, Roderick gives him a hand with kidnapping the unfortunate Leonora. Though Roderick is concerned with the behaviour of Henriquez, he doesn't seem to be able to act to prevent him from doing wrong.

Henriquez and Roderick are mirror images of each other: Camillo (Julio's father) tells the latter 'You look so like him, Lord, you are the worse for't.' (III.iii., p.32). However, though they look the same they have opposite roles to play. Violante is raped by Henriquez, whereas Roderick saves her from another rape (by the Master of the Flocks in Act IV). Henriquez terrifies Leonora, whereas Roderick reassures her. Both the heroines tell Roderick that he is the moral superior of his brother:

Violante: I would, your Brother had but half your Virtue! (III.iii., p.37).

Leonora: -- Are you that Lord Roderick, So Spoken of for Virtue and fair Life,
And dare you lose these to be Advocate
For such a Brother, such a sinful Brother,
Such an unfaithful, treacherous, brutal Brother?  (V.i., p.51-2)

This last passage is one of those picked out by Kukowski as being distinctively Fletcherian. He compares it to similarly repetitive phrasings in *Bonduca* (c.1609-14), *The Loyal Subject* (1618), *Love's Pilgrimage* (c.1616), and *The Island Princess* (1621). It suggests that Roderick (or perhaps the same character with a different name) did have an important role in *Cardenio* (that is, it is unlikely that he is entirely a post-Restoration creation). Kukowski also argues that the opening scene (the one in which the Duke confers with Roderick) is the most Shakespearean in the play. If Shakespeare did have a hand in the scene, then it adds weight to the idea that the theme of fraternal rivalry implicit in *Double Falshood* was first created by Shakespeare and Fletcher in *Cardenio*.

Another set of male rivals who appear in *Double Falshood*, but not in *Don Quixote*, are the fathers of Julio and Leonora. Both Julio's father Camillo, and Leonora's father Don Bernard are introduced in Act I, scene ii, separately. Throughout the play they appear in the same scenes, either simultaneously, or one after the other. There is a certain amount of animosity between them in Act II, when Camillo suggests that the marriage between their children should go ahead, and Don Bernard refuses. However, their animosity increases considerably after both of their children have gone missing. In Act III, iii, Camillo has to be restrained by Roderick from attacking Bernard. Camillo takes the rejection of his son as a suitor by Bernard as a personal slight, and reproaches Bernard with 'I was too poor a Brother for your Greatness' (III.iii., p.36), emphasizing the fraternal possibilities of their relationship, had their children been married as planned. When there are difficulties surrounding a planned marriage in other plays, the bride's father (or brother) tends to aim his aggression directly at the suitor, not the suitor's father — this can be seen in plays as varied as *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598-99), *Philaster* (1608-9) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613). This play is rare in that the groom's father is pitted against the
Though there is evidence that Roderick (or the same character with a different name) was in the original Cardenio, there isn't such evidence to account for the presence of Camillo and Bernard. However, there is no reason to suppose that they were not in the original play, and their presence accords well with Fletcher's dramatic technique at the time, in which he often seems to double characters. The Captain (1609-12), mainly by Fletcher with some help from Beaumont, is a particularly good example of this. The dating evidence for both Cardenio and The Captain comes from the records which indicate that they were both played at court during the Christmas festivities of 1612-13. It seems likely that Fletcher could have been working on them at around the same time.

The Captain is for the most part constructed out of several pairs of characters: the gentlemen Julio and Angilo; the ladies Clora and Franke; the soldiers Jacamo and Frabitio; and the 'Cowardly Guils' Piso and Lodowicke. Three other characters (Franke's brother Fredrick, and Lelia and her father) don't fit into these pairs, however. In The Captain, the feelings of the characters are introduced as they come on stage chatting to their 'doubles'. This way of structuring the play is lacking in panache, but it must have been quick and comparatively easy to write. The plot is difficult to summarize quickly, but involves Franke attempting to win the attentions of the captain of the title, Jacamo: whilst in the sub-plot the sexually desirable but wanton Lelia, after bewitching Julio and Angilo, inadvertently attempts to seduce her own disguised father, who marries her off to the gullible Piso at the end to keep her out of further trouble.19

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19 There are tensions and rivalries between each of the three pairs of men in the play, which are left unresolved at the end:

a) Angilo tries to meet Lelia privately, even though he has warned his friend against her earlier in the play. This seems like a betrayal of Julio, and yet it is not so, since Julio declares himself cured at the same moment as Angilo falls under her spell (IV.i). Their 'one-up-manship' is more to do with which of them is most stricken and most culpable for falling in love with this unchaste woman. However, since Angilo falls in love with Lelia immediately Julio brings him to see her, it is hardly surprising that Julio woos and marries Clora in secret (i.e. without letting his friend know about
It's striking that for a comedy there are lots of spare men left at the end of *The Captain*. One half of each of the male pairs marries, the other half is left lingering. Whereas in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Double Falsehood* the basic tension in the plot seems to be that there are three unmarried young bachelors and only two unmarried young women, in *The Captain* there are six unmarried bachelors and two eligible women (though there is a third, unexpected marriage at the end when it is revealed that Clora, Franke's companion, was eligible and desirable after all, and has covertly been wooed by Julio). However, if you include the three wife-less fathers in *Double Falsehood* (the Duke, Bernard and Camillo) the number of men left at the end of the play without female partners is even greater in *Double Falsehood* than in *The Captain*.

*Much Ado About Nothing* is a similar play to *Double Falsehood* in many ways: the dramatic climax of the ill-fated wedding, in which the bride faints away because of the cruelty of her father and the groom; the hostility between those on the bride's side and those on the groom's until new marriages are arranged; the presence of the unmarried prince in *Much Ado*, the presence of the duke's oldest son Roderick in *Falshood*, and the double wedding at the end. However, whereas in *Much Ado* the minor characters Ursula and Margaret are there to join in with the dance at the end of the play, at the end of *Double Falsehood* the two female characters seem much more isolated among the many men that surround them.

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b) Piso betrays his friendship with Lodowicke without a second thought in order to marry Lelia. Lodowicke gets some kind of revenge when he laughs heartily at Piso for having married a 'whore'. Piso seems reconciled to his fate in the end and Jacamo declares 'Hang 'em they dare not be Enemies, or if they be, The danger is not great' (V.v.123-4). Despite this statement we do not find out if these two friends are truly reconciled at the end of the play.

c) Jacamo is lured into Franke's house by his friend Fabritio towards the end of the play so that Franke can propose to him. Clora makes the initial suggestion that 'a piss-pott' should be poured on his head to make him angry enough to come in, but Fabritio gets carried away by the idea (V.ii.42ff) and takes great delight in humiliating him in order to bring him together with Franke.
One thing that all Shakespeare's romances have in common, including *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (and possibly *Cardenio*) is that there are few female characters in the final scene, compared to the number of male characters. This difference between Shakespeare's Jacobean romances and his Elizabethan romantic comedies may be partly the result of the exigencies of casting at different periods in the history of the King's Men. There are four women's parts in the final scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-6), *As You Like It* (1599) and *All's Well that Ends Well* (1602-3), for example. There are two women at the end of *Twelfth Night* (1601-2), but Feste could well have originally been played by a boy singer and Sebastian would have to have been as young and pretty a boy actor as Viola. When writing his late plays, however, Shakespeare seems less willing to give out so many female roles and singing parts. This becomes clearer if one disregards parts for women who are middle-aged or older throughout the play, such as Dionyza, Paulina and Cymbeline's queen: these may not have been taken by boy actors. In *Pericles* (1607-8) and *The Winter's Tale* (1610-11) there was casting for one actor who could sing and play a young maiden (Marina and Perdita), and another who could convincingly play a woman before and after aging many years (Thiassa and Hermione), plus other minor female roles. In *Cymbeline* (1609-10), *The Tempest* (1611) and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613) there is need for only one actor to play a romantic heroine (Imogen, Miranda, Emilia), and in *The Tempest* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* another boy actor who could sing (Ariel and the Jailor's Daughter) is also needed, in addition to female minor roles.  

20 T.J. King in *Casting Shakespeare's Plays: London Actors and Their Roles 1590-1642* (Cambridge, 1992) notes that in total four boys are needed for the female roles in *Pericles*, four boys for *Cymbeline*, seven for *The Winter's Tale*, four for *The Tempest*, three for *Henry VIII* and six for *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. However, King makes no distinction between old and young female characters -- he assumes boys played them all. Even if one accepts that older women such as Paulina and Dionyza would have been played by boys, how likely is it that a pubescent boy would have been chosen to play an 'ancient MATRON' (Posthumus's mother who appears as a ghost in V, iv of *Cymbeline*)? Neither does King give any opinion on how many of these boys would have taken relatively unimportant parts: no-one remembers much about the role of the waiting-woman in *Kinsmen* or Emilia (Hermione's attendant) in *The Winter's Tale*, for example.
The Two Noble Kinsmen could have been played by an actor who usually played older women's parts, such as Dionyza, Paulina and Cymbeline's queen.

This pattern of restricting important young female or singing roles to one or two is less obvious for Beaumont and Fletcher's plays of this period, perhaps because they only became firmly committed to writing for the King's Men late in 1609 or early 1610. In Cupid's Revenge, for example, which was probably written at about the same time as Pericles (1607-8) though only two actors capable of playing lead women are required (an actor to play Bacha, plus an actor who could double as Hidaspes who dies in Act II, and Urania who first appears in Act V), there are minor female roles, which may have required singing. This play is thought to have been written for the Children of the Revels. In Philaster, however, which was written about the same time as Cymbeline, in addition to the leading female roles of Arathusa and Euphrasia, the role of Megia would have required a boy actor with a certain amount of skill, plus an actor to play the minor role of Gallatea. Philaster may well have been the first Beaumont and Fletcher collaboration to be performed by the King's Men, though whether it was written with them in mind is open to question.


22 It was only after writing The Maid's Tragedy (1610) that they seem to have become committed to writing for the King's Men. In between Philaster (1608-9) and The Maid's Tragedy (1610) Fletcher wrote The Faithful Shepherdess (1608-9) and Beaumont and Fletcher collaborated on The Coxcomb (1608-10). Both these plays were performed by the boys of Blackfriars. See Gordon McMullan's chronology of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon in The Politics of Unease, p.267 and Andrew Gurr's 'A Select List of Plays and their Playhouses' in The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642 (Cambridge, 1992, repr.1993) pp.233-243. T.J. King, op.cit., notes that

[...] authors of the period carefully planned the number of actors required for each play in a plot or outline listing the characters who appear in each scene, and this plot was submitted to the acting company for its approval before the author wrote dialogue for a given play. (p.6)

However, it's not clear if this was a matter of routine for writers who were not attached to one particular company. Moreover, scripts would not necessarily always remain with the company that they had been originally written for, so it would be
In his essay 'The Doubling of Roles on the Jacobean Stage', Richard Fotheringham argues that the King's Men 'remained stable at twelve men and four boys' throughout the Jacobean period, though authors sometimes wrote specifically for small casts of twelve which would be 'suitable for touring'. He cites *The Alchemist* as an example of this kind of play in the Jacobean era, which incidentally has only two women's parts of any importance. In the light of this, there seem to be two possible explanations as to why Shakespeare restricted the lead female and/or singing roles to two. One is that he wanted the plays to be more adaptable for touring than they would have been with more numerous demanding roles for boy players. The other is that Shakespeare particularly wanted to make use of two exceptionally talented boy players in the company, but was less interested in other boy players. Beaumont and Fletcher may have been less fussy, less able to write plays which would best suit the strengths of the company, or simply less committed to writing for the King's Men.

Fotheringham also discusses the theory that Jonson, Chapman and Marston's *Eastwood Ho!* (printed 1605) was 'padded with extra roles so that each actor in a cast of twenty had something to do' (p.26). Fletcher and Shakespeare may have felt they had to provide enough parts to give each of the twelve adult male actors 'something to do', resulting in the odd doubling up of male parts in some of the plays written in this period.

This could explain why male rivalry is especially important in plays of this era for Fletcher, and to a certain extent for Shakespeare. These extra male characters have to have something interesting to say to one another, after all. The creation of the

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23 'The Doubling of Roles on the Jacobean Stage', *Theatre Research International* 10 (1985), p.28. Andrew Gurr follows W.W.Greg in suggesting that the Queen's Men on tour in the 1590s were reduced to seven men and two boys, and had to cut Greene's *Orlando Furioso* (1594) to suit their reduced circumstances (*The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642* (Cambridge, 1992, repr.1993) p.107-110.)
character of Roderick, and the elaboration of the roles of Camillo and Bernard fits in with a pattern in *Double Falshood* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* of a multiplication of intense relationships between men (mainly rivalries) which are not in the sources. Each plot centres on one male rivalry -- between Palamon and Arcite in the *Kinsmen* and between Julio and Henriquez in *Double Falshood* -- but other dualisms become apparent until many of the main characters seem to be caught up in one or more kinds of binary system.

Psychoanalytic theory can provide a useful framework for thinking about the dynamics of these binary systems. Freud writes about sibling rivalry, and particularly about the strength of emotion an older child feels when a younger child is born and threatens to take the mother's love away.24 Freud's scheme is reversed in *Double Falshood* since the father rather than the mother is the important parent, and it is the younger son who is dispossessed of the parent's love: Henriquez only attains at the end of the play the paternal approval which Roderick has throughout.25 In a patriarchal society dependent on primogeniture, such as that in the eighteenth-century England of *Double Falshood* (or the Jacobean England of *Cardenio*) this reversal hardly comes as a surprise.

Otto Rank's study of the double may have some relevance here.26 He notes

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25 Fletcher, Beaumont and Massinger's *The Tragedy of Thierry and Theodoret* (1613) in which two brothers struggle with (and are eventually killed by) their mother fits Freud's scheme more exactly. The older son, Thierry, seems strangely ready to believe the mother's slanders against the younger son, and is willing to abet her in destroying him, unable to see that his own torture and death at her hands will follow. This play is a good example of a collaborative work which would respond well to a psychoanalytic reading.

26 Harry Tucker Jnr (trans. and ed.), *The Double: A Psychoanalytical Study by Otto Rank* (London, 1971, repr. 1989). Rank's original essay was published in 1914, expanded in 1925. All quotations will be from this edition.
that the double who pursues the subject 'frequently represents the father or his
substitute (brother, teacher, etc.)' (p.75). It seems from their relationship at the
beginning of the play that Roderick is indeed the substitute of his father for
Henriquez, and at some level he may represent the super-ego. The play is resolved
when Henriquez's desire to marry Violante (who is of a lower social class) turns out
to be not against his father's will after all. However, whereas *Double Falsehood*
is merely suggestive of such a reading (and anyway, we can't know how important these
male rivalries were in the original *Cardenio*), *The Two Noble Kinsmen* offers a much
broader scope for investigation in the light of Rank's study.

Though Emilia -- the romantic heroine of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* -- can
easily tell the difference between the kinsmen, she is unable to choose between them.
As I shall argue, though the kinsmen are not mirror-images of each other in a literal
sense, many aspects of their relationship suggest that they are 'doubles' in the way that
Otto Rank describes. Palamon is also linked to the Wooer in a different version of his
relationship with Arcite. In order to win the Jailor's Daughter, the Wooer pretends to
be Palamon -- he becomes Palamon's double for the Daughter, who is unable to tell
the difference between them.

There are pairings of characters in other ways. Most importantly, there are
some intense same-sex relationships in the play. In addition to the relationship
between the kinsmen, there are those between Theseus and Pirithous and Emilia and
Flavina (her childhood friend who died before the beginning of the play). Muriel
Bradbrook argues that the play is structured in such a way which 'allows the topic of
homosexuality to become pervasive without becoming acknowledged.'27 Richard
Abrams, Dorothea Kehler and Gordon McMullan all concentrate on Emilia's
sexuality, especially her description of the love she had for her childhood friend
Flavina.28 Abrams also suggests that in Act I, scene iii 'Hippolyta worries [...] that

27 Muriel Bradbrook 'Shakespeare and His Collaborators', *Proceedings of the World

28 Richard Abrams 'Gender confusion and sexual politics in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*'
she, a woman, can never displace Theseus' old friend [Pirithous] from "The high throne" of his heart (p. 72).

Other critics see the play as a discussion of male friendship, rather than homosexuality. Jo Eldridge Carney argues that *The Two Noble Kinsmen* focuses on the rivalry between love and war, and also on 'the threat that the love of women poses to the noble virtue of classical male friendship'. In his introduction to *The Oxford Shakespeare* edition of the play, Eugene Waith suggests that it was Fletcher rather than Shakespeare who developed the nature of the friendship between the kinsmen:

[Fletcher] did most to establish the Ciceroonian basis of the friendship between Palamon and Arcite (in 2.2), and after Shakespeare set the pattern for the strange mixture of hostility and courtesy in their encounters in the forest, Fletcher not only maintained it but made it the basis for the most effective presentation in the entire play of the conflict between love and friendship (in 3.6).  


Piero Boitani suggests that a rivalry between 'culture and nature' in the play is related to that between love and friendship:

[A]n opposition between 'nobility' and the basic human drive of possession in love -- between courtliness and instinct, ultimately between culture and nature -- is added to that between *philia* and *eros*. In turn, *philia* means both 'friendship' and 'kinship'. (p. 187)

('The genius to improve an invention: transformations of the *Knight's Tale* in Ruth Morse and Barry Windeatt (eds.), *Chaucer Traditions: Studies in Honour of Derek Brewer* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 187.)

Before *The Two Noble Kinsmen* Fletcher had collaborated with Beaumont on *The Coxcomb* (1608-10), in which the same theme of the conflict between love and friendship is dealt with in a much more light-hearted way. *The Coxcomb* may have been influenced by *The Tale of Foolish Curiosity*, another interpolated story in *Don Quixote*, in which Anselmo persuades his friend Lothario to try to seduce his wife as a test of her, with disastrous consequences for the friendship and the marriage.31 This suggests that Fletcher was working with the theme of male friendship and using *Don Quixote* as a source before his collaboration with Shakespeare on *Cardenio*.

In *The Coxcomb*, Antonio and his friend Mercury arrive back at the former's house, after having been travelling together. Mercury becomes infatuated with Antonio's wife Maria, and for the sake of their friendship Antonio (the coxcomb of the title) decides that he will do everything to encourage Mercury's seduction of her. In Act II, when Antonio has decided on this course of action, he announces to Mercury that their friendship will become famous:

*Antonio*  
[...] We two will be — you would little thinke it; as famous for our friendship —

*Mercury.* How?

*Antonio.* If God please, as ever *Damon* was and *Pytheas*, or *Pylades* and *Orestes*, or any two that ever were: do you conceive me yet?  
(II.i.152-157)

This self-consciousness in Antonio's feelings of friendship makes him all the more ridiculous. Damon and Pithias (or Phintias, as he is known in the original classical legend) offer to die for one another, hence their legendary friendship. *Damon and Pithias* (published 1571) is the only extant play of Richard Edwards, who also wrote a play called *Palamon and Arcite* (now lost) for Queen Elizabeth's entertainment at Oxford in 1566. Pylades and Orestes are discussed by Mnesippus and Toxaris in a

31 See Douglas Harold Orgill in 'The Influence of Cervantes on the Plays of John Fletcher' (Ph.D. University of Southern California, 1960) for the argument that *El Curioso Impertinente* was a source for *The Coxcomb*.
dialogue on friendship in Lucian's *Toxaris* (from his *Dialogues*, which were a standard text-book in Elizabethan grammar schools): their friendship was proverbial.\(^{32}\)

Palamon and Arcite's last words to one another as friends also reflect a self-conscious desire to become legendary for their friendship:

*Palamon.* Is there record of any two that lov'd
Better than we do, Arcite?

*Arcite.* Sure there cannot.

*Palamon.* I do not think it possible our friendship
Should ever leave us.

*Arcite.* Till our deaths it cannot,

*Enter EMILIA and her WOMAN {below}*

And after death our spirits shall be led
To those that love eternally. Speak on, sir.

(II.ii.112-117, attributed to Fletcher)

Palamon is unable to 'speak on' because he has caught his first glimpse of Emilia. For Fletcher, it seems that once men begin to think that their friendship will become famous they lay themselves open to ridicule. Self-consciousness signals vulnerability in friendship -- it's an opportunity for dramatic irony before the turn in the plot.

One of the striking things about the play is that the kinsmen's friendship collapses so quickly and completely after it had seemed so strong. The very intensity of the friendship seems to have something to do with its fragility. Arcite makes an extraordinary speech earlier in the same scene to illustrate his strength of feeling about their friendship:

And here being thus together,
We are an endless mine to one another;
We are one another's wife, ever begetting

---

New births of love; we are father, friends, acquaintance;
We are, in one another, families:
I am your heir, and you are mine; this place
Is our inheritance. No hard oppressor
Dare take this from us; here with a little patience
We shall live long, and loving. (II.i.78-86).

Arcite responds to imprisonment by blocking out the rest of the world, focusing himself exclusively on his friend. Palamon becomes his double, not physically, but because of the perfect symmetry of the arrangement. Arcite expects the same things from Palamon that he is willing to give: he loves Palamon because Palamon will love him in exactly the same way. It is clear that the kinsmen love a narcissistic projection of themselves in each other.

When Emilia arrives on the scene her first action is to point out a narcissus flower in the garden. She comments

That was a fair boy certain, but a fool
To love himself. Were there not maids enough? (II.i.120-1)

After interrupting such an intensely self-involved conversation between the kinsmen, this seems like a reminder to them that there are other objects of desire in the world than themselves.

Otto Rank suggests that inability to love is the psychological basis for narcissism which, in turn, produces the phenomenon of the double.

Either the direct inability to love or — leading to the same effect — an exorbitantly strained longing for love characterize the two poles of this over exaggerated attitude toward one's own ego [i.e. narcissism]. (p.48)

When Emilia says that she would like the narcissus to be embroidered in silk all over one of her dresses (II.i.128), she seems to imagine herself as symbol of narcissism.
Not only is this appropriate enough for her own state of mind (her description of her relationship with Flavina has strong auto-erotic overtones in I, iii), but also for the kinsmen, since she represents a diversion from the intense narcissism which they
project onto one another.

As in so many of the stories and myths in Rank's study this narcissism results in a fight to the death between the doubles over an object of sexual love.

[T]he double, who personifies narcissistic self-love, becomes an unequivocal rival in sexual love; or else, originally created as a wish-defence against a dreaded eternal destruction, he reappears in superstition as the messenger of death. (p.85)

In the stories and myths which Rank recounts, the hero often finds that in attempting to kill his double he is killing himself: this has an obvious parallel in the fate of the kinsmen. Before their first attempt to fight, Palamon emphasises that they share the same blood:

[...] thou art mine aunt's son,
And that blood we desire to shed is mutual,
In me, thine, and in thee, mine. (III.vi.94-96)

The kinsmen are thus both 'unequivocal rivals in sexual love' and 'messenger[s] of death' for one another. Their first declarations of exclusive love for each other in prison arise out of fearing that they will grow old and die without having experienced sexual love. Arcite says:

Here we are,
And here the graces of our youths must wither
Like a too-timely spring. Here age must find us,
And which is heaviest, Palamon, unmarried. (II.ii.26-29)

That they become rivals in love and messengers of death for one another accords with Rank's ideas of the way that repressed fears return in stories and myths of the double: Palamon's sudden interest in Emilia seems to offer the possibility of escape from, but instead merely heralds a new phase of, their mutual obsession.

Unlike Rank's examples, the kinsmen are two individuals who have become psychically entwined, rather than one individual who has become divided. Emilia's
desire for them to be 'metamorphis'd/ Both into one' (V.iii.84-85) would solve the problem; just as the doubles in Rank's study regain their sanity and sense of self if they reunite. Instead, however, one of the kinsmen must die, since they cannot continue to co-exist with such a strangle-hold on one another's psyche. It is striking that Palamon's last words may indicate that he has lost his passion for Emilia, at the same time as losing Arcite:

O cousin,
That we should things desire which do cost us
The loss of our desire! that nought could buy
Dear love but loss of dear love! (V.iv.109-112.)

Palamon's single desire has been to gain the hand of Emilia -- has he now lost this desire? These words, ambiguous as they are, may suggest that the intensity of Palamon's passion for Emilia was dependent on the existence of Arcite. At any rate, it is clear that the romantic interest is of secondary importance at this moment. As Eugene Waith remarks, notwithstanding the impending marriage, '[t]he predominant feeling is the loss of friendship' at the end of the play.33

Gordon McMullan argues that the triangular relationship between the kinsmen and Emilia echoes that of the collaborating playwrights and their joint text:

I [...] see in the simultaneously collaborative and competitive intimacy of Palamon and Arcite a figure for the collaborative creation of the play, and I see in Emilia a dramatisation of the 'feminine' text which resists passivity as a defining characteristic of the feminine.' (p.3, op. cit.)

It certainly seems more than a coincidence that two of the three joint plays by Fletcher and Shakespeare have plots which centre on a struggle between two men over a woman. Perhaps the dynamics of collaboration between the rival playwrights did indeed find dramatic expression in the rivalry of the kinsmen. Although, in theory, one might expect a collaborative play to resist psychoanalytic interpretation, in

practice *The Two Noble Kinsmen* seems to be particularly amenable to Rank's theories of the double, perhaps because both playwrights had certain common reactions to the subject matter. If play-texts of early modern England are to be seen as collaborative works not simply by one or two authors but as products of the (all-male) culture of the theatre (as Masten implies) then their responsiveness to psychoanalytic techniques of analysis may be all the more compelling. It is misguided to assume that only work produced by a single mind is open to psychoanalytic readings -- the text should not be seen as an analysand. Much of Rank's material comes from mythology and folklore, forms which are, after all, inherently collaborative.

In *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and, it seems, Cardenio, it is what will happen to the love-interest which keeps the suspense of the play moving along, though the centre of dramatic interest is the relationship between men. Whereas in *Cymbeline*, *Bonduca* and *Antony and Cleopatra* the male rivalries which subordinate the women are often implicit, and the central female characters compelling subjects, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Double Falshood* the women are primarily the objects of explicit male rivalries. In the latter plays it is the phenomenon of male rivalry which is of central importance.

Before leaving the relationship of Fletcher with Shakespeare, I shall discuss how the Jailor's Daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* becomes subject to these masculine struggles for ascendency. Unlike the main plot, this subplot reaches an ostensibly harmonious conclusion. The figures of male authority who decide the Jailor's Daughter's fate (her father, the Doctor and the Wooer) all achieve their goals (goals that had seemed irreconcilable): the father sees his daughter married; the Doctor cures his patient; the Wooer's desires are consummated. However, the feelings of the Jailor's Daughter disappear into obscurity.

The opening lines of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* jokingly invite us to see maidenhead as something which can be bought in much the same way as any commodity:
New plays and maidenheads are near akin —
Much follow'd both, for both much money gi'n [...] (Prologue, II.1-2)

Though, like a new play, virginity is 'Much follow'd', there is a hint of a devaluing of what we think of as its usual sanctity during the early modern period: it exists so that it can be desired, bought and terminated, rather than having any hallowed value in itself.

The plot of the play charts the progress of two such maidenheads. The marriage of Emilia, who seems to prefer to remain single, is decided on by three men: Palamon and Arcite -- the two kinsmen of the title who are both in love with her, and Theseus -- her brother-in-law and sovereign. The other ill-fated maidenhead belongs to the nameless Jailor's Daughter. She falls mad with unrequited love for Palamon, and pre-marital sex with her Wooer is presented as the cure. As in Emily's case, the loss of her virginity is decided on by three men: the Doctor, her Wooer and her father.

I address the issue of 'love' as a cure for inappropriate gender behaviour in the discussion of Love's Cure below: Lucio's father at one point insists that he rape a woman to prove his masculinity. In Act II, scene vi, the Jailor's Daughter decides to make a similar demand on Palamon:

Let him do
What he will with me, so he use me kindly,
For use me so he shall, or I'll proclaim him,
And to his face, no man. (II.vi.28-31)

Her threat only serves to emphasize her evident lack of power in this situation -- even if she were to run into Palamon she would hardly be in a position to dictate these terms to him. Her desire to be 'used' merely devalues herself and her virginity. Instead of being able to force Palamon to prove his manhood by having sex with her, at the end of the play sex is used to force her back into her role as a wife and daughter.

This fate (marriage to the Wooer) is lower in her estimation than the one she would like (marriage to Palamon), but in the eyes of those around her it is higher than remaining 'as mad as a March hare' (III.v.73), as she is before the cure.
The Wooer's seduction of the Jailor's Daughter by taking the persona of Palamon is another version of the bed-trick, used in *All's Well That Ends Well* (1602-3) and *Measure for Measure* (1604). Perhaps it is most comparable to Titania's fate in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-6), however. In the former two plays, a man thinks he is sleeping with a woman whom he has unlawfully seduced, instead of his rightful partner who has taken the other woman's place. This swapping about of partners is based on the sexist and rather peculiar premise that once you switch out the light all women are interchangeable. Moral standards governing extra-marital sex by men mean that they can ultimately be forgiven their intended transgression.

The treatment of Titania and the Jailor's Daughter, on the other hand, is more complex. Neither of them are of sound mind at the time of their seductions -- as a result they both sleep with men they believe to be their ideal partners. In both cases they are being comically punished for an earlier hubris: in Titania's case disobeying her husband; in the Jailor's Daughter's case, breaking a betrothal to set her heart on a man who is too well born for her. Forgiveness for the extra-marital liaisons of the female bed-trick victims does not arise, since in each case it was the men in charge of them who have orchestrated events, rather than the women themselves.

When the bed-trick is played on a man, in a sense both the man and the women get what they want. When the bed-trick is played on a woman, the result is somewhat more distasteful: the women are left with little dignity and an uneasy voyeurism seems to be required of the audience.34 The Restoration adaptation of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (Davenant's *The Rivals* (1668)) solved this problem by lifting the Jailor's Daughter up a class or two, so that she is a suitable partner for Palamon, who eventually agrees to marry her. No bed-trick is required.

34 Another more horrible version of the bed-trick is played on Imogen in *Cymbeline*, when she wakes up in Act IV, scene ii to discover Cloten's beheaded body lying by her, which she takes for her husband's. The effect is of course tragic, rather than comic, but again there is a rather discomforting feel to the plot: this is certainly one of the worst experiences she endures during the course of the play.
When the play was first written it was still thought that the mind was governed by the four humours: blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy. The melancholy humour was defined as follows:

It is an Humor colde and drye, thicke in consistence, sower tasted, proper to nourish the parts that are colde and drie, and is compared to the earth, or winter.\(^{35}\)

It was believed that a preponderance of this humor could cause depression, or even madness, and in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* it is 'a most thick and profound melancholy' (IV.iii.49-50) that afflicts the Jailor's Daughter according to the Doctor. Bridget Gellert Lyons usefully summarizes the hall-marks of the love-melancholic in literature:

The love-melancholic had the oldest literary history of all these stock figures [of those suffering from melancholy], since his style and attributes were part of the convention of medieval courtly love. He was in some ways not a typical melancholic, because his condition was neither humoral nor 'causeless', but easily cured by obtaining the object of his desire. Although the feelings connected with rejected love, seriously explored, were central to the Petrarchan conventions of so many Renaissance love lyrics, the male love-melancholic on the stage was almost always (until later plays, like Ford's) a figure of fun. Only women were invested with genuine pathos in that role; men were made to express, through their standardized costumes and the patterned ways in which they behaved, a certain amount of self-indulgence.\(^{36}\)

True to type as a female love-melancholic, the Jailor's Daughter is invested with a genuine pathos -- perhaps more so than the other characters who are in love in the play. One reason for the difference in the treatment of male and female love-melancholics was that it was not easy for a woman, once she had already been rejected, to obtain the object of her desire. A cure would be much less likely than for a man, inevitably investing her fate with more tragedy.


It is surprising that Gellert Lyons says that the cause of this kind of madness was not considered 'humoral', as there is at least some evidence to suggest that during the early modern period love-melancholy in women was indeed caused by an imbalance of the humours as a result of celibacy.\footnote{See for example Galen's attitude to the effects of 'seminal retention' in women, described by Ilza Veith in \textit{Hysteria: The History of a Disease} (Chicago, 1965), p.37.} Though published much later than \textit{The Two Noble Kinsmen}, Nicholas Fontanus's \textit{The Woman's Doctour} (1652) gives some insight into early modern theories of women's health:

\begin{quote}
Wives are more healthfull then Widowes, or Virgins, because they are refreshed with the mans seed, and ejaculate their own, which being excluded \[i.e. \text{expelled}\], the cause of the evill is taken away. [...] \[M\]arried women by lying with their husbands, doe loosen the passages of the seed, and so the Courses \[i.e. \text{menstruation}\] come down more easily thorow them; Now in Virgins it falls out otherwise, because the bloud is stopped by the constipation and obstruction of the veines, and being stopped putrifies, from which purtrifaction grosse vapours doe arise, and from thence heavinesse of minde, and dulnesse of spirit, a benummednesse of the parts, timorousnesse, and an aptness to be frighted, with a sudden propensitie to fall into fits of the Mother \[i.e. \text{hysteria}]...\footnote{The passage from \textit{The Womans Doctour} runs as follows:}
\end{quote}

The basis of this theory comes from Hippocrates and Galen, the two most influential classical authorities in medicine throughout the medieval and the early modern periods. Fontanus goes on to emphasize that 'the use of \textit{Veneri} is exceeding wholsome, if the woman will confine her selfe to the Lawes of moderation, so that she feele no wearisomnesse in her body, after those pleasing conflicts', citing Galen as an authority.\footnote{The passage from \textit{The Womans Doctour} runs as follows:}

\[W\]e must conclude, that if they \[women\] be young, of a black complexion, and hairie, and are likewise somewhat discoloured in their cheeks, that they...
The passages later in Fontanus's book which relate specifically to 'melancholy proceeding from the Matrix' seem to be an almost tailor-made description of the symptoms of the Jailor's Daughter:

They [the sufferers] despaire, they doate, they talke idely, especially at that time when they expect their Courses; in these you may observe a depraved motion of the principal Members because the temperament of the braine is perverted by the cold and dry humour; moreover they are unwilling to dye [sic], they cannot sleep, they have no stomack to their meat, and being taken with a strange loathing of aliment, their bodies waste and consume. [...] Certainly there is not a more strange and wonderfull disease, for in several persons it bewrayeth a thousand, several, ridiculous, and antick behaviours.

The despairing, doting, idle talk and ridiculous 'antick behaviours' of the Jailor's Daughter make up a considerable part of the dramatic interest of the subplot. There are other more specific details linking the diagnosis of the Jailor's Daughter with Fontanus's interpretation of contemporary medical theory some decades later. The Doctor asks her father if she is worse at certain times of the month:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Doctor.} & \quad \text{Her distraction is more at some time of the moon than at other some, is it not?} \\
\text{Jailer.} & \quad \text{She is continually in a harmless distemper, sleeps little, altogether without appetite, save often drinking, dreaming of another world and a better; and what broken piece of matter soever she's about, the name have a spirit of salacity, and feele within themselves a frequent titillation, their seed being hot and prurient, doth irritate and inflame them to Venery, neither is this concupiscence allaid and qualified, but by the provoking the ejaculation of the seed, as Galen propounds the advice in the example of a widow, who was affected with intolerable symptômes, till the abundance of the spermatick humour was diminished by the hand of a skilfull Midwife, and a convenient ointment [...]}
\end{align*}
\]

Unfortunately, the Doctor in the Two Noble Kinsmen does not seem to have read this particular piece of Galen's advice. If he had, an alternative fate for the Jailor's Daughter's might have awaited her.

These ideas had been around throughout the medieval period. Mary Frances Wack notes that the medieval doctor Bona Fortuna 'speaks without the least hesitation or circumlocution, recommending masturbation by an obstetrix [midwife] and providing technical directions for it' in order to arouse a woman to orgasm to release the poisonous retained 'seed' causing hysteria. (*Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Vaticum and Its Commentaries* (Philadelphia, 1990), p.131.)
Palamon lards it, that she farces ev'ry business withal, fits it to every question. (IV. iii. 1-8)

By asking this question the Doctor is perhaps referring to the idea echoed by Fontanus: that women, presumably in an early modern version of the Pre-Menstrual Syndrome, are more prone to suffer from melancholy before their period is due.  

Her father seems to suggest that this is not the case, that 'She is continually in a harmless distemper [...]’ (IV. iii. 3), but other symptoms -- her lack of appetite, sleeplessness and inability to engage properly with reality all coincide with the typical symptoms of melancholy. That the Jailor’s Daughter often drinks may have been a reference to the idea that the melancholy humour was supposedly 'dry', causing the patient not only to drink often, but also perhaps to attract her to a watery grave.

The Jailor’s Daughter's attempted suicide at the 'great lake' described in Act IV, scene i bears interesting comparison with Ophelia's death, another woman suffering from similar symptoms in a very different play.

Fontanus goes on to say that this kind of melancholy is difficult to cure. First

40 On this subject Robert Burton remarks

Detention of emrods, or monthly issues [is a cause of melancholy] [...]
Skentius has two other instances of two melancholy and mad women, so caused from the suppression of their months. [...] 
Venus omitted produceth like effects. [...] And so doth Galen himself hold, that, if this natural seed be over-long kept (in some parties) it turns to poison.

41 Jacques Ferrand notes that melancholy madness in 'young girls on the point of marrying' caused

the women of Lyons [to throw] themselves into wells hoping in that way to quell their burning lust, just as the pest-ridden of Athens during the great plague, according to Thucydides and Lucretius, pitched themselves into rivers or sewers in search of relief from their burning fevers.
(Donald A. Beecher and Massimo Ciavolella (eds.), A Treatise on Lovesickness (1610, revised 1623) (Syracuse, 1990), p. 264). He also remarks that Sappho committed suicide by hurling 'herself from the Leucadian rock into the sea' as a result of love-sickness, and that among the symptoms is 'raging thirst' (p. 229).
he suggests special diets and plenty of rest, before reiterating the wholesomeness of 'venery':

Venery is wholsome for melancholy persons, provided that it be acted seasonably, and with moderation. Hippocrates placed the whole hope of the Cure in the evacuation of that excrement [the woman's putrefied 'seed'], commanding, as we have said above, such virgins to marry. (p.73)

The Doctor in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* also recommends food and rest, advising the Wooer to pretend that he is Palamon in order to coax her into accepting this therapy. In addition to inducing her to accept her cure, the deception humours her delusions, which accorded with contemporary thinking on how to treat hallucinations.42

Finally the Doctor asks the Wooer to have sex with her, something which her father understandably finds perturbing at first:

**Doctor.** If she entreat again, do any thing,  
Lie with her, if she ask you.  
**Jailer.** Ho there, doctor!  
**Doctor.** Yes, in the way of cure.  
**Jailer.** But first, by your leave,  
'I th' way of honesty.  
**Doctor.** That's but a niceness.  
Nev'r cast your child away for honesty.  
Cure her first this way; then if she will be honest,  
She has the path before her. (V.ii.17-23)

The Jailor, perhaps awed by the authority and learning of the Doctor thanks him

---

42 Lawrence Babb summarises contemporary thinking on the subject:

If a lover has become irrational and has developed a hallucination, the physician must remember the principles applicable in all cases of melancholy involving delusion. One must never contradict the patient but must humor him even to the point of agreeing with the most preposterous assertions. One must contrive a means of uprooting the patient's fanciful notions without betraying any skepticism concerning them. The shrewd physician often resorts to ingenious deceptions.

(*The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* (East Lansing, Michigan, 1951), p.140.)
politely for his advice, even though he thinks the Doctor 't th' wrong still' (V.ii.27).

Luckily the Wooer has no objections to this treatment, and the cure turns out to be a success. It seems clear that the Jailor's Daughter will rescue at least some of her 'honesty' through marriage to the Wooer which is mentioned near the end of the play.

The Jailor comes at the end of a long tradition of fathers in Shakespeare's plays, who show themselves to be 'fine fools' (as the Doctor calls all fathers, V.ii.28) by jealously guarding their daughters' chastity. By comparison with Prospero, who threatens Miranda and Ferdinand with a curse if they should have pre-marital sex, the Jailor seems remarkably complacent. Leonato, in Much Ado About Nothing (1598-9) also appears quite sanguine at the idea that Hero's future husband might have 'vanquish'd the resistance of her youth' (Much Ado, IV.i.46) before marriage, though he is too ready to 'cast [his] child away for honesty' when he suspects that she has slept with someone else.

The distinction between pre-marital sex between two betrothed and pre-marital sex between others is evidently an important one, and it is significant that Act II opens with a nuptial agreement between the Jailor and the Wooer in preparation for the latter's marriage to the former's daughter. Class may be another factor in the unusual treatment of the Jailor's Daughter. Lower-class characters in Shakespeare's plays often have a lack of moral awareness partly to allow for more opportunities for comedy, while the central (noble, often tragic) characters can get on with the main plot. It might be argued that the cure of the Jailor's Daughter is one of the comic aspects of the tragicomedy of the Two Noble Kinsmen. By comparison, the pre-marital sex between the nobles Mariana and Angelo, and Juliet and Claudio, leads to near tragic events in the tragicomedy of Measure for Measure. Perhaps this is too simplistic, however: there is an uneasiness about the resolutions of both plays.

Though the Doctor's suggested cure, with her father's reluctant acceptance of it and the Wooer's eagerness may be funny on stage, the madness of the Daughter has much of the pathos of other desperate love-struck heroines. And the pre-marital sex between the above named characters in Measure for Measure (along with the
imposed marriage of Lucio with a 'whore') are the very factors which give the play its rather uneasy 'happy' ending -- the conventional closure of a comedy with marriage.

These variables and qualifications regarding the value of a woman's virginity before marriage complicate the issue of how we should regard the strictures on female sexuality. Is it less important that the Daughter loses her virginity outside of marriage because of her class, because of who seduces her, because her illness requires this cure, or because protection of it turns out to be merely 'niceness' anyway? It is striking, to say the least, that pre-marital sex for a virgin in a play of this era is presented as therapeutic. Coitus as a cure for love-sickness was controversial even within the medical profession.43

The subplot reflects a similar debate about the value of chastity in the main plot. Emilia's unsuccessful prayer to Diana in Act V is the clearest instance of this. She first asks Diana to let the kinsman win 'that best loves me' (V.i.158), and only as a secondary consideration asks to remain a devotee of the Goddess (i.e. chaste). However, when Diana sends the sign of a rose tree with only one rose on it, Emily immediately interprets it as a sign that she will be able to remain chaste:

If well inspir'd, this battle shall confound
Both these brave knights, and I, a virgin flow'r,
Must grow alone, unpluck'd. (V.i.166-8)

The tone of the lines is difficult to gage, but it seems from this and her attitude all the way through the play that she is reluctant to choose a partner and would rather remain single, even if it means the death of the kinsmen. When the flower falls off

43 See Jacques Ferrand's *A Treatise on Lovesickness*, op. cit., chapter 33 'How to cure erotic melancholy and love madness', pp.333-335. Although he concedes that 'No physician would refuse to someone suffering from erotic mania or melancholy the enjoyment of the object of desire in marriage in accordance with both divine and human laws' he emphasises 'that fornication is never permitted to a Christian' and adds 'that such persons, rather than finding a cure in fornication, will only find themselves more inclined to lust and wantonness'. He condemns the advice of other doctors who recommend coitus as 'sacrilegious and misguided' (p.334).
and the tree descends accompanied by 'a sudden twang of instruments' (s.d.V.i.168) (undoubtedly a bad sign), Emily seems somewhat perturbed:

The flow'r is fall'n, the tree descends. O mistress,
Thou here dischargest me. I shall be gather'd,
I think so, but I know not thine own will:
Unclasp thy mystery. -- I hope she's pleas'd,
Her signs were gracious. (V.i.169-173)

It's unclear why Emily thinks that the signs are gracious: the fall of the flower and the descent of the tree seem ominous, and Emily doesn't exactly sound overjoyed at the thought of being 'gathered'. Of the three prayers which are offered to the gods during this scene, hers is the only one which isn't answered. Her chastity is ultimately antipathetic to her role in the play as a reward for whichever kinsman wins the struggle.

It could be argued that the fate of the Jailor's Daughter highlights a contradiction between medical and ethical theory about women's sexuality at the time, but Emily's fate makes the issue broader. The play voices an unease concerning the value of chastity generally. Though it keeps its attraction for men, the virginity of unmarried women is not necessarily seen as sacrosanct in the drama of the time. However, it is significant that this play does not celebrate marriage as an alternative. Marriage, with a terrible inevitability, takes place only after war, bitter personal conflict and death in the play. For the kinsmen as well as Emily, celibacy represents a hopeful and peaceful, if doomed, period of innocence before the onset of sexual awareness.

It seems odd that critics should be so convinced that Fletcher is entirely responsible for the subplot when (with one exception, to my knowledge) the bed-trick doesn't appear elsewhere in his work, but it does in Shakespeare's *All's Well*

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44 Theanor, in Fletcher, Field and Massinger's *The Queen of Corinth* (1617), believes he has raped Merione and Beliza, but it turns out that he has actually raped Merione twice, the latter having substituted herself for Beliza at the appropriate moment.
That Ends Well, Measure for Measure and A Midsummer Night's Dream. Peggy
Muñoz Simonds identifies precedents for the bed-trick in Genesis, Malory's *Le Morte
D'Arthur* and cites the example of Jupiter disguising himself as Alcmene's husband
from classical legend, but she doesn't give examples of the bed-trick in the
contemporary drama. Unfortunately for those critics who would rather promote a
more dignified version of the bard, Shakespeare seems to have been uniquely
attracted to this plot device.\(^45\)

However, whichever playwright thought of the idea, I would argue that it
anticipates in some ways Fletcher's later dramatic practice. Fletcher later uses
romances as sources (rather than medical texts), but many of his most interesting
plays continue to explore the fringes of acceptable gender and sexual behaviour. As I
hope the succeeding chapters will show, Fletcher's romance sources tend to be radical
in the way that they describe gender partly because they are so concerned with
exploring femininity. Like the medical traditions that Shakespeare and Fletcher draw
on in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, though rarely feminist, these texts are nevertheless

45 For example, Alfred Harbage writes '[t]he jailor's daughter is disrespectfully used
only while under Fletcher's manipulation' (*Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions*
(Indiana, 1952), p.51). F.E.Halliday is of the same opinion:

> Fletcher is [...] responsible for the ridiculous and revolting sub-plot of the
jailer's distracted daughter, a theme and a treatment that are as characteristic
of him as they are foreign to Shakespeare.


According to legend, Shakespeare was not averse to performing his own
versions of the bed-trick:

> Upon a time when Burbage played Richard III, there was a citizen grew so far
in liking with him that before she went from the play she appointed him to
come that night unto her by the name of Richard the Third. Shakespeare
overhearing their conclusion went before, was entertained, and at his game ere
Burbage came. Then message being brought that Richard the Third was at the
door, Shakespeare caused return to be made that William the Conqueror was
before Richard the Third.

(From John Manningham's *Diary*, cited in James Sutherland (ed.), *The Oxford Book
of Literary Anecdotes* (Oxford, 1975, repr.1976), p.13.) See also the equally
centrally concerned with women, and thus produce an exciting shift away from the homosocial cultural hegemony. One of the consequences of Fletcher's use of romance sources was to 'feminise' to some extent the masculine culture of the theatre. The Jailor's Daughter is a discomforting presence in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*: though she seems on many levels the victim of homosocial relations, she also throws some of the assumptions of patriarchy into question.
2. 'Feminine Recreates': Pastoral Tragicomedy

Women and Jacobean Pastoral Tragicomedy

The first play for performance written by a woman was a pastoral tragicomedy: Lady Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory*.¹ The first perspective scenery in England was prepared for a performance of a pastoral tragicomedy by Samuel Daniel to be presented to Queen Anne at Oxford in 1605: *The Queenes Arcadia*.² Inigo Jones, a virtually unknown designer and budding architect, fresh from travels abroad, probably first came to the notice of the court by designing this scenery.

These are important landmarks for our culture. One gives an indication that conditions for more widespread female authorship were beginning to be established. Women had already written autobiographies, translations, pious treatises and prayers, 

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¹ No records of a performance of *Love's Victory* have been found, however. Surviving plays written by women before Wroth are: Joanna Lumley's *Iphigenia at Aulis* (c. 1540, a manuscript, partial translation of Erasmus's Latin version of the play); Mary Sidney's *Antonius* (published in 1592), a verse translation of Garnier's *Marc Antonie*; and Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedie of Mariam, The Faire Queene of Jewry* (published 1613). All of these are closet-dramas, written to be read rather than performed.


Orrell identifies a manuscript plan of a theatre as the design for the hall at Christ Church, Oxford, for James I's 1605 progress. He does not, however, link the new kind of stage and hall design with Daniel's pastoral. He seems to think of the pastoral as somewhat of an afterthought in the programme:

On the last day Daniel's *Arcadia Reformed* [later published as *The Queenes Arcadia*] was played in English as a treat for the Queen and Prince Henry, and although it stood apart from the main programme it was by far the best liked. (p. 133)

Orrell does not take account of the probability that this pastoral was conceived as, and proved to be, the climax of the entertainments put on for the royal guests. It is likely that the perspective scenery was designed in emulation of continental productions of pastoral tragicomedies.
defenses of women, books giving mothers' advice, poetry and closet-drama. Wroth herself had written a long prose romance, *The Countesse of Montgomeries Urania*, published in 1621, and an unpublished continuation, *The Second Part of the Countesse of Montgomerys Urania*. However, she showed an unprecedented degree of confidence in the female authorial voice by writing, for the first time, a play intended for performance.

Jones's perspective scenery, on the other hand, marks the beginning of renewed interest in European (particularly Italian) culture which was to have an increasingly important effect on the Stuart court until the Civil War. After coming to the notice of the Queen in 1605, Jones was commissioned to design court masques and became Surveyor of the Works to the Prince of Wales in 1610 and Surveyor of the King's Works in 1613. Perhaps his most significant achievement was his design for the first neoclassical buildings in England: the Banqueting House at Whitehall and the Queen's House at Greenwich.

Pastoral tragicomedy is an incarnation of pastoral romance, and until fairly recently both have been out of favour with most literary critics, who have been unwilling to recognise the importance of their legacy. It is no coincidence that the opportunity for the two landmarks of Wroth's play and Jones's perspective set design in English culture occurred at more or less the same time as pastoral tragicomedy arrived in this country. Pastoral tragicomedy and pastoral romance were two

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3 See the bibliography of English Women Writers (1500-1640) listed by Elaine Beilin in Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (eds.), *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon* (Amherst, 1990), pp.347 - 360.

4 See John Harris and Gordon Higgott, *Inigo Jones: Complete Architectural Drawings* (London, 1989) for a discussion of how Jones managed to attract such exclusive treatment and patronage: he was only 30 when James came to the throne. Harris suggests that he had homosexual relations with the Earls of Essex and Southampton (p.13). However, surely Jones's immense talents as an architect and designer, and his innovative use of continental traditions and technology, are sufficient explanation.
manifestations of new aesthetic values which gave Jones and Wroth the confidence to experiment.

The meanings and possibilities of pastoral tragicomedy have recently been reassessed partly as a result of interest in Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* (1608-9). Two collections of essays in particular have engaged with and contextualised Fletcher's intervention into the genre, as well as providing other discussions of tragicomedy. These are *Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics* (New York, 1987), edited by Nancy Klein Maguire, and *The Politics of Tragicomedy: Shakespeare and After* (London, 1992), edited by Gordon McMullan and Jonathan Hope. However, neither of these collections discusses Wroth and the importance of pastoral tragicomedy for women, nor the specific aristocratic and university context of pastoral tragicomedy.

The prefatory material which accompanies Samuel Daniel's two pastoral tragicomedies and Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* reveals much about the poets' aesthetic aims and intended audience. Together with contemporary accounts of productions of Daniel's pastorals, it will provide the context for my discussion of gender and sexuality in Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* and Wroth's *Love's Victory*.

During the reign of Elizabeth, the language and images of pastoral were often used to promote the cult of the Virgin Queen. Louis Montrose discusses the political use of pastoral in Elizabeth's reign, developing William Empson's point that pastoral's 'characteristic effect is "to imply a beautiful relation between rich and poor"':

Royal pastoral was developed into a remarkably flexible instrument for the mediation of power relations between Queen and subjects. The pastoralization of the Elizabethan body politic put relationships of power into relationships of love: between the royal shepherdess and her flock, and between the Queen of shepherds and the pastors who guarded her flock [...]. Pastoral forms and performances fostered the
illusion that the Queen was approachable and knowable, lovable and loving, to lords and peasants, courtiers and citizens alike.  

Katherine Duncan-Jones remarks wryly that Elizabeth 'was rarely able to move about a park for long without being besieged by importunate nymphs, fairies, pages, shepherds, Wild Men or woodland deities.'  

James made an attempt to continue the theme of pastoralism in royal propaganda immediately he ascended the English throne, as demonstrated by his speech to open parliament in 1603:

I am the Husband, and all the whole Isle is my lawful Wife; I am the Head, and it is my Body; I am the Shepherd, and it is my Flocke.

Montrose comments on these lines that Elizabeth's 'pastoral strategies were usually subtler'.  

Though pastoralism may not have been as pervasive and distinctive as it had been under Elizabeth, there were many instances of it in Jacobean royal entertainments. It has been suggested that the first experience James and Anne had of English theatre after their coronations, for example, was a revival of Shakespeare's most pastoral play *As You Like It* (1599): the Earl of Pembroke is supposed to have commissioned the Lord Chamberlain's Men to travel to his seat at Wilton to give this performance for the King and Queen. It may have been James's approbation of this play which inspired him to offer his patronage, enabling them to rename themselves the King's Men.  

Versions of Jacobean pastoral soon replaced the use of Elizabethan pastoral to celebrate royalty.

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9 See Ethel Carleton Williams, *Anne of Denmark: Wife of James VI of Scotland: James I of England* (London, 1970), p.88. I am grateful to Michael Dobson for pointing out the fact that there is no firm evidence for this revival of the play: speculation about it may be merely literary myth.
A year after James's address to parliament, Jonson wrote a pastoral entertainment for James and Anne ("The Penates' at Highgate, performed on Mayday morning, 1604). David Bergeron discusses some other instances of the use of pastoral in Jacobean royal entertainments in his essay 'Urban Pastoralism in English Civic Pageants'.

Jonson's masque *Pan's Anniversary*, is a later example, which was performed on 19th June 1620 at Greenwich, and figured James in the pastoral role of Pan. Stephen Orgel argues that in the court masques of James I's reign pastoral 'becomes an assertion of royal power'. Orgel considers pastoral to be one of the defining elements of Jacobean (and Caroline) masque, although the uses to which it was put changed over the course of the reigns of the early Stuarts.

In *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) George Puttenham describes pastoral as an appropriate vehicle for dissent:

> [Poets devised pastoral] not of purpose to counterfeit or represent the rustical manner of loves and communication: but under the veile of homely persons, and in rude speeches to insinuate and glaunce at greater matters and such as perchance had not bene safe to have been disclosed in any other sort.

It has been argued that a group of 'Spenserian' poets used pastoral to criticise the Jacobean government, not only because it was a relatively safe way to 'insinuate and glaunce at greater matters', but also because pastoral was associated with a nostalgic version of the old Elizabethan values. This use of pastoral was very different from

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10 *The Elizabethan Theatre* 8 (1982), 129-143.


the propaganda of Jacobean court masques and royal entertainments: the abstract world of pastoral (in common with romance in general) could easily be appropriated to serve many different kinds of politics.

Pastoral offered opportunities to explore the politics of gender and sexuality in a literary context. It was, perhaps, the feminist possibilities of pastoral which made it an attractive way of paying compliments to the queen. The art dedicated to the early Stuart queens had a different political emphasis and function from that inspired by their husbands. Even though pastoral may not have been such an unequivocal tool of royal propaganda as it had been under Elizabeth, it did play an important part in the art patronised by Anne and later by Henrietta Maria.

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14 For a discussion of how Anne's court art differed from James's, see Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, Writing Women in Jacobean England (Cambridge, 1993), especially the first section of chapter 1, 'Enacting Opposition: Queen Anne and the Subversions of Masquing'. For a discussion of how Henrietta Maria used her court art to influence Charles see Erica Veevers Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments (Cambridge, 1989).

15 Anthony à Wood's account of George Ferebe's pastoral entertainment for Queen Anne in 1613 is very reminiscent of those put on for Elizabeth:

On the eleventh of June, the Queen, in her return from Bath, did intend to pass over the downes at Wensdyke within the parish of Bishop's Cannings; of which Ferebe [the local vicar] having timely notice, he composed a song of four parts, and instructed his scholars to sing it very perfectly, as also to play a lesson or two (which he had composed) on their wind instruments. He dressed himself in the habit of an old Bard, and caused his scholars, whom he had instructed, to be clothed in Shepherds' weeds. The Queen having received notice of these people, she with her retinue made a stand at Wensdyke; whereupon these musicians, drawing up to her, played a most admirable Lesson of four parts with double voices, the beginning of which was this:

'Shine, O thou sacred Shepherds' Star,
On silly shepherd swaines, &c.'

Which being well performed also, the Bard concluded with an Epilogue, to the great liking and content of the Queen and her Company.
Lady Politic Would-be in Jonson's *Volpone* (1605) carries a copy of Guarini's *Il pastor fido* (1589) around with her, among other works. She comments that English writers '[w]ill deign to steale out of this author':

_He has so moderne and facile a veine,_
_Fitting the time, and catching the court-eare._

Lady Politic testifies to the popularity of Guarini and those playwrights who emulated him (including Jonson) among female aristocrats throughout the early Stuart period. The emphasis in English pastoral tragicomedy was often on celebrating aristocratic

Afterwards he was sworn Chaplain to his Majesty, and was ever much valued for his ingenuity.


Another example of a pastoral entertainment for Queen Anne was Campion's 'Caversham Entertainment' performed 27th - 28th April 1613 (printed in 1613 with Campion's *Lord's Masque*).

For a discussion of Henrietta Maria's use of pastoral see Sophie Tomlinson, "She that plays the King": Henrietta Maria and the threat of the actress in Caroline culture" in McMullan and Hope, pp.189-207.


17 Jonson left unfinished a pastoral tragicomedy called *The Sad Shepherd* when he died in 1637, and also wrote a pastoral for private aristocratic performance, called *The May Lord* -- see below p.113. In addition, William Drummond of Hawthornden reports that Jonson intended to write a 'fisher or Pastorall play & sett the stage of it in the Lowmond Lake' (Herford and Simpson 1, p.143). It is not known whether this work was ever written.

By putting praise of Guarini and his imitators into Lady Politic's mouth, Jonson implies a criticism which was voiced openly to William Drummond of Hawthornden. According to Drummond, Jonson thought 'that Guarini in his Pastor Fido keept not decorum in making shepherds speek as well as himself could.' (Herford and Simpson 1, p.134. See also p.149, ll.611-2 for a repetition of the same view.) How his views here squared with his preparation of a pastoral in which aristocrats seem to have taken parts as shepherds is impossible to know (since *The May Lord* is lost). Perhaps the fact that the play is lost suggests that he was unwilling to allow himself to be criticised for the same lack of decorum as Guarini supposedly shows by allowing it to be published -- the aristocrats involved may have felt the same way.
femininity, though the plays are more complex and varied in their political meanings than this would imply. In particular, *The Faithful Shepherdess* stands out as having a different political emphasis, no doubt partly because it was written for a public audience. Indeed some critics see it as an irony that this play first enjoyed success in performance when Henrietta Maria's patronage and involvement in pastoral tragicomedy stimulated a revival of it in 1634.\(^{19}\)

The suitability of pastoral tragicomedy for female participation was established in England long before Henrietta Maria and her ladies donned their elaborate costumes and false beards to perform in single-sex productions in Charles I's reign.\(^{20}\)

\(^{18}\) Abraham Fraunce's pastorals written in honour of Wroth's aunt Mary Sidney in the 1590s are the best examples of this. These are *The Countess of Pembroke's Ivychurch* (1591), *The Second Part of the Countess of Pembroke's Ivychurch* (1591) and *The Third Part of the Countess of Pembroke's Ivychurch* (1592). The first of these is a rewritten version of Tasso's *Aminta*. The Countess is represented in the huntress Pembrokiana who presides over the pastoral characters taken from Tasso's play. The plays are discussed by Mary Ellen Lamb in *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (Madison, 1990), chapter 1. Michael Brennan mentions the other 'pastoral poets who invested [Mary Sidney] with the traditional perfection and purity of such country maidens as Amaryllis (Dyer), Cinthia (Baxter), Clorinda (Spenser) and Pandora (Drayton).'


\(^{20}\) The Tuscan Resident describes Henrietta Maria's production of a French pastoral tragicomedy, *Artenice*, in a despatch to the Grand Duke of Florence, on February 24th, 1626:

On the day of carnival, for which Tuesday was set aside, she acted in a beautiful pastoral of her own composition, assisted by twelve of her ladies whom she had trained since Christmas. The pastoral succeeded admirably; not only in the decorations and changes of scenery, but also in the acting and recitation of the ladies -- Her Majesty surpassing all the others. The performance was conducted as privately as possible, inasmuch as it was an unusual thing in this country to see the Queen upon the stage; the audience consequently was limited to a few of the nobility, expressly invited, no others being admitted.
There is some evidence for private performances of pastoral tragicomedies in which aristocratic women acted during the Jacobean period. William Drummond of Hawthornden describes such a production (now lost) by Ben Jonson:

[... ] he beth a Pastorall intitled the May Lord, his own name is Alkin Ethra the Countess of Bedfoords Mogibell overberry, the old Countesse of Suffolk ane enchantress other names are given to somersets lady, Pemb<r>ook the Countess of Rutland, Lady Wroth.  

These unpublished plays, (it seems unlikely that Wroth's and Jonson's were the only examples), were probably the immediate context and inspiration for Wroth's work.

Whereas a central concern of Elizabethan pastoral as a whole may have been 'to imply a beautiful relation between rich and poor' (using Empson's words) this was not the case for Jacobean pastoral tragicomedy. In this respect, The Winter's Tale (1610-11) -- for example -- owes more to Elizabethan and vernacular modes of pastoral than to Italianate pastoral tragicomedy. The pastoral section of the second half of the play represents both the pleasure which the idealised life-style of the lower-

This extract indicates that the ambassador was under the impression that Henrietta Maria had written the pastoral herself (in fact it had been written by the French poet and playwright Racan). John Chamberlain wrote a brief and less adulatory account of the performance to Dudley Carleton on 7th March:

On Shrovetuysday the quene and her women had a maske or pastorall play at Somerset House, wherin herself acted a part, and some of the rest were disguised like men with beards.


Acting, especially by aristocratic women, was not thought acceptable at any time before the Civil War by some groups of people. William Prynne, for example, wrote Histriomastix (1633) defaming the acting profession in general, and attacking actresses in particular, referring to them as 'notorious whores' in the index. He was imprisoned and mutilated for what was considered -- and probably was -- an attack on Henrietta Maria.

class characters gives to their disguised royal guests, and the tensions between rich
and poor. The harmony ends when Polixenes makes explicit the class divisions which
are already implicit in the way the characters relate to one another. Furiously angry,
he tells his son

Mark your divorce, young sir,
Whom son I dare not call. Thou art too base
To be acknowledged. Thou, a sceptre's heir,
That thus affects a sheep-hook! (IV.iv.417-420)

For Elizabeth, Henrietta Maria, or even Anne, a sheep-hook could be a suitable
metaphor for a sceptre, but not for Polixenes: he has destroyed the metaphor of the
courtliness of pastoral by insisting on the strict maintenance of class distinctions.

Pastoral tragicomedy depended on maintaining the illusion that the shepherds
were courtly and not to be compared with genuine rustics. The aristocratic shepherds
of Jacobean pastoral tragicomedy live in a golden age which allows them to exhibit
their literary sophistication, and their elitist politics. Again, Fletcher's The Faithful
Shepherdess is atypical: though his shepherds are not rustics, neither are they
aristocrats.

Samuel Daniel expresses much about the nature and purpose of Jacobean
pastoral tragicomedy in the following words spoken by Hymen in the prologue to
Hymens Triumph, a pastoral tragicomedy commissioned by Queen Anne in 1614 to

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22 See Jane Tylus's essay 'Colonizing Peasants: The Rape of the Sabines and
Renaissance Pastoral', Renaissance Drama 23 (1992), 113-138 for a discussion of
how class is represented in Italian pastoral tragicomedies. Guarini, who saw pastoral
tragicomedy as a way of 'saving' drama from the violence and lasciviousness of its
origins' (p.132), thought of the peasants on his estate in northern Italy as 'human
beasts', according to a letter written while he was composing Il pastor fido (p.131).
Tylus argues that Italian pastoral tragicomedies should be seen as part of the
emergence of 'the new bourgeois subject' (p.132), rather than reflecting aristocratic
values. It may have been this aspect of Guarini's work which inspired Fletcher to write
his play.

23 E.K. Chambers makes the intriguing remark that women acted in Hymens Triumph
(The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), vol.1, p.371). However, he doesn't give any
evidence for this, and in vol.3, p.277 he comments that 'There is nothing to show who
celebrate the wedding of Lord Roxburgh and Jane Drummond (one of her principal
ladies-in-waiting, who had been a governess to the royal children):

Here, shall I bring you two the most entire
And constant lovers that were ever seen,
From out the greatest sufferings of any
That fortune could inflict, to their full joy:
Wherein no wild, no rude, no antique sport,
But tender passions, motions soft, and grave,
The still spectators must expect to have.
For, these are only Cynthia's recreatives
Made unto Phoebus, and are feminine;
And therefore must be gentle like to her,
Whose sweet affections mildly moove and stirre.\(^{24}\)

A distinguishing feature of pastoral tragicomedy which Daniel mentions in the
above passage is that the 'greatest sufferings' of the central characters are merely to
inspire 'tender passions, motions soft, and grave' in the 'still spectators'. John
Fletcher, in his address 'To the Reader' in the published edition of *The Faithful
Shepherdess*, also suggests that the audience of tragicomedy is not supposed to feel
extreme emotions:

A tragie-comedie is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in
respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it a tragedie, yet
brings some neere it, which is enough to make it no comedie [...] (II.20-
23)

It is the forbearance from extremes which Daniel's Hymen regards as 'feminine'.

'Mirth and killing' are avoided in favour of a gentler drama; as the soft moonlight of

\(^{24}\) Rev. Alexander B. Grosart (ed.), *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of
Samuel Daniel*, (London, 1885), vol. 3, II.11-12. All quotations from Daniel's work
are taken from this edition.
Cynthia is less harsh than the sunlight of Phoebus. Daniel adopts an almost apologetic tone. The 'still spectators' ought not to expect anything too wild and exciting from this play. Judging from the accounts of contemporary audiences finding plays of this genre boring and soporific (including this one), Daniel's attempt to forewarn the audience is understandable.

John Chamberlain, who witnessed this production of *Hymens Triumph*, gave the following account of it to Sir Dudley Carleton:

This day se'ennight the Lord Roxburgh married Mrs. Jane Drummond at Somerset House, or Queen's Court, as it must now be called. The King tarried there till Saturday after dinner. The Entertainment was great, and cost the Queen, they say, above £3000. The Pastoral by Samuel Daniel was solemn and dull; but perhaps better to be read than represented.  

(Nichols 2, p.754)

As host, the Queen had financial responsibility for the entertainment. Why it cost quite so much money is not clear, though it is tempting to think that some of it would have been used on elaborate scenery, machines, lights and costumes in emulation of court productions of pastoral tragicomedies on the continent. If this was the case it did nothing to enliven the experience for Chamberlain.

Prince Charles and Frederick the Elector Palatine complained of the 'immoderate length and stupidity' of two plays presented to them at Cambridge a couple of years earlier in 1613. These were a Latin pastoral by Samuel Brooke and a Latin comedy. One of the plays lasted between seven and eight hours. The other started at seven in the evening and finished at one in the morning. Though Prince Charles (aged twelve at the time) managed to stay awake, the Elector is reported to have slept most of the way through.

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25 No women are recorded as having attended these performances, possibly because they were in Latin. See Alan Nelson's 'Women in the Audience of Cambridge Plays' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990), pp.333-4.

In his preface to *The Faithful Shepherdess*, Fletcher tells us that the Blackfriars audience of his play 'began to be angry' because they missed 'whitsun-ales, creame, wassel, and morris-dances' (Il.7-8). He evidently felt the audience would have appreciated the play more in performance had they known about the conventions of the genre. Kathleen McLuskie argues that Fletcher's preface and the accompanying poems by Field, Beaumont, Jonson and Chapman were attempting to contribute 'to the definition and construction of a new audience for their plays.' In the prologue to *Hymens Triumph*, Daniel, too, was evidently attempting to foster the right state of mind, thus forestalling criticism which might come from an unprepared audience. By characterising the play as 'feminine' Daniel is making a special appeal to women, particularly the Queen. Cynthia clearly represents Anne, who is presenting the entertainments to James/Phoebus.

Daniel's apologetic tone disguises his implicit criticism of an audience unable to enjoy this kind of drama, reminiscent of Fletcher's attitude in the preface to *The Faithful Shepherdess*. These criticisms are not solely aimed at the audience's ignorance of what to expect. In his prefatory poem defending Fletcher's play Ben Jonson suggests that its lack of success was due to its failure to match the urban cynicism of its audience, whom he describes as

\[
\text{[...]} \text{ Compos'd of Gamester, Captaine, Knight, Knight's man,}
\text{Lady, or Pusil [prostitute], that weares maske, or fan,}
\text{Velvet, or Taffata cap, rank'd in the darke}
\text{With the shops Foreman, or some such brave sparke,}
\text{That may judge for his six-pence [...] (Il.3-6)}
\]

Jonson, following up his opening metaphor of the 'many-headed Bench' sitting in judgement on Fletcher's play, goes on to write that he was glad Fletcher's 'Innocence
was [his] Guilt'. Not only was the audience uneducated, it was morally lax. For Jonson, the 'Lady, or Pusi* (as if the two were interchangeable) is unable to enjoy such a play because she is nestled in the dark next to the 'shops Foreman'. Field also contrasts the play's 'innocent verse' with the 'vice' of the times in his prefatory poem (1.6). One of the ways in which an audience for pastoral tragicomedy could be created was by suggesting that only the 'innocent' would be able to appreciate it. This strategy would have made the genre especially appealing for women, for whom any indications that they were correctly situated within the strict boundaries of socially prescribed behaviour were important.

The innovation of Inigo Jones's stage designs took place nine years earlier than Hymens Triumph, at the production of Daniel's first pastoral tragicomedy, The Queenes Arcadia. In the dedication to the Queen in the published edition, Daniel remarks on the 'innocent, and plaine simplicity' of pastoral as being particularly appropriate -- not for women -- but for scholars and divines at Oxford University:

And though it be in th'humblest ranke of words,
And in the lowest region of our speach,
Yet is it in that kinde, as best accords
With rurall passions; which use not to reach
Beyond the groves and woods, where they were bred:
And best become a clastraall exercise,
Where men shut out retyr'd, and sequestred
From publicke fashion, seeme to sympathize
With innocent, and plaine simplicity:
And living here under the awful hand
Of discipline, and strict observancy,
Learn but our weaknesses to understand [...](Il.10-20)

The fact that the majority of the recorded Jacobean pastoral tragicomedies were performed at the two universities would seem to suggest that they were suited to the tastes of the educationally elite. However, Daniel does not suggest that pastoral is suited to scholars because it is intellectually demanding. In fact the opposite is the case -- the words are humble, the speech is low and the passions are rural.
McMullan and Hope read Fletcher's preface to The Faithful Shepherdess as claiming that 'the initial failure of the play was due to its being too intellectual for its first audience' (p.3).\textsuperscript{28} My reading of the preface is that Fletcher criticises his audience for ignorance of the genre, not for lack of intellect. Beaumont is alone among the writers of the prefatory material in arguing that the play was too intellectual. 'Scarce two', he says, of the thousand in the audience of the Blackfriars 'can understand the lawes/ Which they should judge by' (ll.15-16). However, in the remainder of his poem he implies that this audience is incapable of understanding any play — not just pastoral tragicomedy. Jonson's and Chapman's prefatory verses and Fletcher's dedicatory verse to Sir Walter Aston combine criticism of the hostile audience for being uneducated with criticism for its being lower class, giving the impression that class is just as important as education for an understanding of the play. Fletcher's preface itself is more concerned with the lower class rather than the lower intellectual expectations of the audience. As has already been mentioned, he reports that his audience would have been happy had they been given 'whitsun ales, creame, wassel and morris-dances', which were all associated with rural customs of the day.

In many cases, those who held a high class position were also the best educated, but the two ought not to be confused. Women of high social status did not necessarily receive good educations, and Jonson, who is so snobbish in his prefatory poem, started his career as a bricklayer and only received a university degree in 1619 at the advanced age of 47, after he had written some of his cleverest plays and masques. Shakespeare's Hamlet (1600-1) and King Lear (1605), written for the public theatre, are much more intellectually challenging than any of the pastoral

\textsuperscript{28} Sandra Clark also says that "To the Reader" assumes that the play was too clever for its audience, and in this [Fletcher] seems to have been correct'. The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: Sexual Themes and Dramatic Representation (Hemel Hempstead, 1994), p.28.
tragicomedies I have come across. Pastoral tragicomedy is only peculiarly demanding in that it requires a receptive audience familiar with continental pastoral traditions.

Returning to Daniel's dedication which prefaces *The Queenes Arcadia*, he suggests that it is the 'innocent, and plaine simplicity' of pastoral which should appeal to scholars, rather than any intellectual challenge. The scholars should be sympathetic to pastoral because they are 'shut out retyr'd, and sequestred / From publicke fashion' like shepherds. He creates an ideal of scholarly life, designed to encourage royal patronage of the University, rather than describing the reality of student life. Special rules had to be introduced for the duration of James I's visit in 1605 to Oxford University when this play was performed, to ensure that student rowdiness would be kept to a minimum and to give the impression of a perfectly ordered society.29

Daniel's vision of a sequestered and rule-bound life-style for scholars in his dedication to *The Queenes Arcadia* reflected the reality of life for most women much more than for most scholars at the time. The lives of women were sequestered, and if they valued their reputation and femininity, their lives were also extremely rule bound.

The sequestered and disciplined life of the scholars also suggests a religious life. The pious associations of pastoral had become traditional by the reign of James I. Christ was the Good Shepherd, and pastoral life was supposedly contemplative and leisured without being idle: it was thus an appropriate metaphor for the lives of gentlemen, who also had a paternalistic role to play in society and wished their comparative leisure to appear justified.30 This applied to gentlewomen too, and indeed the humility of the shepherds and shepherdesses may have had an added appeal. If aristocratic women were going to watch, commission, write and perform in

29 See Nichols 2, pp.530-532. Among other items it was decreed that 'the Schollers which cannot be admitted to see the Playes, do not make any outcries or indecent noise about the hall, stayres, or within the quadrangle of Christ Church, upon pain of present imprisonment, and other punishment, according to the discretion of the Vice-chancellor and Proctors' (p.532).

plays which were essentially about themselves then it may have seemed more acceptable to be represented in the guise of pious shepherdesses. Daniel emphasises the supposed humility of the scholars at Oxford, who, in their monastic/pastoral style of life, were supposed -- like women -- to 'learn but [their] weaknesses to understand'.

Another link between the cloistered lives of scholars and aristocratic women (which Daniel does not mention, but which has more basis in reality) is that both groups were concerned with the latest European cultural trends, because both had responsibility for organising royal entertainments. During James I's visit to Oxford, the University was, in a sense, showing Queen Anne and her ladies what it could do.

It isn't often emphasised that the staging of pastoral tragicomedies at European courts was often as daring as the productions of English court masques. It seems very likely that the plays by Samuel Daniel at Oxford in 1605 and Somerset House in 1615 may have been attempts to put on magnificent productions modelled on those performed at courts on the continent. Techniques of artificial perspective on stage had been developing on the continent throughout the sixteenth century, but perspective scenery in England had to wait for the happy combination of Inigo Jones and pastoral tragicomedy.

In his account of the progress the Oxford Fellow Philip Stringer relates that the University paid Jones a hefty fee, but was not altogether pleased with the results:

For the better contriving and finishing of the stages, seats, and scaffolds in St.Marie's and Christ Church, they entertained two of his Majestie's Master Carpenters, and they had the advice of the Comptroller of his Works. They also hired one Mr.Jones, a great Traveller, who undertooke to further them much, and furnish them

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31 Andrew Gurr in *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge, 1989 -- first published 1987), for example, seems to take it for granted that pastoral tragicomedy was not usually interesting as a spectacle in his remarks on how *The Faithful Shepherdess* would only have appealed to an intelligent 'audience', rather than to visually hungry 'spectators'. He discusses the two types of audience on pp.85-97, and mentions *The Faithful Shepherdess* specifically on pp.94-95.
with rare devices, but performed very little, to that which was expected. He had for his pains, as I heard it constantly reported, £50.

(Nichols 1, p.558)

This was the kind of money Jones was later to obtain for designing a masque, and it is likely that the University expected something very spectacular for this kind of fee: coloured lights, moving machines, beautifully designed costumes and painted scenery.

Exactly how English productions of pastoral tragicomedies compared with European versions is difficult to ascertain: the University's disappointment may have been partly the result of ignorance of what to expect. Courtiers sent to view the arrangements for the progress before the arrival of the King 'utterly disliked the stage at Christ Church' mostly because the perspective scenery meant that the King was placed in the best position to view it, rather than -- as was customary -- in the best place for the King himself to be viewed by the rest of the audience. The 'chair of Estate' was eventually moved further from the stage, which unfortunately meant that the King was unable to hear some of the actors' speeches very well.32

Moreover, perhaps the English were unable or unwilling to provide all the trappings of a continental court production. Italian-style intermezzi,33 which were


33 Eugene Waith writes that in Italy 'the intermezzi, important precedents for the masque, often swamped the plays with which they were performed', and he goes on to describe the themes of the intermezzi in a production of Tasso's Aminta in Parma in 1628 (the pastoral was first performed at the court of Ferrara in 1573):

'[The intermezzi] presented Bradamante and Ruggiero, Dido and Aeneas, a dispute between the Olympians over love and chastity, the story of the Argonauts, and a joust between the gods led by Pluto and Jupiter respectively. A high point was the moment when Jupiter's knights, mounted on their horses, were lowered in a machine to the stage -- equi et equites ex machina.'


Roy Strong describes other Italian intermezzi, including those which influenced Jones's designs for Stuart masque in Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650 (Woodbridge, 1984, repr. 1995), pp.133-141, p.151 and p.158.
often the most visually exciting parts of a production of a pastoral tragicomedy at courts on the continent are not mentioned in accounts of English Jacobean pastoral tragicomedies. One would have thought that if *intermezzi* had been a feature of English performances, some accounts would have survived, but with existing information it is impossible to know how the plays would have been staged. In his poem for *The Faithful Shepherdess* Beaumont writes only of the boy who dances 'Betwecne the actes' (as was conventional at performances of plays): if the Blackfriars audience was expecting much more between the acts, then it is not so surprising that this was one reason for their 'censure [of] the whole play' (ll.24-25). When the play was revived in 1633 the scenery was designed by Inigo Jones and the costumes were donated by Henrietta Maria from her own pastoral. The appeal of at least one of three Restoration revivals of the play that Pepys saw was, according to him, based on the scenery more than the content of the play itself.

Wroth's text comes closest to providing *intermezzi* in Jacobean pastoral tragicomedy, with the appearance of Venus and Cupid between the acts and in the final act of *Love's Victory*. Daniel's *Hymens Triumph* also has a masque-like prologue. In one letter Chamberlain mentions that the entertainment at the Roxburgh

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35 Pepys saw the play five times in all. On 13th June 1663 he wrote that he went to the Royal Theatre:

> Here we saw *The Faithfull Shepherdess*, a most simple thing and yet much thronged after and often shown; but it is only for the Scene's sake, which is very fine indeed, and worth seeing. (Robert Latham and William Matthews (eds.), *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (London, 1970-1983), vol.4, p.182.)

After seeing this production he vowed not to see any more plays for the next six months, though his reason is not revealed. On 12th October 1668 he writes that he went to see *The Faithful Shepherdess* twice, principally to hear a French eunuch sing (Latham and Matthews 9, p.326). Two days later he records that he went to see the same production a third time, and highly commends the acting and singing of the eunuch (Latham and Matthews 9, p.329). On 26th February 1669 he saw the play again, remarking on the emptiness of the theatre (Latham and Matthews 9, p.459).
wedding consisted of 'shews and devises, specially a Pastoral [i.e. Hymens Triumph] that shall be represented in a little square court' (Nichols 2, p.748). He doesn't specify whether the 'shews and devises' were intermezzi for this production or separate performances. The 'little square court' suggests that Hymens Triumph was performed outside, an unusual decision considering it was the beginning of February. It is possible that fireworks or some other special lighting effects were used in the 'shews and devises' which accompanied the play: intermezzi were sometimes held in Italian palace courtyards for similar reasons.\(^{36}\)

If intermezzi were a feature of English pastoral tragicomedy early in the century, they were not regarded as an important part of the plays. The difference between the English and continental attitudes can be illustrated by comparing Chamberlain's comment that Daniel's Hymens Triumph was 'perhaps better to be read than represented' with a comment by the French writer Nicolas de Montreux, who wrote that the satisfaction of seeing his pastoral tragicomedy performed was as great as the tediousness of reading it.\(^{37}\) The likelihood is that Chamberlain had seen a very lavish and costly production, but he was still more interested in the play itself.

\(^{36}\) John Orrell discusses a temporary theatre put up by Inigo Jones in the 'Paved Court' at Somerset House in the winter of 1632/3 ('The Paved Court Theatre at Somerset House' The British Library Journal 3 (1977), 13-19). It is possible that a similar structure was erected for Hymens Triumph, and that the performance was held indoors despite Chamberlain's wording.

\(^{37}\) See Rose-Marie Daele, Nicolas de Montreux (Ollenix du Mont-Sacre): Arbiter of European Literary Vogues of the Late Renaissance (New York, 1946), pp.235-236 for a discussion of Montreux's play Arimène which was performed at the Court of Nantes in 1596. Five intermezzi followed the five acts of the play, giving plenty of opportunity for lavish and costly spectacle. Montreux wrote disparagingly of his literary skill in the dedication to the reader of Arimène:

Also I have passed it [Arimène] on to you, not as it appeared in its naive performance, as one might say unique in its beauty, but in the poverty that it brings from its author. The satisfaction was as great to see it in that form as the boredom will be to read it.
Despite the disappointment of the University, Jones's scenery for the Oxford progress in 1605 was evidently technologically advanced for the day. Stringer describes 'a false wall [behind the stage] painted and adorned with stately pillars, which pillars would turn about, by reason whereof, with the help of other painted clothes, their stage did vary three times in the acting of one Tragedy' (Nichols 1, p.538). It is likely that the costumes, too, were very important for Daniel's play since Stringer describes how a repeat performance of it had been expected but finally did not go ahead as the costumes had been packed up and sent away. (Nichols 1, p.558)

*The Queenes Arcadia* was the only one of the plays put on during the visit to be performed in English, and as such it was probably intended to appeal specifically to the women in the audience, who may not have understood Latin as fluently as many of the men present. The Latin pastoral *Alba* which was performed a few days earlier was a failure, perhaps because it had not been conceived with the Queen in mind as a principal member of the audience:

> In the acting thereof they brought in five or six men almost naked, which were much disliked by the Queen and Ladies, and also many rustical songs and dances, which made it very tedious, insomuch that if the Chancellors of both Universities had not intreated his Majesty earnestly, he would have gone before half the Comedy had been ended. (Nichols 1, p.548)

Individuals involved in organising the Oxford progress probably hoped to attract the attention of the Queen and her ladies to improve their chances of gaining patronage. It certainly paid off for Daniel himself, and also for Inigo Jones. Both these men were later to reap great benefit from royal patronage.

In addition to *The Queenes Arcadia*, several pastoral tragicomedies were written and/or acted at Oxford and Cambridge during the Jacobean period, mostly in Latin. Of the four Oxford pastoral tragicomedies, two were written in English (one

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38 Alfred Harbage, in his *Annals of English Drama 975-1700* (revised by S. Schoenbaum, London, 1964 -- third edition 1989), lists the following pastoral plays put on at Oxford and Cambridge during the reign of James I:
was performed for Anne and the other, eventually, for Henrietta Maria), the other two in Latin (one of which was the unsuccessful *Alba*, performed in front of Anne and James). All five of the Cambridge pastorals were written in Latin. Samuel Brooke's *Scyros*, was the one which the Prince of Wales and the Elector Palatine found so tedious in 1613. *Melanthe*, also by Brooke, and *Sicelides* by Phineas Fletcher (John Fletcher's cousin) were probably written specifically for the King's progress to Cambridge in 1615. James had only a few ladies in his entourage on this occasion.  

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*Pastor Fidiis*, anonymous (W. Quarles?), a translation of Guarini's *II pastor fido*, performed some time between 1590 and 1605 (1604?) in Latin at King's, Cambridge. Manuscript.

*Alba*, by R. Burton and others, performed 27th August 1605, in Latin at Christ Church, Oxford. Lost.

*The Queen's Arcadia (Arcadia Reformed)*, by Samuel Daniel, performed 30th August 1605 in English at Christ Church, Oxford. Published 1606.

*Atalanta*, by Philip Parsons, performed 1612 in Latin at St John's, Oxford. Manuscript.


*Melanthe*, by Samuel Brooke, performed 10th March 1615 in Latin at Trinity, Cambridge. Published 1615, manuscripts also exist.

*Sicelides*, by Phineas Fletcher, a piscatory performed 13th March 1615 in Latin at King's, Cambridge. Published 1631, manuscripts also exist.

*Sylvia*, by Philip Kynder, written 1615-16 (not known if acted) in Latin at Pembroke, Cambridge. Lost.

*The Careless Shepherdess*, by Thomas Goffe, written some time between 1618 and 1629 at Christ Church, Oxford (?). Revised for Henrietta Maria c.1638, earliest printed text 1656.

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John Chamberlain's letter to Dudley Carleton on 16th March 1615 mentions the lack of women in the progress:

The Prince came along with him [the King], but not the Queene by reason (as it is said) that she was not invited, which error is rather impuned to theyre chauncellor then to the schollers that understand not those courses. Another defect was that there were no Ambassador, which no doubt was upon the same reason. But the absence of women may be the better excused for default of language, there beeing few or none present, but of the Howards or that alliance as the Countesse of Arundell with her sister the Lady Elizabeth Gray: the Countesse of Suffolke with her daughters of Salisbury and Somerset, the Lady Walden and Henry Howards wife: which are all that I remember.

The likelihood of their presence at the Latin plays is briefly discussed by Alan Nelson in his essay 'Women in the Audience of Cambridge Plays'. The prologue to another play put on in the same progress, *Albumazar*, states that it is in English especially for the benefit of the ladies, which suggests that the Latin plays were not written with women in mind.

Of the pastoral plays listed by Alfred Harbage outside of Oxford and Cambridge, only *The Faithful Shepherdess* and *Hymens Triumph* are pastoral tragicomedies. Jonson's *The May Lord*, thought to have been a pastoral tragicomedy, is now lost, and the remaining two pastorals were royal entertainments rather than plays as such. There is no mention of Wroth's *Love's Victory*, even in the 1989 edition of the *Annals*, perhaps because there are no records of its performance.

The university performances suggest that pastoral tragicomedy had a degree of intellectual prestige which is unusual for early seventeenth-century romance, especially for a genre which already during the Jacobean period, and increasingly

Thomas Howard, the first Earl of Suffolk, who had been appointed Lord Treasurer in 1614, was the newly appointed Chancellor. His entertainment of the King at Cambridge is reputed to have cost him over £5000 (see Nichols 3, p.49 and n.1, p.40): perhaps his failure to invite the Queen and her ladies was an attempt to prevent costs from escalating even further. Suffolk may well have dipped into the treasury to fund his largesse. He was tried for corruption in 1618.

40 *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990), p.334.

41 Pastoral dramas listed by Harbage and Schoenbaum outside of the Oxford and Cambridge during the Jacobean period are as follows:

--- *The Fairy Pastoral, or Forest of Elves* (*The Fairy Chase, or A Forest of Elves*), by William Percy, performed 1603 at Syon House. Manuscript.
--- *The Faithful Shepherdess*, by John Fletcher, performed 1608-9 by the Queen's Revels. Published c.1609.
--- *The Shepherd's Song*, by George Ferebe, performed 11th June 1613 in Wiltshire. Lost. (Description above, p.110, n.15.)
--- *The May Lord*, by Ben Jonson, possibly non-dramatic, written around 1613-1619. Lost.
--- *Hymen's Triumph*, by Samuel Daniel, performed 2nd February 1614 (1613 old style). Published 1615 (manuscript also exists).
under Charles I, came to be so strongly identified with female audiences, actors and patronage. As the failure of *The Faithful Shepherdess* at the Blackfriars shows, the genre was unable to survive outside of the socially and educationally elite circles of university and private aristocratic performance during the reign of James I.

If more clues survived about the ways in which women participated in and sponsored private pastoral entertainments we would, perhaps, have a clearer idea of how women influenced the development of the genre during the Jacobean period. As it is, we are left with some scarce but important indications. It seems highly probable that *The Queenes Arcadia* was tailored to suit the aesthetic tastes of the women in the audience during the 1605 progress to Oxford. The likelihood is that Daniel and Jones in particular were attempting to attract the attention of Anne and her ladies, whom they knew would be responsible for commissioning future royal entertainments. Their success is witnessed not only by the important patronage they both received from Anne, but also the fact that she chose to commission another pastoral tragicomedy for the wedding of her lady-in-waiting, Jane Drummond and the Earl of Roxburgh. This was one of the most impressive events which Anne hosted: she entertained the Lord Mayor and Aldermen and the most important members of the nobility on successive days, and the entertainments and feasting on the day itself were incredibly lavish and expensive, according to Chamberlain's account. *Hymens Triumph* was the centrepiece of these wedding entertainments. The Countess of Bedford, another of Anne's ladies-in-waiting and one of the most powerful women in the country, took a central role in a private production of the lost pastoral by Jonson. Wroth was also involved in this production and her own play indicates that she had an intimate and full knowledge of the genre without slavishly imitating or translating existing works. Pastoral tragicomedy evidently played a significant part in the cultural lives of aristocratic women, the full history of which will probably never be known.
Lady Mary Wroth was one of the Queen's ladies early in the reign. She had performed in Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* in 1605, the same year as Daniel's *The Queene's Arcadia* was presented to Anne and her ladies at Oxford, and it is therefore highly likely that she was one of their number. She wrote about a pastoral-style masque created by the enchantress, Melissea, in the manuscript continuation of her prose romance *The Countesse of Montgoemery's Urania* (1621). As has already been mentioned, she may have participated in a pastoral play called *The May Lord* by Ben Jonson. In one of Jonson's poems 'To Mary, Lady Wroth' he pays homage to her interest in pastoral, describing her as 'drest in shepheards tyre'. He might have read the play – a sonnet addressed to her shows knowledge of her skill as a writer, though he does not refer to the play specifically.

Wroth's unusual personality and family connections explain to some extent how she came to write when the circumstances were so prohibitive for women.

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2 *The Second Part of the Countesse of Montgomery's Urania*, II.i.fol.41-41V.

3 Herford and Simpson 8, 'Epigrams' cv, p.68, l.9. In Jonson's poem 'To Sir Robert Wroth', he mentions Mary welcoming 'rurall folke' into the hall of their estate of Durrants in Enfield (Herford and Simpson 8, p.98, l.53) as part of a tribute to their pastoral festivities.

4 In this poem Jonson tells Wroth 'Since I exscribe your Sonnets, [I] am become/ A better lover, and much better Poët' (8, 'The Underwood' xxviii, p.182, l.3-4). Another poem addressed to her praises her for being a member of the Sidney family (8, 'Epigrams' ciii, pp.66-7). He also dedicated *The Alchemist* (1610) to her.

5 After the death of her husband, Wroth had two illegitimate children by her first
However, the close relationship between pastoral tragicomedy and prose romance perhaps goes some way to explaining why, for the first time, a woman felt empowered to write a play which was to be acted. Though prose romance, with the exception of the Urania, was written by men, it was seen as having a female audience: pastoral tragicomedy, too, was regarded as being particularly suitable entertainment for aristocratic women. Moreover, pastoral tragicomedy occasionally drew on romance for character and plot motifs. Having written her romance, Wroth may have felt that writing a pastoral tragicomedy was a perfectly natural concomitant.

In the essay which first attributed Love's Victory to Wroth, Josephine Roberts observes that three of the names of the characters in Love's Victory also appear in the manuscript continuation of the Urania:

One particular episode in the second part of the Urania contains even more significant parallels to Love's Victorie. At the beginning of the second book of the Urania, II, ten pastoral figures are described who dwell near Tempe, where they spend their leisure in writing love poetry (II,i.fol.5v). Included are two disguised shepherds Arcas and Rustick, whose names and characters reappear essentially unchanged in Love's Victorie, where Arcas is known for his sad songs and played on a "dolefull rebeck," while Rustick is a comic cousin William Herbert. Authorship was always a danger to a woman's reputation, but since she had lost hers already, she may have felt empowered to write and publish whatever she liked. Her oeuvre parallels that of her uncle: a prose romance, a sonnet sequence, and a pastoral entertainment (Sidney wrote The Lady of May, performed c.1578/9). The publications of her aunt, Mary Sidney (which included a pastoral lament for Sir Philip Sidney and a pastoral verse dialogue) may also have inspired her. For biographical information on Wroth see Josephine Roberts' introduction to The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth (Baton Rouge, 1983) and Elaine Beilin's Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance (Princeton, 1987), chapter 8. See Mary Ellen Lamb's Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle (Madison, 1990) for a discussion of the factors which encouraged Wroth to write her romance.

Wroth seems to have been the first English woman to write a prose romance herself, though Margaret Tyler had written a translation of a Spanish romance The Mirrour of Princely Deeds and Knighthood (1578).

For a discussion of this see Helen Hackett's 'Wroth's Urania and the "Femininity" of Romance', in Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss (eds.), Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760 (London, 1992), pp.39-68.
buffoon, whose poetry humorously violates decorum. He is in love with a woman called "magdeline, a name of contempt among us" (II,ii.fol.7). In the play her name is abbreviated to Dalina, but her aggressive, fickle nature remains the same as in the Urania. The leaders of this group of ten pastoral characters are a distinguished brother and sister, described in glowing terms as patterns of excellence. 8

Roberts doesn't remark that five of the names from Love's Victory come from a French pastoral romance by Nicolas de Montreux (pen-name Ollenix de Mont-Sacré), Les Bergeries de Julliette (first book published in Lyon in 1585). The shepherd Phyllis (with his sister Julliette) is the first to be described in Montreux's romance, just as Philisses is the central romantic hero of Love's Victory. The name of the 'distinguished brother' in the Urania is Belario, which is evidently taken from the character Belair in Les Bergeries. The names Areas, Rustic, and Magdelis (Magdalina in the Urania) also appear in Les Bergeries, as does the name Cliomene, which appears as Climeana in Love's Victory. Montreux wrote a number of pastoral tragicomedies based on his own romance. One of these, Athlette, was published at the back of the 1592 edition of the first volume of Les Bergeries. Wroth followed his example in basing her play on part of her romance. The success of the costly and spectacular production of his pastoral tragicomedy Arimène in 1596 at the court of Nantes caused him to disparage the printed version of the play, as I have mentioned.

Roberts suggests that the names Philisses and Simena (Simeana in the Penshurst manuscript) are anagrams for Philip and Mary Sidney; Musella echoes Stella of Sidney's sonnet sequence; and Lissius refers to Matthew Lister with whom Mary Sidney is supposed to have had an affair (p.38). Carolyn Ruth Swift, basing her argument on the derivation of these names, proposes that there is 'no doubt about the source of her pastoral's plot' -- implying that she was writing à clef. 9 Swift evidently


9 Carolyn Ruth Swift, 'Feminine Self-Definition in Lady Mary Wroth's Love's Victory (c.1621)', English Literary Renaissance 19 (1989), p.185. In her abstract Swift writes that the play 'satisfies [Wroth's] own and her audience's romantic fantasies through completing the interrupted betrothal and marriage of Sir Philip Sidney and
did not know Montreux's work and she doesn't give due attention to the way that Wroth engaged with other texts. Her remarks are symptomatic of the way that Wroth's work is often viewed, though this is less true of criticism of *Love's Victory* than the *Urania*. Many critics seem to feel that she wrote partly from the heart and took the rest of her inspiration from Philip Sidney. She was working within some well-established, feminocentric traditions, and ought not to be viewed in isolation, or merely in terms of her biography or Philip Sidney's works.

The manuscript of *Love's Victory* was probably originally owned by Sir Edward Dering, who early in the century hosted amateur dramatic performances at his estate in Kent (perhaps including Wroth's). She may have been present at some Lady Penelope Rich' (p.11). This reading seems all the more plausible because parts of Wroth's *Urania* were written *à clef*. However, I agree with Barbara Lewalski who finds this reading 'too restrictive' (Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory* and Pastoral Tragicomedy*, in Naomi J. Miller and Gary Waller (eds.), *Reading Mary Wroth: Representing Alternatives in Early Modern England* (Knoxville, 1991), p.89).

Barbara Lewalski, for example, gives a very rich account of Italianate pastoral tragicomedy in order to contextualise *Love's Victory*, op. cit., pp.88-105. Margaret McLaren also discusses possible influences on Wroth in 'An Unknown Continent: Lady Mary Wroth's Forgotten Pastoral Drama, "Loves Victorie"', in Anne Haselkorn and Betty Travitsky (eds.), *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon* (Amherst, 1990), pp.276-294, though she tends to discuss how Wroth wrote differently from other writers, rather than to emphasise how she worked within existing literary traditions. Michael Brennan, in the introduction to *Lady Mary Wroth's Love's Victory*, makes the surprising statement that 'Only in her use of mythological characters did Lady Mary clearly follow the example of her literary contemporaries' (p.12): this is simply not true. In their introduction to an edition of *Love's Victory* in the recently published *Renaissance Drama by Women: Texts and Documents* (London, 1996), the editors S.P Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies suggest that the play is written 'about and for her family and friends' (p.94, my italics). They see the biographies and works of her uncle and aunt, as well as Wroth's own biography, as much more important in the formation of her drama than Tasso, Daniel and Fletcher, whom they mention as literary influences.

This point is made by Miller and Waller in the introduction to *Reading Mary Wroth: Representing Alternatives in Early Modern England* (p.7), a collection of essays which sets out to challenge this attitude.

Roberts, 'The Huntington Manuscript', p.163. Roberts lists family connections between Wroth and Dering which indicate that it was highly likely that they knew each other (p.164).
of these occasions, and she may have had access to his library, which at its height contained nearly two hundred and forty play-books\(^\text{13}\) (including the summaries of five Latin plays which Dering had seen during the King's progress to Cambridge in 1615).\(^\text{14}\) Wroth's probable attendance at court entertainments, including the progress to Oxford in 1605, also gives reason to suggest that she had a wide range a literary stimulation.

Margaret McLaren compares *Love's Victory* with *The Faithful Shepherdess* briefly in her essay 'An Unknown Continent: Lady Mary Wroth's Forgotten Pastoral Drama, "Loves Victorie"'. She emphasises Wroth's 'avoidance' of the 'savage irony' and 'aggressive sexuality' present in *The Faithful Shepherdess* (pp.288-289). McLaren, who did not have access to the complete play when she wrote her article, describes Wroth as making use of 'a special language of avoidance' (p.280) and the play as being 'marked by conspicuous gaps and even silence' (p.279). This does not do justice to the way in which Wroth engages with issues of gender and sexuality in the play; and the similarities and differences between Wroth's and Fletcher's representation of gender and sexuality are worthy of further scrutiny.

The plot of *Love's Victory* revolves around four sets of lovers. The central plot concerns Musella and Philisses for whom love is a life and death issue: the play is resolved when they are united. Philisses' friend Lissius spends much of the play deriding women, but nevertheless eventually falls in love with Philisses' sister Simeana. This second couple are less earnest in their love than Philisses and Musella, whom they nevertheless resemble in many ways. Forester and Silvesta make up a third couple, who exemplify chaste love. The fourth couple are Dalina, who is shown to be loveless and fickle, and Rustic, who has no idea of what courtly love entails. All

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p.163-4.

\(^{14}\) The year was 1614 old style. See P.Gemsege's letter in *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle* 26 (1756), 224-5.
the couples except for Forester and Silvesta are married to each other at the end of
the play. The dramatis personae says that 'A FORESTER loves and marries Silvesta',
but the play does not show their marriage.

Another important pair are Venus and Cupid, who appear between the acts
and comment on the action. Venus repeatedly commands her son to humble the
shepherds and shepherdesses so that they will recognise the power of love:

Venus: Then shall wee have againe owr ancient glory
And lett this called bee love's victory. (I. 33-34)

At the end of the play Venus sits in judgement of the characters, but ultimately her
verdicts are merciful and the play ends on a happy note.15

Much of the plot is taken up with the lovers talking to each other about love,
falling victim to petty jealousies and misunderstandings, and playing games (such as
the poetry competition in Act I, and the fortune telling in Act II). It isn't until the
final act that the tragic part of the tragicomedy begins, as it becomes known that

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15 See Brennan, p.12, for a discussion of plays and masques in which Venus and
Cupid appeared which may have influenced Wroth. The prologue to Tasso's Aminta
is given by Cupid, and the prologue to Daniel's Hymen's Triumph is given by Hymen.
Jonson uses Cupid as a commentator in Cynthia's Revels (1600), as well as in three
entertainments performed in 1616: Christmas His Masque; Love Freed From
Ignorance and Folly; and A Challenge at Tilt. Venus and Cupid are also given acting
roles in The Hue and Cry After Cupid (1608) performed at the wedding of Viscount
Haddington to Lady Elizabeth Radcliffe. To Brennan's list I would add Robert
White's Cupid's Banishment (1617) and Beaumont and Fletcher's Cupid's Revenge
(1607-8). In both of these, Cupid is portrayed as very destructive, and in Cupid's
Revenge he anticipates some of Venus's lines in Love's Victory:

And on the first heart that despis'd my Greatnesse,
Lay a strange misery, that all may know
Cupid's revenge is mightie [...] (I.iii.14-16)

In Wroth's play, Cupid's function is to harm the mortals, though his power is
circumscribed by Venus. She is also capricious and jealous of her power, but
ultimately benevolent. Cupid is powerful and damaging in the masque in Fletcher's A
Wife for a Month, but this play was licensed in 1624 and may well have been written
and performed after Wroth's play (c.1621).
Musella is engaged to marry Rustic, and her mother intends to enforce the marriage because it was in Musella's father's will. Musella and Philisses fake death and Rustic renounces his engagement to Musella while she is apparently dead, thus clearing the way for her to be revived and married to Philisses instead. Silvesta, who used to be in love with Philisses herself, risks her life to help save the couple.

Wroth's play, in common with other pastoral tragicomedies — including *The Faithful Shepherdess* — is at one level a discussion of different kinds of sexuality. The central purpose of this section will be to examine the extent to which Wroth's and Fletcher's attitudes to gender and sexuality can be compared, and to see if Wroth's femininity gave her any special insight into issues of gender politics.

In both *The Faithful Shepherdess* and *Love's Victory* the central plot is built around two chaste virgins, one of whom remains a virgin living on the fringes of society (Clorin/Silvesta), the other enduring what seems to be death, before being reunited with her partner at the end of the play (Amoret/Musella). In addition, Perigot of *The Faithful Shepherdess* resembles Philisses in his reluctance to trust in his partner's love. Fletcher's Cloe, who reworks some of the themes concerning sexuality in the play in a comic way with her frivolous attitude to chastity, is similar to Dalina, who is the main source of light-hearted entertainment and is similarly unchaste in *Love's Victory*. The Sullen Shepherd, who helps to undermine Amoret in *The Faithful Shepherdess* has a similar role to Arcas, who betrays Musella in *Love's Victory*. However, though both plays draw on common sources, Wroth's play is not an imitation of *The Faithful Shepherdess*; there are other characters in each play who have no parallels, and most importantly, the themes which these 'types' act out are often handled differently.16

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16 Both Fletcher and Wroth were influenced by Guarini. The tragic threat in the plots of *Love's Victory*, *The Faithful Shepherdess* and *II pastor fido* is the result of accusations maliciously aimed at the romantic heroine who has been trapped in a compromising situation in all three plays. In Wroth's play the similarity is all the more striking because it is not necessary — Musella could have been forced into marriage to Rustic by her Mother without the vindictive intervention of Arcas. There is a further similarity between *Love's Victory* and *II pastor fido*: in both plays a woman...
An important difference between the plays is the way each of the playwrights handles social hierarchy. In *The Faithful Shepherdess*, the Priest seems to control the working lives of the shepherds, sending them to bed at the beginning of Act II and giving orders for them to be woken up at the beginning of Act V. He also sends those who have committed crimes to Clorin for judgement at the end of the play, by which time she seems to have gained the status of a priestess. The play is unusual among pastoral tragicomedies in having no characters who are parents, so there is no hierarchy based on age (unless you count the minor role of the old Shepherd, who acts as a sort of aid to the Priest). Neither are there any significant hierarchies based on birth, or its signifier, refined sensibility, as in *Love's Victory*.

In Wroth's play the chaste virgin Silvesta offers her life up to save Musella, thus metaphorically rendering virginity subordinate to chaste love. This could not happen in *The Faithful Shepherdess*: Clorin has many characteristics in common with Wroth's Silvesta, yet her moral superiority raises her above the vicissitudes which affect the other shepherds and shepherdesses. Though the title of Fletcher's play could refer to either Clorin or Amoret, Clorin remains firmly at the centre of the symbolic framework of the play. Hierarchy among the shepherds and shepherdesses is

(Silvesta/Amarillis) only openly confesses her love for a man (Forestcr/Mirtillo) when he offers to give up his life to save hers.

Florence Ada Kirk discusses Fletcher's debt to Guarini in more detail in her edition of *The Faithful Shepherdess* (New York, 1980, submitted for a Ph.D. examination at Northwestern University in 1943), p. xxii. Critics tend to pass over Fletcher's debt to Guarini to point out often less obvious but perhaps more interesting similarities with other writers. For example, see V.M. Jeffreyy's 'Italian Influence in Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess"', *Modern Language Review* 21 (1926), 147-158, which claims Fletcher had a debt to Hieronimo Bisaccioni's *I falsi pastori*. W.W. Greg argued that Fletcher's direct debt to Guarini is confined to the title and certain traits in the characters of Cloe and Amarillis'. Amarillis's name is used but she is the heroine of Guarini's play and one of the villains of Fletcher's. Eugene Waith, though following Greg in suggesting that 'Fletcher probably took the title' of his play from *Il pastor fido* 'but not the plot' (p.7), nevertheless compares the plays in some detail in *The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher* (New Haven, 1952), (ff.p.7, and ff.p.191). Nancy Cotton Pearse compares the plays in *John Fletcher's Chastity Plays: Mirrors of Modesty* (Lewisburg, 1973), pp.134-5.
based on sexual purity.

According to contemporary morality, Silvesta might well have seemed more virtuous than Musella in Wroth's play. When Musella thinks she has been rejected by Philisses she agrees to marry Rustic, whereas when Silvesta was rejected by him she devotes herself to lifelong solitude and virginity. Silvesta is more chaste and more self-sacrificing than Musella, yet the concern of the other characters and the resolution of the plot centres on Musella. The difference between them is not to do with conventional ideas of virtue and chastity (as in the parallel characters in Fletcher's play), but their attitude to love, which in Wroth's play is related to class.

In her essay 'Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory* and Pastoral Tragicomedy' Barbara Lewalski suggests that Wroth represents a utopian egalitarian society:


Swift also claims that Wroth creates 'a feminine dreamworld' (op.cit., p.171). However, there are class and gender hierarchies in Wroth's play, certainly more so than in *The Faithful Shepherdess*, for example. One of the ways in which Wroth introduces humour into her play is by juxtaposing the discourse of courtly pastoral love with the concerns that a real working shepherd might have:

**Rustick, faith tell mee, hast thou ever lov'd?**
**What call you love? Thave bin to trouble mov'd**
**As when my best cloke hath by chance bin torne.**
**I have liv'd wishing till itt mended were,**
**And butt soo lovers doe; nor cowld forbeare**
**To cry if I my bag, or bottle lost,**
**As lovers doe who by theyr loves ar crost,**
**And grieve as much for thes, as they for scorne.**

**Call you this love? Why love is noe such thing,**
**Love is a paine which yett doth pleasure bring,**
**A passion which alone in harts doe move**
**And they that feele nott this they cannott love.**

(II.85-96)
Philisses with his petrarchan formulas ('Love is a paine which yett doth pleasure bring') is almost as much the butt of Wroth's humour as Rustic, crying over his lost bag and bottle. Class difference is as evident here as it is in Shakespeare's comedies, despite the fact that the shepherds are supposed to be of the same class (in contrast to Shakespeare's plays, in which the class differences are made clear from the outset). Wroth's aristocratic perspective is also evident. Though she gently teases Philisses, her sympathies are with him, whereas the concerns of Rustic, as a working shepherd, are trivialised.

There is another example of the same sort of humour when Rustic attempts to praise Musella's beauty in Act I:

Rustic: Thy cheecks are red
        Like Okar spred
        On a fatted sheep's back:
        Thy paps ar found
        Like aples round
        Noe praises shall lack.

Musella: Well you have praises given enough; now lett
        An other come some other to comend. (I.347-354)

The humour here is in seeing Musella, a refined and courtly shepherdess, endure Rustic's rough compliments. Despite his lame attempts to conform to poetic conventions, his praise is insulting because it is too firmly linked with real life in the country.

McMullan points out that in 'To the Reader' Fletcher is eager to emphasise that the shepherds in his play are 'the owners of flockes and not hyerlings' (I.19-20), 'thus allowing them the right to political autonomy'.\(^{17}\) Fletcher's shepherds are not of

\(^{17}\) McMullan, p.59. He compares these words with a sentence from Sidney's *Old Arcadia*:

[The Arcadian shepherds] were not such base shepherds as we commonly make account of, but the very owners of the sheep themselves, which in that thrifty world the substantiallest men would employ their whole care upon.
the peasant class, like Rustic: neither is refined and courtly sensibility as important to
them, as it is to the central characters of Wroth's play. They are of the property-
owning classes and yet their concern is with virtue (which is presented as 'right rule of
the self and, by implication, of the body politic') rather than with the economic life
of their community, though the two are seen to be interrelated.

In recent criticism there is a consensus that Fletcher uses chastity as a political
symbol. This is discussed in some detail by James Yoch in 'The Renaissance
dramatization of temperance: the Italian revival of tragicomedy and The Faithful
Shepherdess' and Philip Finkelpearl in Court and Country Politics in the Plays of
Beaumont and Fletcher (Princeton, 1990). McMullan follows Finkelpearl in

Katherine Duncan-Jones (ed.), Sir Philip Sidney: The Countess of Pembroke's

James Yoch 'The Renaissance Dramatization of Temperance: The Italian Revival
of Tragicomedy and The Faithful Shepherdess' in Nancy Klein Maguire (ed.)
Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics (New York, 1987),
p.116.

Failure to control emotions inevitably leads to lack of protection for sheep in
Fletcher's pastoral. See, for example the Priest's rebuke to Thenot at the beginning of
Act V:

Doest thou not blush young sheepheard to be knowne,
Thus without care, leaving thy flocks alone,
And followinge what desire and present bloud,
Shapes out before thy burning sence [...] (V.iii.11-14)

Perigot also sees psychological torment in terms of danger to his sheep:

When I fall off from my affectioa,
Or mingle my cleane thoughts with foule desires,
First let our great God cease to keepe my flockes,
That being left alone without a guard,
The woolfe, or winters rage, sommers great heat,
And want of water, rots [...] (I.ii.50-55)

Finkelpearl also discusses the subject in his article 'John Fletcher as Spenserian
Playwright: The Faithful Shepherdess and The Island Princess', Studies in English
linking Clorin unequivocally with Elizabeth I, and seeing her role in the play as 'a thoroughly Jacobethan literary strategy recalling the mythologized norms of the reign of Elizabeth'. In *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* Sandra Clark agrees that Fletcher's representation of chastity was politicised without wanting to go as far as Finkelpearl who sees the play as a 'plea [...] for England's moral regeneration'. None of these critics discusses in depth how Fletcher's ideas of chastity are politicised specifically through his use of Spenser.

Fletcher seems to be particularly indebted to Spenser's representation of the sisters Belphoebe and Amoret in Books III and IV of *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96): one of whom can be seen to represent virgin chastity, the other married chastity. Spenser elides the distinction between them: female virginity may be a powerful social icon, but it is not that useful socially (in reproducing the human race) or politically (in resolving the problem of succession in Queen Elizabeth's reign). Thus, the principal exemplar of a chaste woman in *The Faerie Queene* is Britomart, who has the supernatural powers of a virgin, but like Amoret (in both *The Faerie Queene* and *The Faithful Shepherdess*) looks forward to a faithful and temperate married life.

The incident at the beginning of Fletcher's play when Clorin is approached by a satyr who begins to worship her as a kind of deity, is analogous to an incident in

21 McMullan, p.67.

22 Finkelpearl, *Court and Country Politics*, p.110, n.27.

23 Nancy Cotton Pearse compares *The Faithful Shepherdess* with *The Faerie Queene*, but does not discuss the politics or representation of gender and sexuality in either work. She argues that Fletcher made a mistake in trying to recreate Spenserian characters on stage:

when [Fletcher] attempts to re-create on stage those characters who in Spenser are aesthetically distanced and given a certain dignity by virtue of the allegory, he creates instead characters who are, in the last analysis, ludicrous. (*John Fletcher's Chastity Plays: Mirrors of Modesty* (Lewisburg, 1973), p.149.)

My own feeling is that Fletcher has a strongly developed style of his own in *The Faithful Shepherdess*, and although there are clear parallels with Spenser's work, the characters ought not to be seen merely as unsuccessful duplications.
Book I of *The Faerie Queene* in which Una is approached by a number of satyrs and fauns who begin to worship her. This story in *The Faerie Queene* is preceded by the attempted rape of Una and succeeded by the description of the rape of another woman by a satyr. Una's escape is due to a mystical power of protection arising from her youth and beauty:

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They in compassion of her tender youth,
And wonder of her beaute beaute soueraine,
Are wonne with pitty and vnwonted ruth,
And all prostrate vpon the lowly plaine,
Do kisse her feete, and awe on her with count'rance faine. 24
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Clorin's beauty has this power over her satyr too. He literally worships her:

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By that heavenly forme of thine,
Brightest faire thou art devine [...] (I.i.58-59)
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However, for all the satyr's protestations of her heavenly beauty, when he has gone Clorin insists that it is 'that great name of virgin' (I.i.126), which inspires his worship, not her beauty, as though her virginity was somehow evident from her outward appearance. Within the terms of Fletcher's fiction, Clorin has such power over the satyr because she is a symbol of good self-government. 25

Clorin takes on the roles of judge and healer, particularly towards the end of the play. The only other figure of authority, the Priest, seeks her out to ask for her judgement on the guilty shepherds in the final act:

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Clorin: Then boldly speake why doest thou seake this place.
Priest: First honourd virgin to behold thy face,
Where all good dwells, that is: next for to try
The trueith of late report, was given to mee:
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25 The satyr is chosen because it was a lustful, half-animal. According to Pliny the satyr is named after the penis -- see Hamilton, p.399, note to III.x.48.
Those shepheards that have met with foule mischance,  
Through much neglect, and more ill governance,  
Whether the wounds they have may yet endure  
The open ayre, or stay a longer cure:  
And lastly what the doome may be, shall light  
Upon those guilty wretches, through whose spight  
All this confusion fell. For to this place,  
Thou holy mayden have I brought the race,  
Of these offenders, who have freely tolde,  
Both why, and by what meanes, they gave this bold  
Attempt upon their lives. (V.v.75-89)

It is not clear whether the Priest means that the two injured shepherds received their wounds through their own 'neglect' and 'ill governance', or through that of the people responsible for wounding them. This is an important point because one of the wounded is Amoret. The possibility that she is being held partly responsible for Perigot's attack on her is hinted at earlier in the play when Amoret is brought to Clorin to be healed of Perigot's wounds. Clorin detects some impurity and roundly declares that she is 'not sound, [but] Full of lust' (V.ii.40-41). It turns out that Clorin has detected the impurity of Cloe and Daphnis who are nearby, but nevertheless the suspicion that Amoret is impure remains.

Her fate echoes that of her Spenserian namesake, who undergoes a kind of open-heart surgery in III, xii of *The Faerie Queene*: both cases involve a 'sadistic literalisation of the Petrarchan metaphor of love's wounds'. Spenser's Amoret is only freed and cured of her wounds when she subjects herself to chastity, embodied by Britomart (III.xii.39), implying that she was not chaste enough before.

In another incident in *The Faerie Queene* Amoret wilfully makes herself vulnerable to being carried off (IV.vii.4). In this episode she is merely wounded, despite the threat of being raped and devoured by her abductor -- the hideous salvage man who evidently represents sexual passion. A further example in which the victim is shown to have a certain amount of guilt occurs in Book VI when Serena is attacked by the Blatant Beast (which represents slander) as she is 'loosely wandring' (VI.iii.23)

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26 Sandra Clark, writing of Arathusa's wounding in *Philaster*, p.35.
picking flowers, after being found in a potentially compromising situation with her lover. Serena and her knight are not necessarily guilty of any crime (the Beast attacks the innocent as well as the guilty), and yet Serena must suffer much pain and loss of blood before she is cured by taking the advice of a Hermit, who tells her

Abstaine from pleasure, and restraine your will,
Subdue desire, and bridle loose delight,
Vse scanted diet, and forbearre your fill,
Shun secrecie, and talke in open sight:
So shall you soone repairre your present euill plight. (VI.vi.14)

It seems that a measure of guilt does cling to Serena — despite the lack of evidence for it in Spenser's descriptions of her. She lover only wins her back by fighting off a 'salvage nation' of men who later capture and threaten to rape and eat her, as Amoret had been threatened by the salvage man in Book IV. The fauns and satyrs who worship Una are also referred to as a 'salvage people' (I.vi.19). Spenser obviously wanted his readers to make links between the episodes.

In The Faithful Shepherdess Perigot's attack is inspired by sexual revulsion after Amarillis, pretending to be Amoret, has tried to seduce him. Fletcher's Amoret, like Spenser's Serena, is the victim of slander. The wounding they endure fulfils many of the same functions as rape at the same time as allowing them a full recovery, untainted by any sexual disgrace in the end. This way of handling violence towards women gives them a share of some of the guilt for having been attacked, but also enables them to make a complete moral recovery.

Though no rapes take place in The Faithful Shepherdess, the danger of sexual pollution, from one's own weakness or by the temptation or attack of another, is a

27 See Walter F. Staton 'Italian Pastorals and the Conclusion of the Serena Story', Studies in English Literature 1500-1900 6 (1966), 35-42 for a discussion of this.

28 Amarillis's ability to transform herself may also have been inspired by The Faerie Queene: Duessa makes herself into the beautiful Fidessa (I.ii.44) in order to seduce men; and a witch creates an identical version of Florimell (III.vii.5), for the enjoyment of her son, after the original has fled.
constant preoccupation. In those romances in which a woman's chastity has been threatened or impuned, her moral regeneration may provide a benign resolution, a variation of marrying her attacker and an alternative to committing suicide. Suzanne Gossett discusses three Jacobean tragicomedies in which women are raped and then married to their attackers, and concludes that they represent a 'decadent Jacobean exploration of rape, with [the] heretical suggestion that rapists may be heroes and that women may love their attackers'. It could be argued that Amoret's marriage to Perigot is another version of this plot. Gossett sees those plays which condemn women to death after rape as showing a 'concern and respect' for women 'missing' from the plays which marry them to their attackers. Whilst this may be true, the 'happy' ending also undermines the importance of the guilt which clings to the women. The fact that they are not irrecoverably polluted is perhaps more significant than Gossett is willing to concede.

There was an unusually large number of plays in which slander of a woman was the central plot device between 1605 and 1610, perhaps partly because slander became a political issue. Robert Y. Turner discusses the phenomenon in his essay 'Slander in Cymbeline and Other Jacobean Tragicomedies'. Turner sees the victims of slander in these plays as always being completely innocent, whereas it seems to me that some guilt for false accusations occasionally clings to the victims, such as in The Faithful Shepherdess and The Faerie Queene. James I's 'Act Against Scandalous Speeches and Lybells' of 24th June 1609 (the same year as The Faithful Shepherdess) was no doubt intended to protect himself, his laws, proclamations and favourites. If the political metaphor is carried through, whilst Fletcher acknowledges the destructive power of slander, he also seems to be suggesting that if James and his

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29 "Best Men are Molded out of Faults": Marrying the Rapist in Jacobean Drama', English Literary Renaissance 14 (1984), p.327. The three plays are Fletcher, Field and Massinger's The Queen of Corinth, Middleton's Women Beware Women and Middleton and Rowley's The Spanish Gypsy, all performed between 1617 and 1623.

favourites were perfectly innocent, there would be no slander — that there is no smoke without fire.

At the end of the play there is a further, and perhaps more significant, incident which suggests that recovery from sexual corruption is possible for a woman. Amarillis plots to harm Amoret, and, aside from the Sullen Shepherd, she is the most evil character in the play. Significantly, her repentance seems to be prompted by an attempted rape. However, since she passes the test of chastity (having a burning taper held to her hand) she is forgiven by Clorin, who declares:

Yonge Sheepheardesse now, ye are brought againe
To virgin state [...] (V.v.158-9)

Presumably she is speaking metaphorically, here, as only a couple of scenes earlier, Amarillis stated that her 'flower Virginitie' was as yet 'unblasted' (V.iii.94). Even so, it is striking that Fletcher represents the restoration of a virginal state of mind.31

The renewal of Amarillis's mental virginity is congruent with the idealism of romance, but the symbolic framework of the play suggests that we should think of her return to the fold primarily as a political change of mind, rather than as Fletcher's attempt to shift attitudes towards female sexuality as such. Other elements in the plot can also only be explained if the play's political symbolism is taken into account. The extraordinary influence which Clorin has over the Priest is an example. In The Faerie Queene, once Una has persuaded the satyrs and fauns not to worship her, they worship her ass instead. The incident is evidently meant to represent the ease with

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31 One of the arguments put forward in the Roman tradition of declamation (rhetorical training for advocates) was that a woman who had spent time in a brothel 'has incurred stuprum, the defilement of illicit sexuality. Even if she has retained her virginity, her experience has irrevocably defiled her' (Lorraine Helms 'The Saint in the Brothel: Or, Eloquence Rewarded', Shakespeare Quarterly 41 (1990), p.321). These texts were readily available in the early seventeenth century, and exerted an important influence on Fletcher, according to Eugene Waith in The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher (New Haven, 1952), especially chapter 3. In The Faithful Shepherdess (and The Custom of the Country (1619)) however, Fletcher depicts women who are not irrevocably defiled by non-physical corruption.
which the unlearned can be led into worship of false idols, implying a criticism of Catholicism. At the beginning of The Faithful Shepherdess Clorin explains how she is able 'to draw submission, From this rude man, and beast' (the Satyr) (I.i.4-5), but it is not explained why such an exalted figure as the Priest is also drawn to submission, nor why Clorin is in a position to dictate the sentences of offenders in the community at the end of the play, unless her centrality as a political symbol is recognised.

The safest women are virgins, and the stability represented by an intact hymen is placed at the centre of the Golden Age society of The Faithful Shepherdess. The control of sexuality is seen as the prerequisite of a controlled individual, and a controlled society. Clorin has the effect of making man, woman and satyr alike more chaste. The prelapsarian stability of virginity is seen as preferable to the uncertainty of sexual knowledge, even though sexual knowledge is as essential to society as it is potentially disruptive. Clorin qualifies her injunction to Amarillis to remain in the 'virgin state' until 'thy last day' by saying that if

the faithfull love
Of some good sheepeheard force thee to remove,
Then labour to be true to him [...] (V.v.160-162)

The word 'force' is conspicuous in such a context, implying that the poor shepherdess must cling on to her virginity for all she is worth, even in a legitimate sexual relationship. Any kind of sexual activity — even sex within marriage, or rape — leaves a woman compromised in much of the contemporary literature.

32 This issue is complicated. John M. Steadman argues that the fauns and satyrs should be seen as symbolising the rural English. They are eager to rescue Una who represents 'the true church' during a period of persecution, but their illiteracy leads them to idolatry and superstition ('Una and the Clergy: The Ass Symbol in The Faerie Queene', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 21 (1958), p.135). Steadman doesn't tackle the problem of how this distinguishes them from Catholics in Spenser's symbolism: after all, it is precisely idolatry and superstition, arising from the inability to read God's word, which many Protestants felt was typical of Catholicism.
Fletcher’s political symbolism, combined with the exigencies of the tragicomic mode, results in a different, and in some respects more radical, code of sexual ethics. Many romances propagate the myth (still pernicious today) that purity and unwillingness to be raped are adequate protection from it, but in Fletcher’s play Amarillis is sexually guilty, and yet still does not deserve rape. In some of the later plays of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon, it seems to be accepted that men can prove their manhood through rape\textsuperscript{33}), but in Clorin’s chaste society the only man who remains a potential rapist (the Sullen Shepherd) is expelled. Moreover, in Fletcher’s Arcadia Clorin’s desire for autonomy is respected, even admired.

In *Love’s Victory* virginity is not symbolically important. Silvesta opens Act III with a hymn to chastity, but Musella puts her virginity into proportion by reminding her that if she hadn’t been rejected by Philisses, she would never have taken this attitude:

\begin{quote}
  Chastitie, you thus commend, \\
  Doth proceed butt from love’s end. (III.17-18)
\end{quote}

This is equally true of Clorin in *The Faithful Shepherdess*, though no mention is made of it, because chastity is so important to the play’s symbolic framework, and must not be seen merely as a sterile product of disappointed love.

*Love’s Victory* is, however, just as concerned with male chastity as *The Faithful Shepherdess*. Though in Fletcher’s play chastity in the male characters is as

\footnote{Gossett makes this point in her discussion of *The Queen of Corinth* (1617) (p.324), and it is even more true of *Love’s Cure* (1607–1625?). Alvarez, exasperated by his effeminate son Lucio tells him

\begin{quote}
  Ther’s only one course left, that may redeem thee, \\
  Which is, to strike the next man that you meet, \\
  And if we chance to light upon a woman, \\
  Take her away, and use her like a man, \\
  Or I wil cut thy ham strings. (IV.iii.37-41)
\end{quote}

Also see above, p.93: the Jailor’s Daughter wants Palamon to prove his manhood by having sex with her in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.}
politicised as it is in the female characters, it seems likely that Fletcher was also gently teasing some of the men. For example, early on in the play, Daphnis gives the following speech:

I charge you all my vaines
Through which the blood and spirit take their way,
Locke up your disobedient heats, and stay
Those mutinous desires, that else would growe
To strong rebellion [...] (II.iv. 16-20)34

His language is clearly politicised, and we are, perhaps, meant to take him seriously, though a lot would depend on how it was played. However, later in the play he seems impossibly pure and chaste: he is found alone with Cloe in a hollow tree and yet passes Clorin's test for purity. He enters into compromising situations very willingly, yet remains unmoved by them. There is something decidedly odd about this. Fletcher is making an obvious reference to Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe* (translated from the French by Angel Day in 1587) through his use of their names. In Longus's work Daphnis feels overwhelming ardour for Chloe, but is too naive to know how to satisfy his passions. The innocence of the work was under question in the seventeenth century: an Italian edition of 1643 suggested the romance was over-explicit sexually, whereas an English title page of 1657 described it as 'A Most Sweet, and Pleasant Pastorall ROMANCE for Young Ladies'.35 Fletcher replicates Daphnis's innocence in a way which makes it absurd in the face of Cloe's direct attempts to seduce him, suggesting that Fletcher recognised the prurience of the original romance. His use of the name of Amarillis, Guarini's chaste and virtuous heroine, for the female villain of *The Faithful Shepherdess* may similarly imply a

34 This speech is one of those chosen by McMullan to discuss the play's political meanings, p.66.

criticism of the morality of *Il pastor fido*.

Fletcher's use of the name Alexis, for Cloe's other lover, may also be significant. The hero of Honoré d'Urfé's *L'Astrée* (first part published 1607) Celadon, is disguised as a woman named Alexis for much of the romance. He, too, never has sex with his lover, despite many opportunities afforded by his disguise. It seems that d'Urfé preferred to depict 'a titillating and unsatisfied eroticism'; this is more or less what the subplot involving Cloe and her unsuccessful attempts to have sex also evokes, notwithstanding the serious sexual politics of the play as a whole.

It's possible that Wroth was using the name of Arcas in a similar way. In Montreux's *Les Bergeries de Julliette*, Arcas is not a villain, but one of the central characters. He is rather lugubrious throughout the romance, however, and even more so in Robert Toft's adaptation of *Les Bergeries, Honours Académie* (1610), which Wroth may also have read.

The chastity of Forester in *Love's Victory* is an altogether more touching affair, devoid of political meaning, or wry allusions to other literature. Forester tells his beloved Silvesta that he will love chastity 'Since 'tis in you' (1.56). He is content as long as he is able merely to see Silvesta, as he tells Lissius:

Forester: I wish you may obtaine your hart's desire, And I butt sight who waste in chastest fire.
Lissius: These tow to meete in one I ne're did find, Love, and Chastitie link'd in one Man's mind. (1.275-278)

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37 Clifford Leech finds the behaviour of Perigot and Amoret comic, as well as that of Cloe and her lovers: I feel that this is reading too much humour into the play. *The John Fletcher Plays* (London, 1962), pp.44-5, n.18.

38 *Honours Academie or the Famous Pastorall of the Faire Shepheardesse Julietta* (London, 1610). The work purports to be a translation of Montreux's romance, but actually bears little relation to it. Fletcher uses the name Arcas for a father and son in *The Loyal Subject* (1618), but the plot of this play is not directly related to the romances of Wroth, Toft or Montreux.
Lissius finds Forester's chastity highly exceptional, yet the idea that sexual standards were as important for men as they were for women was to gather momentum in the next couple of decades, partly, perhaps, because of the influence of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon in which chaste male heroes occasionally appear.

That Wroth's attitude to male chastity should be more serious than Fletcher's is perhaps not unexpected: what is surprising is that Fletcher's pastoral society is more egalitarian in the way that men and women are represented. If anything, Fletcher's female characters are presented advantageously compared to the men. The most supremely good person, who stands in judgement on the others, is a woman. The only character who is condemned and banished is a man. The other men and women exist between these poles. In *Love's Victory* women are also powerful: Venus and Musella's mother are the strongest authority figures and female friendship and heroism plays a large part in resolving the plot. However, some of the incidents in the play would not occur in a feminine utopia.

Throughout much of the play Lissius is impervious to the allure of love and women: at one stage he even compares women to sheep. Musella asks if he is moved by Forester's devotion to Silvesta (Forester and Lissius are often juxtaposed in the play, presumably because they have such different ideas about love). Lissius replies

> Yes, thus it moves, that man should be so fond,
> As to be tied t'a woman's faithles bond.
> For we should love butt as our sheep
> Who being kind and gentle gives us ease,
> Butt cross, or straying, stuborne, and unmeet,
> Shun'd as the wulf, which most our flocks disease. (II.65-70)

Lawrence Stone argues that the remission of the double standard in sexual ethics in the 1630s and 40s was due to increasing acceptance of female adulterous sexuality, rather than of male chastity. See *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London, 1977), p.505. However, he notes that earlier in the century adulterous liaisons became much less acceptable for men as the result of pressure from Puritans (p.502).

I discuss this phenomenon in Section 3 on prose romance sources.
Lissius's attempt to view women merely in economic terms dehumanises them. Wroth builds up the expectation that Lissius will get his come-uppance for this misogyny. Venus and Cupid even single him out twice in their dialogues between the acts, as someone who needs to be taught a lesson. However, although he experiences a little difficulty with his love-life, and does, in the end, declare himself to be a slave to Cupid, he doesn't encounter the life-threatening problems that some of the other characters have to face, and marries happily at the end of the play. Falling in love is seen as adequate punishment for his misogyny. In the final act he asks Philisses if he may marry his sister. Philisses readily agrees, whilst Simeana remains silent. The engagement is presented as a seal to the bond of male friendship rather than a seal to heterosexual love. He is hardly a candidate for an ideal man in a feminine utopia.

Wroth's pastoral engages with problems which faced women in reality. For example, the play discusses the impropriety of women taking an active role in courtship, and the inevitable complications which arise from this prohibition. Lissius calls women's courtship of men 'The most unfitting'st, shamfull'st thing to doe' (III.292). Musella also says that it is 'most unfitt' (III.78), and Silvesta concurs: 'Indeed a woman to make love is ill' (III.79). Even Dalina seems to think that it is rather unattractive for women to express their desire for men openly:

This is the reason men ar growne soe coy,
When they parceave wee make theyr smiles owr joy.
Lett them alone, and they will seeke, and sue,
Butt yeeld to them and they'll with scorne pursue. (III.249-252)

The silence which is expected from women in Love's Victory indicates not that they don't desire men, or that they're incapable of wooing them, merely that they're bowing to convention. Though Musella doesn't directly approach Philisses, she does contrive (with the aid of Silvesta) to meet him alone, and then prompts him to reveal his passion for her. She keeps within the bounds of propriety dictated by the play at the same time as taking an active part in wooing the man she loves. However, the
difficulties surrounding her betrothal to Rustic would never have occurred had she been allowed to speak her mind in the first place.

The final act of the play develops these profound problems concerning female agency in a patriarchal society. Musella's mother decides to force Musella to marry Rustic, after Arcas has told her that Musella is in love with Philisses. Musella sums up the position to Simeana in the following way:

> Alas, I have urg'd her [i.e., her mother], till that she with teares
> Did vowe, and grieve she could nott mend my state
> Agreed on by my father's will which bears
> Sway in her brest, and duty in mee. Fate
> Must have her courses, while that wretched I
> Wish butt soe good a fate as now to dy. (V.11-16)

An apparently impossible situation is set up, since the father who ordered the unfair ruling that Musella should marry Rustic is dead and cannot revoke it. The mother acts as her husband's deputy (in that she has to make sure that his instructions are carried out), but she does not have the concomitant right, as his deputy, to change an inappropriate ruling in his absence.41

When it seems that Musella and Philisses have committed suicide to escape from this conundrum, the Mother's response is not to blame her late husband's will, or even Arcas (who is seen as immediately responsible for the apparent deaths). Instead she suggests that she herself should be sacrificed in punishment, along with Silvesta who administered a dangerous potion to the young lovers. The only resolution of her deeply ambiguous position within the power structures of the family seems at this point to be to obliterate herself.42 Her role in society has fallen between the two stools of being an agent of male authority and being subject to it, in effect leaving her

41 For a discussion of the unstable subject position of the mother/wife within the family in seventeenth-century discourse see Catherine Belsey's *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London, 1985), chapter 6.

42 See Mary Ellen Lamb's *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (Wisconsin, 1990) for a discussion of how dying well was an acceptable form of female heroism.
without a place to exist.

Wroth makes good dramatic use of the mother's impossible situation. In choosing the mother as the person who helplessly has to enforce an unreasonable ruling, rather than a father-figure who would be able to revoke his own decree, Wroth makes the situation even more difficult to resolve and the potential tragedy more poignant. Luckily, Rustic perfidiously disclaims Musella while he thinks she is dead, releasing Musella's mother from the obligation to her dead husband and leaving Musella free to marry Philisses.

There is a heightened feminocentric concern in Love's Victory, not present in other pastoral tragicomedies, which is manifested chiefly through the depth and sympathy of the portrayal of the relationships between women. The conversations between women, such as the one in which each of the shepherdesses reveals something about her love in Act III, suggest an intensified interest in the female point of view.\textsuperscript{43} The depiction of female friendship is compelling. Sylvesta's willingness to die for her friend and old rival Musella, as well as the practical advice she gives her to gain Philisses makes the parallel male friendship between Philisses and Lissius appear shallow by comparison.

The dramatic climax of the play seems as though it will involve Musella's mother's self-sacrifice for the sake of her daughter, as well as Silvesta's. Despite Forester's offer of self-sacrifice for Silvesta, the men fade into the background during the final scene, which is primarily about female self-sacrifice and love. For example, that Philisses hardly gets a mention when everyone is mourning the apparent death of Musella, even though he is as dead as she is.

Wroth's play discusses these issues in a way which only a female playwright

\textsuperscript{43} W.W. Greg, having only seen extracts, and without knowing who the play was by, picked out 'the scene in which the nymphs meet and relate their love adventures' as being '[t]he only more original trait' in a work of 'small' poetic merit: Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama: A Literary Inquiry, with Special Reference to the Pre-Restoration Stage in England (London, 1906), p.367.
could attempt at that time. Fletcher's feminocentric tendencies, however, were still strongly underwritten by patriarchal attitudes. Fletcher's romantic heroine Amoret is a passive victim who is married off to her attacker as a dubious reward for her fidelity at the end of the play, whereas Wroth's heroine Musella takes positive steps to extricate herself from the difficulties which beset her, with the help of her female friend.

The strong link between pastoral tragicomedy and romance on the one hand empowered Wroth to write her play and on the other resulted in Fletcher's more forgiving and egalitarian attitude towards female characters, under the influence of Spenserian allegory. The sexual double standard is to some extent undermined in both plays because of the emphasis put on male chastity. For Fletcher male chastity is important as part of the political symbolism of the play, and for Wroth because she was evidently fascinated by the possibilities of both male and female purity. The extreme pressures put on the value of chastity, especially virginity, in Fletcher's play are absent in Wroth's. Clorin's loyalty to a dead man, which justifies her independence from society, is ultimately unhealthily repressive. Silvesta, the parallel character in Wroth's play, is allowed her independence without having to marry the man who offers to die for her, or pledging loyalty to a dead man. A few women in some of Fletcher's later plays -- notably Delphia in *The Prophetess* -- need no justification for their independence, and these later works are undoubtedly more subversive of patriarchal and misogynistic attitudes towards women than *The Faithful Shepherdess*.44 However, Fletcher's first solo play already shows signs that he was willing to experiment and test the boundaries of conventional attitudes towards sexuality when it suited his artistic requirements.

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44 See the final section of the thesis which discusses the ways in which women characters use masques and masque-like effects to bring about positive changes and assert their independence.
Clichéd characterization, lengthy and fantastical plots, elaborate use of language and perhaps most of all supposedly conservative politics are aspects of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century romance which have rendered it unappealing for many twentieth-century critics. One of the most extreme (but not atypical) attitudes to romance was expressed by M.A. Shaaber in the 1950s:

In the first half of the [seventeenth] century the appetite of the reading public for prose fiction was appeased with servings of sixteenth-century prose fiction warmed over. Romances of chivalry, especially the late medieval or post medieval variety, the Arcadia, Euphues, Greene's tales, jestbooks, even such venerable compilations as the Gesta Romanorum and the Seven Wise Masters of Rome were reprinted again and again to satisfy the demands of readers whom we can hardly help suspecting of being unsophisticated, if not culturally retarded.¹

Shaaber shares with other critics the notion that romance had had its day by the seventeenth century; that rather than being part of an on-going literary tradition it was a cultural cul-de-sac. In the 1940s B.G. MacCarthy singled out Sidney's Arcadia (1593) (which also heads Shaaber's list of culturally retarded material) as being particularly retrograde and pernicious in its influence on English Literature:

As for the influence of the Arcadia, it is entirely to be deplored, and its occasional poetic beauties do not compensate for the fact that for long centuries English fiction was cursed with this heritage of artificial sentimentality.²

¹ Seventeenth-Century English Prose (New York, 1957), pp.35-36. P.E. Russell, also writing in the 1950s, evidently felt s/he was speaking for most people when s/he wrote 'We are, as yet, not within sight of a satisfying explanation of the extra-ordinary appeal which the romances of chivalry had for European readers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries[...]’ (English Seventeenth-Century Interpretations of Spanish Literature, Atlante 1 (1953), p.70).

Unlike many other late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century romances, Sidney's *Arcadia* has undergone something of a renaissance in the last three decades. Critics emphasise again and again Sidney's 'seriousness' compared with other writers of romance, a seriousness which to some extent serves to lift his work out of the (still disreputable) romance mode.³

Apologists for Beaumont and Fletcher have followed those critics who have reclaimed Sidney's reputation by distancing the plays from the romance tradition. Whilst Sidney is said to have transcended romance by his seriousness, Beaumont and Fletcher are often thought to have used the romance tradition in an ironic way. It is no accident that Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607) is one of the few plays in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon to have received any post-Restoration critical acclaim. Like Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (first part published 1604), *The Knight* is acceptable because it is seen too simply as 'anti-romance'. What many

³ For Andrew Gurr's attitude to Sidney's seriousness, see below, p.169. In their introductions to Sidney's work both Evans and Hollander/Kermode make the point that the seriousness of the *Arcadia* casts doubt on its generic position:

*The briefest comparison between Sidney's work and its sources, however, shows that although he shared with them a common idiom, his treatment is immeasurably more controlled and more serious; and for this reason there has been much discussion about the precise genre to which the *Arcadia* belongs.* (Maurice Evans, introduction to *Sir Philip Sidney: The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (Harmondsworth, 1977), p.20.)

*The New Arcadia* represented a new mode of seriousness, introducing just the confusion of genres which the *Defence* so deplored [...] After finishing two books and part of a very long third one, Sidney abandoned the project [...] There was perhaps no way in which Sidney could handle the transformation of the brilliant but limited genre of the first book without the kind of fundamental re-thinking of the nature of a literary form [...] (John Hollander and Frank Kermode (eds.), *The Literature of Renaissance England* (in the series *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature*, general editors Frank Kermode and John Hollander), (Oxford, 1973), p.126.)

The implication of these editors is that a romance with serious literary intentions is a contradiction in terms.
commentators seem to forget is that by the early seventeenth-century romance and 'anti-romance' were thoroughly entwined. It was quite usual for writers of romance to play against reader or audience expectation in a multitude of different ways: it would be difficult to name a romance of that period which did not play with the boundaries of its genre. Is it romance that Beaumont attacks in his play, or the citizens' outmoded and ill-read response to it? Don Quixote has a serious 'modern' pastoral romance running alongside the first part of its satire on chivalric romance: a fact which is often ignored by its commentators.  

Philip Finkelpearl, in his book length defence of the 'Parnassus biceps' (Beaumont and Fletcher), is oddly chary of even mentioning the romance literature from which the plots of many of the plays are taken.  

One exception is Guarini, but Finkelpearl suggests that Fletcher's use of Il pastor fido (1598) as a model for The Faithful Shepherdess (1609) had a detrimental effect:

Anyone who has perused Fletcher's main model, Guarini's Pastor Fido, will easily believe the report that in its first performance at Mantua in 1598 sixteen hundred lines were omitted without the audience being aware of it. On a smaller scale, the same might happen in a production of Fletcher's play. This is not to say that a very entertaining play could not have been written along the lines Fletcher planned.  

(p.110-111)

The subtext seems to be that Fletcher could have written a more interesting play if he'd been more true to himself and less true to Guarini. Finkelpearl also distances

4 Martin Hume, writing at the turn of the century, seems totally bewildered by Cervantes' pastoral leanings:

It seems strange at first sight that so consummate a realist as Cervantes should, even temporarily, have clothed his ideas in the languid, insipid artificiality of the pastoral.  

(Spanish Influence on English Literature (London, 1905), p.141.)

5 Court and Country Politics in the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher (Princeton, 1990). Beaumont and Fletcher are referred to as the 'Parnassus biceps' on the title page to the First Folio of their work (1647) and on the first page of Finkelpearl's introduction.
Fletcher from romance in his discussion of the debt to Sidney's *Arcadia of Cupid's Revenge* (1607-8) (the only mention of Sidney's influence on Beaumont and Fletcher in his study). He suggests Sidney's romance hero, Plangus, is converted into an 'anti-hero' [Leucippus], deeply appropriate to the Jacobean and Caroline age', demonstrating 'the large changes in English culture in the brief interval since Sidney's death' (p.133-4). Romance literature, then, is apparently fading into the past when Beaumont and Fletcher are writing. If this is indeed Finkelpearl's attitude it might explain why he only mentions the historian Procopius's work as a source for *The Tragedy of Valentinian*, completely ignoring the French romance writer d'Urfé, whose work Fletcher is equally likely to have used in creating the play (p.217).  

It has been argued that though Beaumont and Fletcher did draw on romances, they read them ironically. Annabel Patterson, for example, suggests that *The Faithful Shepherdess* is a parody and was 'written sardonically' as 'Jacobean camp'. It's odd that none of the writers of the prefatory material defending the work when it was published in 1609 after its stage failure (including Fletcher's own address to the reader) gave any indication at all that it was to be read as a parody. Patterson does not account for this surprising omission.

Gordon McMullan follows her in seeing the play as 'camp', but broadens this observation to Fletcher's work in general:

> In this irony or 'camp' and in his persistently ambivalent response to romance, at once depending upon and mocking the genre, Fletcher echoes the experiments and achievements of his Spanish sources.

Fletcher's response to romance was undoubtedly ambivalent, though I would say that it was not necessarily more so than many contemporary writers of romance.

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6 Nancy Cotton Pearse also only mentions Procopius as a source for *Valentinian* (John Fletcher's Chastity Plays: Mirrors of Modesty (Lewisburg, 1973), p.156).


McMullan seems to be following in the footsteps of most twentieth-century defenders of Beaumont and Fletcher in trying to show that they rose above romance and left it behind.

I will argue here that if the value judgements which often seem to accompany discussions of romance could be set aside, a more accurate study of Beaumont and Fletcher's debt to their sources would be possible. *Philaster* (1608-9), one of the early Beaumont and Fletcher successes, has already been the subject of some thorough (though, as I shall argue, rather flawed) investigations into its sources, whereas there has been relatively little work done on the sources of Fletcher's solo play *The Tragedy of Valentinian* (1610-12). In addition to providing some useful contextual groundwork for later discussions of how Fletcher (and his collaborators) worked within the romance mode, the discussion also introduces many of the features in the representation of gender and sexuality which recur in the plays of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon, which have become the subject of this work: the way in which women become involved in male rivalry and ambition; the meanings of both male and female lust and chastity; the importance of slander; the degree to which women are allowed power and autonomy.

Andrew Gurr's discussion of *Philaster* in the introduction to his 1969 edition remains the most thorough and comprehensive investigation of the sources of the play to date.⁹ I will discuss Gurr's essay at some length here, because it draws together other source studies and it seems representative of other work on Beaumont and Fletcher which at root seems frightened of admitting the importance of romance. I will then go on to discuss in some detail the nature of the debt to Alonso Perez's work, as well as other areas previously neglected in source studies of *Philaster*, such

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⁹ Andrew Gurr (ed.), *Philaster or Love Lies a-Bleeding: Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, The Revels Plays*, General Editor: Clifford Leech (London, 1969). Dora Jean Ashe edited another version of *Philaster* in 1974, but is not as full in her investigation of source material.
as its debt Guarini's *Il pastor fido* and Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess*.

Gurr begins his section of the introduction on sources by stating that 'There is no obvious single source for *Philaster*\(^1\) (p.xxix) but goes on to discuss how the 'basic story-situation' can be found in Alonso Perez's continuation of Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana* (which was published in an English translation by Bartholomew Yong in 1598) -- a view first put forward in 1926.\(^1\) He then follows James E. Savage in hypothesizing 'that *Philaster* is a reconstruction of the materials in *Cupid's Revenge*, which in its turn is a conflation of two stories from the *Arcadia* [of Philip Sidney]' (p.xxxii).\(^1\) The section ends with a paragraph on similarities between *Philaster* and *Hamlet* (1600-1), although in a later section of the introduction he also implies that there may be a debt to *Cymbeline* (1609-10) (p.xlv), following R.T.Thornberry's theory that *Philaster* was written after *Cymbeline*.\(^2\)

There are a number of surprising turns to Gurr's discussion. The most striking is the primacy given to Sidney's *Arcadia* as a source. Moreover, the raising up of the *Arcadia* is accompanied by the putting down of the *Diana*:

\[...\] it can be said that the essentials, if not of the story then of what the story is designed to do, come from the *Arcadia* and not the *Diana*. \(^{(p.xxxii)}\)

To give the *Arcadia* primacy as a source is surprising because there are no sustained plot similarities between it and *Philaster*. Gurr, following Savage, bases his

\(^1\) *DIANA OF GEORGE OF MONTEMAYOR: Translated out of Spanish into English by BARTHOLOMEW YONG of the Middle Temple Gentleman* [sic] (London, 1598). Perez's contribution is confusingly called 'The Second Part of Diana of George of Montemayor', and is printed from p.161 to p.375. The story of Disteus appears in the seventh and eighth books of Perez's continuation, pp.330-375.

Fletcher's possible debt to Perez was first noted by T.P. Harrison, 'A Probable Source of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*', *P.M.L.A.* 41 (1926), 294-303.

\(^2\) James E. Savage, 'Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* and Sidney's *Arcadia*', *English Literary History* 14 (1947), 194-206.

arguments on the idea that *Philaster* is a rewritten version of *Cupid's Revenge*, which did take its strands of plot from the *Arcadia*. By effectively treating *Cupid's Revenge* and the *Arcadia* as one source Gurr and Savage are able to suggest that more characters ultimately come from the *Arcadia* than the *Diana*:

The four character-types of Perez, the noble hero Disteus, the love-lorn maiden Dardanea, the lecherous antagonist Sagastes, and the faithful go-between Palna, all types which appear in the *Arcadia*, are presented in *Cupid's Revenge* with the addition of the further Arcadian types of lecherous woman, stupid King, and girl disguised as page to the hero. (p.xxxii)

The counting of character types is not necessarily much of an indication of debt. By altering the way some of the character types are described one could say that six, rather than four, characters from *Philaster* can also be found in Perez's continuation of the *Diana*:

1) Noble hero: Disteus (*Diana*), Philaster (*Philaster*).
2) Love-lorn maiden: Dardanea (*Diana*), Arathusa (*Philaster*).
3) Lecherous antagonist: Sagastes (*Diana*), Pharamond (*Philaster*).
4) Faithful go-between: Palna (*Diana*), Bellario (*Philaster*).
5) King on the side of the lecherous antagonist: Rotindus (*Diana*), King of Calabria and Sicily (*Philaster*).
6) Unchaste partner to the lecherous antagonist: Marthea (*Diana*), Megra (*Philaster*).

Thus it could be argued that equal numbers of character types from *Cupid's Revenge* (*Arcadia*) and from the *Diana* appear in *Philaster*. Bellario is counted twice by Gurr, as the faithful go-between and the girl page. Moreover, the girl page in the *Arcadia*, Zelmane, does not appear in either of the stories from the *Arcadia* which were used in *Cupid's Revenge*, so one might as well say that Montemayor's girl page (Felismena) -- who isn't part of Perez's story -- could also be counted as a character type borrowed from the *Diana*.

A brief discussion of the 'type' of the girl page, can perhaps show how circular and uninformative a comparison of sources based on character types quickly becomes. The most obvious point to make is that Sidney's Zelmane may well have been based on Montemayor's Felismena in the first place, so that even if Beaumont and Fletcher
had overlooked the girl page in the Diana they would have found her descendant in the Arcadia. Judith M. Kennedy, in the introduction to her edition of Bartholomew Yong's translation of the Diana, writes that Bellario owes little to Montemayor's Felismena in character or story but she does suggest that Lodge was inspired by Felismena. Shakespeare, too, must have been influenced by Montemayor in his creation of Rosalind and Viola (and perhaps Imogen) either directly, or through Lodge's Rosalynd or indeed (in Imogen's case) through Sidney's Zelmeane. It would be extremely difficult to deny that the characterization of Bellario was influenced by Shakespeare's girl pages, thus leading us back to Montemayor one way or another.

These writers obviously enjoyed re-working familiar characters, and tracing the ancestry of character types can bring only a superficial insight into how writers used their sources. A more productive approach might be to look for specific correspondences in plots, and relationships between characters. After all, it would be rather difficult to find a contemporary narrative or play which didn't have at least three or four of those six character types listed above.

In terms of plot, neither Cupid's Revenge, nor those parts of the Arcadia which are cited by Gurr and Savage, correspond with Philaster. The argument for a connection between the two plays seems to be based on the fact that they are both early collaborative efforts of Beaumont and Fletcher, and they share the character types as described above.

Philaster is more serious in tone than Perez's story both in terms of state and gender politics. Perhaps this to some extent explains why Gurr and Savage have been


The name 'Belario' is used by Lady Mary Wroth for a male character in the unpublished continuation of the Urania, probably after a character in Montreux's Les Bergeries (1585), Belair (see above, p.131). The name 'Bellario' was used by Shakespeare for a kinsman of Portia's mentioned at III.iv.50. and in IV.i of The Merchant of Venice (1596-97). None of these three characters have anything in common with Beaumont and Fletcher's heroine, except the name.
so eager to give the *Arcadia* rather than the *Diana* precedence as a source for *Philaster*: they see the play as being indicative of a new kind of moral seriousness in romance for which Sidney is supposed to have been responsible:

*Philaster* is one of the most ambitious works of literary collaboration ever written. Its aim was no less than the translation of the high literary and educational designs of Sidney's *Arcadia* into commercial drama[...]

(Gurr, p.xxv)

In redeploying the Arcadian characters and tightening up the plot Beaumont and Fletcher were not merely elaborating the *Diana's* story. Sidney's fundamental design in the *Arcadia*, which Beaumont called 'an everlasting work', was very different from the easy entertainment of Montemayor and Perez [...] (ibid., p.xxxiii.)

Without wishing to deny the importance of Sidney's *Arcadia*, it ought to be seen in the context of a wider European interest in pastoral romance which gave rise to works by Sidney's predecessors Sannazaro, Ariosto, and Montemayor, his contemporaries Tasso and Guarini, and his successor d'Urfé, among many others. Sidney was participating in a pan-European tradition of literary art which had a tremendous effect on almost all the writers of fiction in the English Renaissance. To claim that Sidney's literary aims in the *Arcadia* stood out as being far more laudable than any other works suggests a parochialism which Beaumont and Fletcher almost certainly did not share.

It is ironic that Judith Kennedy, who approaches the subject as an expert on Montemayor, writes that it is Beaumont and Fletcher who lack serious literary intent by comparison:

The plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, particularly the Fletcherian comedies, are far removed from the spirit of *Diana* by their frequent eroticism, cynicism and immorality. 14

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14 Kennedy, p.liii. Brunno M. Damiani, in *La Diana of Montemayor as Social and Religious Teaching* (Kentucky, 1983) goes so far as to argue that the *Diana* represents 'a Christian pilgrimage' (p.109).
It should be noted, however, that since Yong's translation of Perez's continuation of
the *Diana* is not included in Kennedy's edition (which does include Yong's translation
of Gil Polo's continuation), she may not have thought it matched up to Montemayor's
work in moral or literary standards.

Perez's story of Disteus and Dardanea has a number of similarities, at least in
the basic setting of the story. Like Philaster and Pharamond of *Philaster*, Disteus and
Sagastes of the *Diana* are enemies: Philaster/Disteus having the good-will of the
people and Pharamond/Sagastes the favour of the King. Both Philaster and Disteus
are saved from the wrath of their enemies by citizens of their countries. When
Pharamond is assailed by angry citizens and Sagastes is attacked by a rival lover,
Philaster/Disteus step in to save them. Both Pharamond and Sagastes court a woman
(Megra/Marthea) who is shown to have a dishonourable attitude towards love. In
both stories there is a comic scene, pivotal to the plot, in which a couple are found in
bed together, though interestingly in Perez's story the hero and his lady are
discovered, rather than the villain and villainess as in *Philaster*. Both Sagastes and
Pharamond eventually fall out of favour with the King, but otherwise leave the plots
unscathed. Both heroes are forgiven by the Kings at the end of the two stories:
however, whereas Philaster is restored to his rightful place in society, Disteus
disappears (though we are given the hope of his restoration, if he can be found).

These are the notable points of connection between Perez's story and
*Philaster* (apart from the similar character types). Gurr suggests that Disteus's
'outburst of misanthropy' at the discovery of the desertion of his faithful servant Palna
may have inspired Philaster's misanthropic reaction at being told that Arathusa and
Bellario have been false to him (p.xxxi). However, I feel that outbursts of
misanthropy are not unusual enough to be linked without some other common factor.
Philaster's outburst is a result of jealous sexual love, whereas Disteus is angry at
having been rejected by a mother figure.

There are many other differences in plot: neither Disteus nor Sagastes (unlike
Philaster and Pharamond) is in line for the throne, though they are both 'of the descent
and famous pedigree of Eolus king of Aeolia' (Perez, p.330). Disteus courts the sister of Sagastes (Dardanea) whereas Philaster is in rivalry with Pharamond for the hand of the daughter of the King (Arathusa). Disteus and Dardanea have a sexual relationship and are forced to flee to take up a pastoral life style; whereas Philaster and Arathusa remain chaste until the end of the play when a marriage as ruler and consort is promised.

It seems at first sight that Beaumont and Fletcher weren't entirely happy with representing Perez's moral standards on stage. Arathusa is a virgin and remains so throughout the play, which ends with the conventional closure of the promise of marriage with Philaster. Dardanea, by contrast, is a young widow, rather than a virgin (a significant difference, I think -- one need only think of other young widows in literature to realise why: Dame Pliant in *The Alchemist* (1610, pub. 1612) and the Duchess in *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613) to name but two). Although she extracts a promise of marriage from Disteus, they begin a sexual relationship which results in pregnancy without any further mention of marriage. There is no real ending to the story (typical for prose romance) only the promise of a hopeful one.

In *Philaster* the two villains are discovered in bed together in Act II, scene iv; whereas in Perez's story (pp.366-7) it is the hero and heroine who are caught in flagrante delicto. Sagastes comes into his sister's room while she is in bed with Disteus. He hides under the covers, and Dardanea pretends that the lump under the bed clothes is a child that she often sleeps with. Sagastes is doubtful and thrusts his hands under the bed clothes to feel the child's feet. Disteus throws the covers on him, runs out of the room in his night shirt and dashes through the town desperately trying to find somewhere to hide from Sagastes.

The scene in *Philaster* in which the king (tipped off by Arathusa) breaks in on Pharamond and Megra at night probably owes as much in terms of plot to an earlier incident in Perez's story. Sagastes lurks about outside the house of his mistress at night, and is ambushed by a jealous rival and his friends. He is rescued by Disteus who steps in with his sword to protect Sagastes who is unarmed (pp.340-6), an action
which is comparable with Philaster's intervention on behalf of Pharamond to stop him from being lynched by angry citizens, later in Philaster. The sense of vulnerability, embarrassment, illegitimacy, confrontation and humour which is present in both the nocturnal incidents in Perez's story find their echoes in the episode in which Pharamond is caught with Megra in Philaster.

In Philaster, the hero's chastity is juxtaposed with Pharamond's lack of sexual continence. Perez's story, on the other hand, implicitly contrasts Disteus's virility in fighting off Sagastes's attackers and seducing his sister, with Sagastes's impotent need to be protected from his attackers and chaste wooing of a woman who doesn't really want him. In Philaster unrestrained sexuality is socially disruptive: both Pharamond's adultery and Philaster's sexual jealousy can be seen as threats to a stable political order. In Perez's story the sexual love of Disteus and Dardanea is shown to overcome the social difficulties which constrain them.

Pharamond's sexual desires reduce him to the level of beast in the eyes of Dion:

[...] Oh, hee's a pretious lyme-hound [hunting-dog]: turne him loose upon the pursue of a Lady, and if he lose her, hang liim up i'th' slip [slip-leash: noose]. When my fox-bitch Bewty growes proud [sexually excited], I'le borrow him. (IV.i.13-15)

He is obviously unfit to be ruler if he can't govern his own body better than an animal. However, the sentiments expressed here by Dion seem to run against his earlier statement which he makes when the lovers are discovered:

Tis strange a man cannot ride a stage
Or two, to breathe himselfe, without a warrant [...] (II.iv.129-30)

Here Dion seems to be defending Pharamond's right to sow a few wild oats without the interference of the state. Dion's two statements may not be as contradictory as they seem. He could be saying that sexual morality, though an important indication of the worth of an individual, ought not to be imposed by the state. An individual's own
sexual morality (or lack of it) is more important than society's judgement -- especially if the judge is partisan, as the king obviously is.

Politics and romance are intertwined in Philaster. The play hinges on Arathusa's chastity; for the romance it is essential that she is innocent, in political terms what is imperative is that she cannot be proved unchaste. To her lover Philaster what matters is her fidelity; the court's concern is that her reputation should not be impuned (because of the potential ramifications for the succession). Arathusa is not put on trial (as is Hermione in The Winter's Tale), nor even given a long speech in which to protest her innocence (as is Imogen in Cymbeline): she has to rely on Bellario's last-minute revelation to vindicate her.\(^{15}\) The reconciliation of Philaster and Arathusa in Act IV resolves the romance: the audience knows that they are innocent of any malicious or unchaste intent. However, the testimony of one person with a grudge against Arathusa still seems likely to bring about her downfall. In Fletcher's political world what can be said against someone is often as important as what can be proved to be true, as has already become clear from reading The Faithful Shepherdess.

Though at first sight Philaster seems far more concerned with sexual ethics than its source, this is not necessarily the case. In Perez's story the relationship between Disteus and Dardanea is shown to be much more honourable than that between Sagastes and Marthea, even though the latter marry and the former do not. This is because Disteus and Dardanea have a strong mutual love, whereas Sagastes only believes he is requited. Even though she is in love with someone else and puts off the marriage for as long as possible, Marthea encourages Sagastes:

\[\ldots\] she gave him as many superficial favours as he desired, and more indeed, then her honour required. (p.338)

\(^{15}\) Nancy Cotton Pearse argues that 'Philaster is not a chastity play as such' because '[t]hough there are many accusations and counter-accusations of lust, Arethusa [sic] is not given a set speech in defense of her chastity' (p.181).
The hollowness of their relationship is emphasized again when Sagastes asks Marthea's father for her hand in marriage, rather than negotiating directly with her as Disteus does with Dardanea. Her father gives his consent but says that 'it was not amiss to leave some part [of the decision] to his wife and daughter' (p.338) thus sending the ball back into Marthea's court. Instead of having the courage to refuse Sagastes she goes along with the marriage. The respectable outer show of Sagastes and Marthea is contrasted with the inner integrity of Disteus and Dardanea.

This concern with the tension between private and public morality, common in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century romance, particularly in pastoral, is echoed in Philaster. What is important to Philaster, Bellario and Arathusa is that they all trust and love each other without any external proof of innocence. The blood Bellario and Arathusa shed, a corporeal manifestation of their vulnerability and their willingness to die, also functions metaphorically as the internal proof that Philaster requires.

Megra is far more reminiscent of Corisca in Guarini's *Il pastor fido* than of Marthea in Perez's story, who, for the most part, is an inoffensive character. Corisca, who is promiscuous herself, attempts to trap the chaste heroine Amarillis in a cave with a man to prove that adultery has taken place. Megra's undiscriminating lust, spite and attempts to prove the heroine guilty of adultery parallel those of Corisca. A happy ending is dependent upon proving the heroine innocent and Corisca/Megra corrupt to the other characters of both *Il pastor fido* and Philaster in Act V. In both plays the audience already knows that the heroine is innocent: the dramatic interest lies in seeing how the 'good' characters are going to escape the intrigues of the 'bad' characters. It is common in pastoral tragicomedy to see miscreants manipulating a rigidly hierarchical and rule-bound society for their own ends. Beaumont and Fletcher take this idea and transplant it out of Arcadia into a world of politics not entirely dissimilar to that in England at the time.16

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16 This is true, not only in terms of gender politics where a woman's honour might easily be besmirched by rumour, but also in terms of the wider political concerns of the play. James, like the King in Philaster, was ruler of two kingdoms, tried to marry his child to a Spanish royal, and had an autocratic attitude to his prerogative (see
Gurr's insistence that no romance except Sidney's *Arcadia* had any significant influence on Fletcher colours his reading of Guarini, as much as it does Perez:

It was not to Guarini, however, that [Fletcher] looked for the material of the new genre [pastoral tragicomedy]. Daniel's title [*The Queen's Arcadia*] shows where the English pastoral tradition saw its origin. Sidney's *Arcadia* had gone through five editions [...] by this time, and a Latin version, Barclay's *Argenis*, was even more popular. [...] It was eminently respectable literary material for an ambitious young dramatist to imitate. (pp.xlvii-xlviili)

Gurr almost seems to be suggesting that *Il pastor fido* was not entirely respectable material compared with the *Arcadia*. To deny the importance of Guarini to Fletcher in the writing of *The Faithful Shepherdess* seems an almost absurd distortion. Gurr's attempt to see Barclay's *Argenis* as simply another version of Sidney's romance is also rather surprising. It is reminiscent of critics of Mary Wroth who often see her *Urania* merely as a rewritten version of Sidney's *Arcadia*.

Fletcher reworked some of the ideas in *The Faithful Shepherdess* in *Philaster*. The stabbing of Arathusa by Philaster is reminiscent of the stabbing of Amoret by Perigot. The anger with which Philaster and Perigot first greet the suggestion of infidelity in their loved ones is very similar:

**Perigot:**

[...] when I leave to be  
The true admirer of thy chastitie,  
Let me deserve the hot polluted name,  
Of a wilde woodman, or affect some dame  
Whose often prostitution hath begot,  
More foule diseases, then ever yet the hot  
Sun bred through his burnings, whilst the dog  
Pursues the raging Lyon, throwing fog  
And deadly vapor from his angry breath,  
Filling the lower world with plague and death. (I.i.128-137)

**Philaster:**

[...] thus to rob a Lady  
Of her good name, is an infectious sinne,
Not to be pardon'd; be it false as hell,  
Twill never be redeem'd, if it be sowne  
Amongst the people, fruitfull to increase  
All evil they shall heare. Let me alone,  
That I may cut off falshood, whilst it springs:  
Set hills on hills betwixt me and the man  
That utters this, and I will scale them all,  
And from the utmost top fall on his necke,  
Like thunder from a clowd. (III.i.67-77)

Sexual jealousy and moral righteousness are merged in both speeches to produce a huge, almost apocalyptic anger, which, paradoxically, turns out to be very threatening to those it is supposed to protect. Philaster's anger is directed outward with heroic bravado, whereas Perigot's is directed inward (he curses himself like this more than once), though both result in similarly disastrous actions.

Perigot's desire to become a wild woodman if Amoret is proved to be false is also echoed by Philaster at the beginning of Act IV, Scene iii:

Oh, that I had beene nourish'd in these woods,  
With milke of Goates, and Akrons [acorns], and not knowne  
The right of Crownes, nor the dissembling trains  
Of womens lookes: but dig'd my selfe a Cave,  
Where I, my fire, my Cattell and my bed,  
Might have beene shut together in one shed:  
And then had taken me some mountaine girlie,  
Beaten with winds, chaste as the hardned rocks  
Whereon she dwells, that might have strewed my bed  
With leaves, and reedes, and with the skins of beasts  
Our neighbours: And have borne at her big breasts  
My large course issue. This had beene a life  
Free from vexation. (IV.iii.1-13)

This paraphrase of the first lines from Juvenal's sixth satire is typical of pastoral-style escapism. It juxtaposes a private life of integrity with a dangerous and corrupting public life. He seems to blame himself for being politically ambitious and for being fooled by 'the dissembling trains/ Of women's looks'. Indeed his name suggests both traits: of ambition in loving the stars (phil — aster); and in the hopeless love of a woman (perhaps in tribute to another hopeless lover, Astrophel, of Sidney's sonnet sequence *Astrophel and Stella* (1582)). Like Philaster, Perigot's reaction to his
beloved's supposed infidelity is to withdraw from society.

The language Philaster uses to describe his ideal pastoral companion comes as rather a surprise — her 'big breasts' and 'large course issue' (children) are not congruent with his usually more refined prose style and imagery. At the heart of the imagined pastoral solution to his problems is a rough but prelapsarian sexuality, unconcerned with the niceties of courtship and marriage. Female sexual transgression is seen as one of the dreadful products of civilisation: Philaster would be able to take it for granted that his 'mountaine girle' would be as 'chaste as the hardned rocks/ Whereon she dwells', presumably making a contractual arrangement of marriage redundant. In contemporary pastoral, The Faithful Shepherdess and Il pastor fido included, female chastity is as much in question as it is in Philaster, which is presumably why he resorts to a classical rather than a contemporary model to voice his yearnings in this instance.17

However the plots of Philaster and the pastoral tragicomedies discussed in the previous section are built around the same fundamental tension, that between inner integrity and outer respectability. In Philaster and Wroth's Love's Victory (and for that matter numerous other pastoral tragicomedies) the dramatic suspense of the central part of the play is resolved when the protagonists are able fully to acknowledge and believe in their love for one another, but there can be no happy ending until their love is publicly sanctioned, which in each play only happens after a life-threatening test and a surprise revelation. Philaster greets the news that Bellario is a woman at the end of the play with evident relief since Bellario's life and Arathusa's reputation will be saved, but his reconciliation with Arathusa comes three scenes earlier, before he has any proof of her innocence (this situation crops up again in Cymbeline when Posthumous repents having ordered Imogen's death long before he

17 See Myriam Yvonne Jehenson's comprehensive discussion of the way that different authors of renaissance pastoral tackled issues of sexual ethics (among other things) in chapter one of The Golden World of the Pastoral: A Comparative Study of Sidney's New Arcadia and d'Urfé's L'Astrée (Ravenna, 1981).
has any proof of her innocence). In *Philaster* and *The Faithful Shepherdess* the signs which assure the hero of the heroine's love are her survival and her constancy after being physically attacked by him. Perigot, unlike Philaster and Posthumous, is never given any proof of Amoret's chastity: in the pastoral world none is needed once the characters have faith in one another.

The impetuous speeches and actions of Philaster have been compared with those of Hamlet. Finkelpearl sees resemblances between Philaster and other heroes from the Beaumont and Fletcher canon: Leucippus (*Cupid's Revenge* (1607-8)), Amintor (*The Maid's Tragedy* (1610)) and Arbaces (*A King and No King* (1611)). This 'character type', according to Finkelpearl, is '[a] figure of great public esteem, but weak-willed, life-hating, given to extreme, self-defeating, impressively noble gestures', reminiscent of Hamlet (p.134). Gurr also suggests that the 'mental torment of Philaster is [...] modelled on Hamlet's' (p.xxxiv). However, it seems to me that the most important precursor for Philaster is not Hamlet but Perigot. Not only are there parallels in the way that they speak, but there are strong affinities between their respective characters and actions: their sexual jealousy; their attempted murder of their lovers; and their subsequent unconditional forgiveness of them.

The tendency of Gurr's study is to see Beaumont and Fletcher as literary magpies stealing the brightest gems from their late sixteenth-century predecessors, producing ambitious syntheses, which, however, lack originality. For Gurr, as for many modern critics, Beaumont and Fletcher represent the end of an era, a falling-off from the achievements of Shakespeare, Sidney and others of the English high renaissance. While it is important to recognise the vernacular tradition, the Jacobean period was not simply the fag-end of an Elizabethan golden age of literature; it saw the evolution of new pan-European movements in literature, of which pastoral tragicomedy was an important example. Rather than being merely a dramatic footnote to Sidney's *Arcadia*, *Philaster* might be seen as a further development from pastoral tragicomedy, particularly as Fletcher had envisaged it in *The Faithful Shepherdess*. 
There are at least two possible sources for *The Tragedy of Valentinian* (1610-12). The earliest version of the story is by the fifth-century historian Procopius who wrote an eight volume account of the Persian, Vandal and Gothic wars of the Emperor Justinian, covering the years 527 to 553 A.D. Fletcher could have read this in Greek, Latin or French.\(^1\) The edition I shall refer to is *Histoire des Guerres Faictes Par L'Empereur Justinian Contre les Vandales et les Goths* (Paris, 1587), which is as likely as any to have been used by Fletcher. The story is just a couple of pages long, introduced parenthetically, almost casually, into the history (pages 7-8):

Quant à la mort de Valentinian je diray en peu de parolles comme elle advint.\(^2\)

Honoré d'Urfé took this short piece and embellished it into a much longer and more elaborate narrative in the second part of *L'Astrée* (Paris, 1610).\(^3\) The full story is told in the twelfth book of the second part, pages 810-924, although the events which coincide with Fletcher's play (the rape of Maximus's wife; the plot against Aecius; the overthrow of Valentinian; the rise and fall of Maximus) take place in pages 845-902.

Fletcher may have used the work of both Procopius and d'Urfé, inspired by the romance and the drama of d'Urfé, but using the brevity of the original narrative to tighten the plot into five acts. It is possible Fletcher used the same technique in constructing *The Island Princess* (c.1621), which again seems to have come from two

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\(^1\) The British Library has Latin copies printed in 1506, 1509, 1531 and 1576, and a Greek copy printed in 1607.

\(^2\) Procopius, p.7:

As for the death of Valentinian, I will say a few words on how it happened.

\(^3\) All references to *L'Astrée* are from the following edition: *L'Astrée de Messire Honoré D'Urfé Seconde Partie* (Paris, 1614).
sources: a fairly brief episode in a history and a romance elaboration of that history. 4

All three texts have many similarities and differences. Rather than attempting to catalogue them all, I will focus on the representation of the two principal women in the story, Lucina and Eudoxa. Their parts shed interesting light on issues of gender relations. Moreover, some of the most significant differences between the stories can be seen in the representation of the two women.

Fletcher keeps the names of four of the five principal characters which are common to all three texts: Valentinian, the sexually corrupt Emperor of Rome; Maximus (Maxime in the French texts) 'a great Souldier', whose wife Valentinian rapes; Aecius (Aitius in L'Astrée and Aëce in Histoire des Guerres) 'the Emperours Loyal General', whom Maximus plots against in order to precipitate the downfall of Valentinian; and Eudoxa, Valentinian's wife (Eudoxe in L'Astrée and Eudoxie in Histoire des Guerres). Lucina, the rape victim in Fletcher's play, is unnamed in Histoire des Guerres, and appears as Isadore in L'Astrée. In choosing the name Lucina, Fletcher may have wanted to signal independence from L'Astrée at the same time as evoking the name and the story of Lucrece. 5 The two stories are very similar: in each the story of a rape of a woman by a monarch has wide political repercussions. The rape is not only seen as a crime in itself, but is indicative of a collapse of political morality in the state as a whole. 6

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4 The bare bones of the history are told in Bartolome Leonardo de Argensola's Conquista Delas Islas Malucas (Madrid, 1609), and the romance elaboration is L'Histoire de Ruis Dias, & de Quixaire Princesse des Mohiques by Le Sieur de Bellan, which was published at the back of the first French translation of Cervantes Novelas Exemplares in 1615, pp. 313-345.

5 There is a character named Lucine (a midwife) in an unrelated part of L'Astrée, however. Lucina was the goddess of childbirth and is invoked as such once in Cymbeline (V.iv.43) and twice in Pericles (I.i.8 and III.i.10). Fletcher may intend an allusion in choosing this name: the victimisation of Lucina begins a process which ends the corrupt reign of Valentinian. Her purity signals the need for regeneration -- in more ways than one she helps deliver the state. Lucina was also a name associated with Elizabeth I (see Simon Shepherd, Amazons and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth Century Drama (Brighton, 1981), p.35).

6 Many of the play's commentators focus on its politics. Writing of the story of the
As Collatine precipitates the downfall of Lucrece by boasting about her to Tarquin, so Maximus is partly responsible for Lucina's rape by gambling away a ring to Valentinian, which is used by him to lure her to court in all three texts. In the stories of both Lucrece and Lucina it is a kind of foolishness tainted with sin in the husband which brings about the wife's downfall: her guilt in 'deserving' to be raped (an accusation levelled at rape victims even in the 1990s) is displaced onto her husband. Indeed, Nancy Vickers has suggested that the Lucrece story is not really about Lucrece:

[...] metaphors commonly read as signs of a battle between the sexes emerge rather from a homosocial struggle, in this case a male rivalry, which positions a third (female) term in a median space from which it is initially used and finally eliminated.7

rape of Lucretia, which he links with Valentinian, Rowland Wymer explains that 'In the Renaissance, the sexual and political halves of the story were easily connected by means of the commonplace body/state analogy and the often stressed relation between good government of a kingdom and self-government of the passions.' (Suicide and Despair in the Jacobean Drama (Brighton, 1986), p.105). When Rochester came to revise Valentinian for the Restoration stage, he depoliticised it by making Valentinian's misdemeanours entirely sexual -- a mark of how politically potent the play was in the seventeenth century. Sandra Clark points out that 'Valentinian [...] is often linked with The Maid's Tragedy in its handling of the divine right issue, both by those who see the plays as absolutist and those who do not.' (The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: Sexual Themes and Dramatic Representation (New York, 1994), p.104). It was one of the plays which caused Coleridge to form the view that Beaumont and Fletcher were 'the most servile jure divino royalists' (cited by Roberta F. Brinkley (ed.), Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century (Durham, North Carolina, 1995). Marco Mincoff also writes of the 'rabid propaganda of absolutism' in Valentinian and The Loyal Subject (Fletcher's early tragedies, Renaissance Drama 7 (1964), p.74), but more recent critics have read the play as having a more complex and more radical message (see Philip Finkelparl, Court and Country Politics in the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher (Princeton, 1990) pp.213-219; Rebecca Bushnell Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance (Ithaca, 1990), chapter 5; Sandra Clark, op.cit., chapter 4; and Gordon McMullan The Politics of Unease in the Plays of John Fletcher (Amherst, 1994), pp.95-99, and 170-172).

Though Lucrece dies, she is not 'eliminated' — she remains the most important and memorable figure in the story, and she has a lasting effect on Roman society. Lucina, on the other hand, is erased much more thoroughly by the end of Valentinian. Her legacy is short-lived, since her husband's vengeance is quickly polluted by his own ambitious designs on the throne, and no-one else seems to remember her cause. Lucina's death signals only the end of a movement in the 'homosocial struggle'.

Lucreca's death has been a favourite subject for writers and painters: it is often the climax of the story. By contrast, Lucina's death is not made much of. Though in Fletcher's play there is a debate between Maximus, Aecius and Lucina about whether or not it would be right for her to commit suicide, the manner of her death is not explained in any of the versions of the story under discussion here. Procopius passes over it in mid-sentence:

Maxime, ayant puis après fait mourir aisément l'Empereur, se saisit de l'Empire, prend Eudoxie, & l'espouse, ayant au paravant perdu sa femme [...].

D'Urfé's Isadore hangs around the court for years, having been dissuaded from suicide by Maxime. She re-enters the story only very briefly (by d'Urfé's standards) at the death of Valentinian:

[Isadore...] voyant le corps sans teste, se lave les mains de son sang, & receut un si grand contentement de sa mort, que la ioye luy dissipant entierement les forces, & les esprits, elle tomba morte de l'autre costé [...].

8 Procopius, p.8.

Maxime, having then easily brought about the death of the Emperor, seized the Empire, took Eudoxie, and married her, having recently lost his wife [...].

9 D'Urfé, p.887.

[Isadore...] seeing the body without a head, washed her hands in his blood, and received such great satisfaction from his death, that, joy completely dissipating her strength and her spirits, she fell dead next to him [...].
Fletcher's Lucina also drops dead, rather than committing suicide. Her death in
Fletcher's play is not entirely passed over, as it is in Procopius's story, nor is she given
a moment of macabre glory, like d'Urfé's Isadore. Descriptions of her death are
abbreviated to say the least. When her waiting woman Claudia tries to announce her
demise to Maximus, he silences her:

Claudia: Nay ye may spare your tears; she's dead. She is so.
Maximus: Why so it should be: how?
Claudia: When first she enter'd
Into her house, after a world of weeping,
And blushing like the Sun-set, as we saw her;
Dare I, said she, defile this house with whore,
In which his noble family has flourish'd?
At which she fel, and stir'd no more; we rubd her --
Maximus: No more of that: be gon: Exit Claudia. (III.i.362-369)

Lucina's final speech is as truncated (compared to the final speeches generally given
to Lucrece) as Claudia's attempted description of it. Maximus is unnecessarily blunt
in declaring that her death is as 'it should be' and he seems almost callous in refusing
to hear any details. Valentinian has a very similar response:

Emperor: Dead?
Chilax: So tis thought Sir.
Emperor: How?
Lycinius: Greife, and disgrace,
As people say.
Emperor: No more, I have too much on't [...] (IV.i.1-2)

The Emperor protests that he has had 'too much on't' when he has heard only three
words. Guilt could explain the men's lack of ability to deal with bereavement, since
Valentinian raped her, and Maximus told her that she should die in case people 'make
a doubt she lov'd that [being ravished] more then Wedlock' (III.i.245). But guilt is a
form of self-obsession, and both men are shown to be far more concerned with
themselves and their position in society than with their wives. It seems clear that
Maximus is motivated by ambition as much as by revenge when he finally brings down Valentinian.

Sandra Clark points out that by contrast with Fletcher's Lucina, d'Urfé's Isadore is a more active figure, and not simply a victim, as she argues Lucrece is:

In making Lucina kill herself, Fletcher has changed his immediate source story, D'Urfé's L'Astrée Part II (1610), where the Lucina-figure, Isidore [sic], makes her husband vow to be revenged on Valentinian, and survives long enough to wash her hands in the dead Emperor's blood. He has chosen to remodel his plot on the Lucrece story, and thus to emphasise Lucina's role as victim, and also to foreground the divine right issue.¹⁰

However, unlike Lucrece, Lucina does not commit suicide -- according to what is said about her death in the play, she simply 'fell, and stird no more' -- if anything, she dies of 'Griefe, and disgrace'.¹¹ Suzanne Gossett suggests that 'Fletcher is so entrenched within the convention [of the suicide of rape victims] that he does not bother to create a mechanism for her death'.¹² I would argue that this is rather harsh on Fletcher (no-one claims that Shakespeare couldn't be bothered to invent a mechanism for Enobarbus's death). It seems more likely to me that Fletcher wanted to signal at this point in the play that he was moving away from the Lucrece story by frustrating the audience's expectation of hearing (or seeing) how Lucina dies. Gossett suggests that Valentinian is a badly constructed play (p.309) -- perhaps one reason for this impression is that after creating considerable sympathy for Lucina, Fletcher robs her of the central place that Lucrece has in her story.¹³

¹⁰ The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, p.108.

¹¹ Rowland Wymer also seems to be under the impression that Lucina kills herself. See Suicide and Despair in the Jacobean Drama (p.107).


¹³ Robert Wolseley, in the introduction to Rochester's revised version of Valentinian (1685), also considered it poorly constructed:

[...] a new Design, which has no kind of relation to the other, is introduc'd in
Clark seems to imply that Fletcher is more reactionary in his representation of sexual politics than d'Urfé, because he 'emphasise[s] Lucina's role as victim' rather than as agent of revenge, as Isadore is. However, the play doesn't end with Lucina's unavenged death. It ends with Eudoxa taking her revenge on Lucina's husband.

Eudoxa slides into the plot almost as unnoticed as Lucina disappears from it, but it is her actions which enable some kind of order to be restored at the end of Fletcher's play. She first appears at the death of Valentinian, trying to comfort him. In her next appearance she has a short conversation with Maximus in Act V, scene vi. Maximus adopts the disastrous policy of wooing her by saying that he is so in love with her that he set up the rape of his own wife so that he would have a pretext for getting rid of Valentinian in order to gain the opportunity to marry her. Not surprisingly, Eudoxa is incredulous. Unlike d'Urfé's heroine who seems eternally beautiful, Eudoxe describes her face as 'long since bequeath'd to wrinkles with my sorrows'. She won't fall for this romantic rubbish, and finally declares:

   either ye love too deerly,  
   Or deeply ye dissemble Sir.   (V.vi.24-25)

She goes along with Maximus's offer of marriage, but it seems clear from her later actions that this is only to allow her to plot his death without suspicion. In contrast to Lucina, she is not self-effacing or unable to protect herself. Even when the soldiers want to '[c]ut her in thousand peeces' (V.viii.64) in revenge for Maximus's death, she seems very confident about the action she has taken:

*Eudoxa.* These are my reasons Romans, and my soule  
Tells me sufficient; and my deed is justice:  
Now as I have done well, or ill, look on me.  

*Affranius.* What lesse could nature doe, what lesse had we done,  
Had we knowne this before? Romans, she is righteous;

the Fifth [act], contrary to a Fundamental Rule of the Stage.

Nature, righteousness and justice are all identified with Eudoxa, even though she has murdered her husband and ruler, disobeying all the usual edicts of patriarchy. It is acceptable because she does it to avenge her last husband and ruler. There is no mention of Lucina's rape and death. If it had been remembered Maximus would have seemed more just, and Eudoxa less so for killing him. Thus, Eudoxa's victory entails the obliteration of even the memory of Lucina. Nonetheless, a victorious woman rounds off an action which started with the victimisation of a woman.

This is not the case in Fletcher's sources. In L'Astrée, Eudoxe is present in the story before Isadore appears. The whole narrative is given from the perspective of Ursace who is in love with Eudoxe. She is a much more prominent figure throughout than Fletcher's Eudoxa, but she also comes across as being very passive. Though she returns Ursace's love, she is forced into an arranged marriage with Valentinian. She remains loyal to him but is again forced to marry after his death:

\[
\text{[...]} \text{ ce Tyran, qui ne se contentant pas d'avoir tué Valentinian, } \& \\
\text{usurpé l'Empire, voulut encore pour une entière vengeance, ou plutôt}
\text{pour rassembler son usurpation, } \& \text{lui donner quelque couler, espouser la belle Eudoxe.}\]

D'Urfé presents Maxime's marriage to Eudoxe as part of his vengeance as well as being indicative of his new self-serving attitude. Not surprisingly, Eudoxe, in contrast to Fletcher's Eudoxa, is very hostile to the marriage, but instead of taking action herself, she asks for Ursace's help. It is he who suggests that they contact Genseric in Carthage, King of the Vandals, and he also advises her to feign illness to avoid

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14 D'Urfé, p.891.

[...] this Tyrant, who was not content to have killed Valentinian, and usurped the Empire, also wanted for complete vengeance, or rather to smooth over his usurpation, and to present himself in a better light, to marry the beautiful Eudoxe.
sleeping with Maxime. When Maxime is killed, Eudoxe is again whisked out of Ursace's grasp, this time by Genseric. The death of Maxime is one in a series of vicissitudes in the life of Ursace, rather than an ending to the story. The story is not as strongly political as Fletcher's play: the trials of Eudoxe and Ursace, and their willingness to sacrifice their personal happiness for the sake of the state seem to be of central importance.

In Procopius's *Histoire des Guerres* this episode is just one of many sending the Roman Empire into deeper and deeper division: order is not restored at the end, as it is at the end of Fletcher's play. Though not as passive as d'Urfé's Ursace, Procopius's Eudoxie is not as active as Fletcher's Eudoxa. Instead of murdering Maxime herself Eudoxie sends for Gizerich in Carthage to take revenge for her. He does so with the help of the Romans (Maxime is deeply unpopular by this time), but he also loots Rome and carries off Eudoxie and her daughters, as in d'Urfé's version. There is no mention of the character Ursace in Procopius's history (or Fletcher's play, for that matter).

Like the rape of Lucrece, the rape of Lucina in Fletcher's play represents profound corruption in the whole government of Valentinian. Unlike Lucrece's husband, Maximus is unable to bring about a much needed change in society because he himself becomes seduced by the self-seeking and individualistic ethos of the court. It is the two women in the play who bring about the important changes to the society. Though, as Nancy Vickers says, in homosocial struggles women are often positioned in a 'median space' from which they are 'used and finally eliminated', in his representation of Eudoxa Fletcher seems to have recognized that a strong and resourceful woman might be in a unique position to use that no-man's land to resolve a homosocial struggle without being eliminated herself.

It is only through the victimisation of one woman and the positive action of another that reformation of society can take place. Sandra Clark argues that women in Fletcher's tyrant plays 'resist the imposition of tyrannical will [...] without radically
challenging the social structures of patriarchy'. To an extent, *Valentinian* conforms to this pattern although Fletcher is more concerned with the relative efficacy of male and female agency, than with 'the social structures of patriarchy' *per se*. On the other hand, the ending of *Valentinian* does amount to a kind of challenge to patriarchy: though Eudoxa's murder of Maximus is on one level a restoration of the patriarchal values which Valentinian's act of rape perverts, on another it is politically destabilising in its implications. The final lines of the play constitute an appeal for reconciliation and harmony, but imply discontinuity and disruption:

**Sempronius.**

Up with your arms, ye strike a Saint els Romans,  
Mays't thou live ever spoken our protector:  
*Rome* yet has many heires: Let's in  
And pray before we choose, then plant a *Cesar*  
Above the reach of envie, blood, and murder.

**Affranius.**

Take up the body, nobly to his urne,  
And may our sinnes, and his together burne.  
(V.viii.115-121)

Sempronius makes an adulatory speech to Maximus at the beginning of the scene, confirming him as Emperor, but now, barely a hundred lines later, he congratulates his murderer. Since there is no successor for Maximus (there is no Gizerich or Genseric to take over as in Procopius or d'Urfé) Sempronius resorts to invoking the 'many heires' of Rome. Ubiquity of heirs to the throne in a patriarchal society can hardly be a source of comfort: the next ruler will not be appointed through fair sequence and succession but as the result of a rather arbitrary choice (with the help of prayer). He hopes the next Emperor will be '[a]bove the reach of envie, blood, and murder', presumably recalling the fate of Valentinian, but also -- inevitably -- that of his successor, Maximus, at the hands of the 'Saint' who will be their 'protector', Eudoxa. Thus, the only character left in an exalted and powerful position is the avenging

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15 *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (the final paragraph of chapter 4 'Sex and Tyranny'), p.127. Clark is writing of Zenocia in *The Custom of the Country* (1619), Celia in *The Humorous Lieutenant* (1619) and Evanthe in *A Wife for a Month* (1624) in this sentence, but her point that there is no 'radical sexual politics' in the tyrant plays seems to be general.
woman: her saintliness is juxtaposed not only with the sinfulness of Maximus, but with the sins of those who put him into power, the men who surround her on stage.

That the play should end with a tribute to female agency (in the form of Eudoxa) subverts expectations in a way that is characteristic of Fletcher. In many of Fletcher's plays feminine virtue transcends male homosocial struggles, as I hope will become apparent in the following sections. This tendency can also be seen in Philaster: like Arathusa and Bellario, Philaster's heroism towards the end of the play principally consists in offering up his life to save his loved ones, an essential attribute of female heroism (as I discuss below, p.203 ff.), while his homosocial struggles with Pharamond and the King slip into the background. Philaster makes a leap of faith to ally himself with the women against the male authority figures, who are out of sympathy with femininity, and by doing so eventually brings about a restoration of order.

Where does this feminocentric sensibility come from? It seems very likely that Fletcher was influenced by his romance sources. However, it is clear that Fletcher didn't slavishly translate his sources for the stage -- rather, he capitalised on popular stories (or in Perez's case, a type of story). Notwithstanding the revenge of the rape victim Isadore, I would argue that Fletcher is more radical in his representation of women than d'Urfé in his version of the story of Valentinian, which boils down to a tale of passive self-sacrifice by the hero (Ursace) and the heroine (Eudoxe). However, in both Valentinian and Philaster, Fletcher shares with his romance sources the basic premise that the heroes will have women and virtuous femininity on their side, whereas the villains will not.
In *Love's Cure* (Beaumont and Fletcher c.1605, revised by Massinger c.1625) the heroine Clara has been brought up as a man by her father Don Alvarez, who took her away with him to war after being exiled from Seville. Lucio has been brought up in Seville as a woman by his mother, Eugenia, to save him from being attacked by Alvarez's enemies. The play begins when Alvarez returns to Seville with his daughter. He and his wife agree to retrain their children according to their 'natural' gender behaviour. This is not an easy matter, since Clara and Lucio seem to have internalised the roles which have been thrust upon them during their upbringing, suggesting that gender is not a matter of nature or divine decree, but social expectation. They both seem happy with their acquired roles and miserable at being forced back into deportment 'appropriate' to their gender.

As the play progresses, however, the brother and sister gladly come to accept the social role implied by their biology. Clara falls in love with Alvarez's enemy Vitelli, and Lucio with Vitelli's sister Genevora. Vitelli and Genevora make it quite clear that they are not interested in Lucio and Clara if they don't conform to what is expected of them as a man and a woman. Falling in love teaches the brother and sister that they must accept their biological gender if they expect to be requited.

Lucio and Clara's reversion to 'natural' behaviour has been seen by many critics as a conservative intervention in the debate on gender. Despite the playful explorations earlier in the play, the ending is thought to demonstrate a reversion to determination of behaviour according to biological gender. In *Amazons and Warrior Women* (Brighton, 1981) Simon Shepherd argues that many of Fletcher's characters demonstrate 'an essential form of social behaviour which is consequent upon biological gender (as in *Love's Cure*)' (p.133). Other critics have also argued that *Love's Cure*, in particular, shows that Fletcher was a reactionary in matters of sexual politics. Jonathan Dollimore suggests that the play may have been written
as a conservative response to the controversy [of transvestism], since it directly addresses the most challenging claim or implication of the radical transvestite, namely, that gender division and inequality are a consequence not of divine or natural law but of social custom.¹

Following a New Historist way of thinking Dollimore suggests that 'Love's Cure produces transgression precisely in order to contain it [...]': neither denying nor affirming Fletcher's ability to make an imaginative break with traditional ideas of gender identity.² Dollimore sees the final scene of the play -- in which the male characters, who seem intent on killing each other because of an ancient blood feud, are prevented by the female characters who threaten to kill themselves -- as a 'reductio ad absurdum of masculine sexuality'. Sandra Clark in an essay published a year before Dollimore's, also emphasizes what she sees as a rather repressive ending to the play, arguing that 'female strength is [...] demonstrated not in positive action against the enemy, but in suffering, in violence against the self'.³

However, in The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher published in 1994, Sandra Clark sees the play's ending in a more positive light, suggesting that 'the play does provide a critique of an influential concept of masculinity and a validation of the contribution of womanliness to the social order' (p.71). In The Politics of Unease (1994) Gordon McMullan also defends the play -- or at least Fletcher's part in it -- against Dollimore's theory that its 'critique of natural gender' is 'defused by the way in


² Marea Mitchell in a broadly similar reading of the play sees the restoration to 'appropriate' gender behaviour in Lucio and Clara as unambiguous:

The notion of a love which conquers all, which smooths out all gender aberrations, is instated, and miraculously 'restores' Clara to femininity, Lucio to masculinity. Nature and natural impulses, specifically gendered, we find, have been there all along and were merely sleeping.

(Love's Cure: Nottingham Drama texts (Nottingham, 1992), p.v)

which the play ends' (p.152). He questions Dollimore's reference to the play as 'Fletcher's Love's Cure' and points out that 'Fletcher's characteristic linguistic habits are conspicuous by their absence in the scenes in which nature reasserts control over Lucio and Clara'. He concludes that 'Fletcher [...] can be seen to have an interest only in the transgression and not the inevitable containment' of the play (p.153).

In his book The Moral Art of Philip Massinger (1993), Ira Clark has a section on Love's Cure which he describes as Massinger's 'thorough revision' of Beaumont and Fletcher's 'plotting'. His views might be seen as an expanded version of Sandra Clark's suggestion that the play offers a critique of masculinity and a validation of femininity. He argues that there is a masculinity within Clara's reformed femininity, and femininity within Lucio's new-found masculinity which are sanctioned by the play and which spread to more virtuous and humane values through their family into their society. However, for Ira Clark, the play still ends on a reactionary note:

 [...] Love's Cure [...] concludes with doubts that such reforms can be maintained by the society, or even recognized by it. For the society seems to vacillate and to mistake the revolutionary implication of its own practices. Probably it is easier, perhaps inevitable, to (mis)construe changes in terms of the past and to regard all movement as reversion to a past practice dubbed natural.4

Thus Clara and Lucio (and the rest of their family and society) are seen to believe in, though perhaps not to have actually enacted, an inevitable reversion to essentialist notions of what is 'natural'. It is not clear what Ira Clark means by the sentence 'the society seems to [...] mistake the revolutionary implications of its own practices'. Perhaps he intends to draw a distinction between the limited vision of the society within the play and the playwrights' more expansive vision. However, it seems more likely that he is implying that the playwrights were unaware of the radical implications of their own writings. There is no reason to assume the playwrights were unaware of how their work fitted into the contemporary debates on gender. Indeed, since gender

identity was so strictly circumscribed at the time, surely the writers and their audience would have been even more aware of their manipulation of gender identity than we are today.

In my discussion of *Love's Cure* I will follow up in much more detail the idea put forward by both Ira Clark and Sandra Clark, that traditionally feminine virtues have something to offer men and masculinity. Whereas it is common in sixteenth-and seventeenth-century literature for women who have masculine virtues to be applauded, that the feminine man might have anything to offer is exceptional. It seems to me that the play may show signs of attitudes to the male adoption of traditionally 'female' virtues which can best be described as *précieux*, a term which I will explain. The play's feminocentric tendencies might also be seen in the representation of female self-sacrifice, which brings up the question of whether representations of the victimization of women might, paradoxically, have been attractive for women in the audience.\(^5\) In order to follow up this aspect of the discussion of *Love's Cure* I address *The Island Princess* (1621), a solo play by Fletcher, in which both a man and a woman are threatened with martyrdom. I compare it with Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr*, written during the same period, which -- though similar in many ways -- is altogether less advanced in its attitude to gender politics than *The Island Princess*, or, for that matter, *Love's Cure*.

In the first half of the seventeenth century the court was eclipsed by the *salons* as the arbiter of what was fashionable in France. The *salons*, meeting rooms in the houses of aristocratic women, played a large part in the development of *préciosité*, which later became an umbrella term for the fashionable manners and literary tastes of the period. The *précieux* aimed for learning without pedantry, and elegance without affectation in language. There was also a strong religious and philosophical dimension.

\(^5\) Verna Foster discusses some aspects of this phenomenon in her essay 'Sex Averted or Converted: Sexuality and Tragicomic Genre in the Plays of Fletcher', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 32 (1992), 311-322.
The précieux would meet principally for conversation, but there were also
games and entertainments. Reading was extremely important to the précieux, and
two of the most influential texts were written by the friends St François de Sales and
Honoré d'Urfé. Sales's Introduction à la Vie Dévote (first version published 1608)
was written in response to the question of whether it was possible for a woman to
lead a devout life at court. The Introduction promoted the view that women in
particular were more easily drawn to piety and devotion and could be the means of
drawing men to God. In L'Astrée, d'Urfé developed another version of this concept

Ainsi, dans la prairie du château de Rambouillet, la marquise et ses amies
reçoivent leurs invités en un galant costume de nymphes. Dans les jardins de
l'hôtel de Nevers ou dans la campagne du château de Fresnes, le comte et la
comtesse de Plessis-Guénégaud, sous les pseudonymes d'Anaxandre et
d'Amalthée que leur a donnés Mlle de Scudéry en faisant leurs portraits au
tome VI de Clélie, fondent d'imaginaires royaumes, voisins de Tendre [of
Scudéry's Clélie] qu'ils parcoururent avec leurs amis, Mme de la Fayette,
Robert Arnault, marquis de Pomponne, sous des déguisements de bergers et
de bergères, à la mode de l'Astrée.

Thus in the meadow of the Château de Rambouillet, the Marchioness and her
friends received their guests in the courtly costume of nymphs. In the gardens
of the Hôtel de Nevers or in the grounds of the Château de Fresnes, the Count
and Countess of Plessis-Guénégaud, under the pseudonyms of Anaxandre and
Amalthée that Mlle de Scudéry gave to them in drawing their portraits in
volume VI of Clélie, founded imaginary kingdoms akin to Tendre [of
Scudéry's Clélie] that they travelled with their friends, Mme de la Fayette,
Robert Arnault, Marquis de Pomponne, in the costumes of shepherds and
shepherdesses, in the style of l'Astrée.


Paul A. Chilton summarises the kind of advice which Sales gave aristocratic women
in the Introduction:

The Introduction defines devotion and prescribes a meditative cycle and a
code of personal conduct for wealthy married women in letters to a fictive
'Philothée' [sic: in the original text she is called Philotée]. [...] True devotion,
Philothée is told, is 'spiritual sugar,' 'honey,' the 'cream of the milk,' 'suavity,'
'the sweetness of sweetenées.' These cloying recurrent images transport
devotion from the ascetic cloister to the worldly court, and more specifically,
to the boudoir. Although the exercises prescribed are vigorous, divine
through his Neoplatonic theories. The poet Vincent Voiture was another important figure: he was the driving force behind the most famous of the salons, the Hôtel de Rambouillet.

From the turn of the twentieth century there has been much debate about the definition and dates of précédosité. The authors of Précis de Littérature Française du XVIIe Siècle (1990) begin their discussion of the issue by suggesting that the term clemency permits Philothea white lies, fashionable dresses, and dancing, provided the spiritual honeybees of the conscience chase out the corporeal spiders of affection for the sinful world. ('Devout Humanism' in Denis Hollier (ed.), A New History of French Literature (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), p.255.)

Sales particularly emphasised the importance of marriage for women. He considered sex a wife’s duty and makes a point of forbidding coitus interruptus as a method of contraception, a practice which seems to have been quite common among the aristocracy of the early seventeenth century.

See Jean Mesnard et al. Précis de littérature française du XVIIe siècle (Paris, 1990), pp.48-9, for a comparison of Sales’s Introduction and d’Urfé’s Astrée, or to be more exact, a comparison of Philotée and Astrée themselves. Louise K. Horowitz summarises the place that women had in d’Urfé’s version of Neoplatonism as follows:

Neoplatonism postulated a positive view of women as superior beings with a link to God; a belief in love as a source of all goodness, and of beauty as the reflection of that good; a spiritual transformation of true lovers’ souls; and happiness as belonging to those whose love was mutual and perfect. D’Urfé devotes page after page to a detailed explanation of such spiritually conceived love, and these tenets are then reinforced by the ascetic ones of Christianity (the druidism of Astrée is essentially a thinly disguised Catholicism).


Other writers who have been associated with précieux ideas are Charles Cotin (1604-1681), Isaac de Benserade (1613-1691), Montausier, Claude Malleville (1596-1647) and Madeleine de Scudéry. Cotin and Benserade wrote epigrams, among other works. Benserade also wrote a series of twenty-two blazons on the beauty and the ugliness of the parts of the body. Montausier wrote poetry, including the Guirlande de Julie (1641) dedicated to Julie d’Angennes, the daughter of Catherine de Vivonne (Mme de Rambouillet). In addition to Clélie (1654-1660), Madeleine de Scudéry wrote a ten volume work Le Grand Cyrus (1649-1653) which set the salon society of the Hôtel de Rambouillet in ancient times, changing the names of the protagonists so that Catherine de Vivonne became Cléomire, Julie d’Angennes Philomide, etc.
referred to a social milieu rather than a style of writing, but they point out that members of this milieu are very difficult to identify. Domna C. Stanton observes that the word was rarely used in the seventeenth century:

[...] seventeenth-century texts make no mention of a précieux style or school, much less of a précieux man or poet. The term, Préciósité, is not listed in the seventeenth-century dictionaries of Richelet, Furetière or the Académie Française. The rare textual instances of the abstract noun date from the last third of the century, and refer almost exclusively to the ideas and behavior of certain women, who are characterized as finicky, disdainful, arrogant.

Most of the evidence for the existence of a social milieu of précieux and -- more importantly -- précieuses (i.e., its female members) comes from their satirists in the second half of the century: de Pure, Somaize and Molière, in particular. However, préciosité is not the only literary phenomenon which has been named posthumously, and most critics seem to agree that it did exist in some form, though its chief writers, characteristics and dates remain debatable. The authors of Précis de Littérature Française du XVIIe Siècle sum up the literary legacy of préciosité in the following way:

Les salons de cette époque ont œuvré pour l'avenir de la langue (par quelques tics de langage, et des expressions qui sont restées) et de la littérature: ils ont encouragé des femmes à écrire, préparé le public des classiques et mis au point

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12 See Michel, abbé de Pure, La Précieuse ou Le Mystère des ruelles (1656-58); Antoine Baudeau, sieur de Somaize, Les Véritables Précieuses (1660) and Le Grand Dictionnaire de Précieuses (1660); and Molière, Les Précieuses ridicules (1659).

13 See Domna C. Stanton, op.cit., for a discussion of how ideas of préciosité have developed from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day.
quelques petits genres.\textsuperscript{14}

They not only encouraged women to write, but had an effect on the way that gender and sexual politics were represented in those writers who were influenced by them. Women were at the centre of préciosité. Though men rather than women (with the exception of de Scudéry) wrote the most famous and influential works, the philosophical and religious elements gave women a central place in these texts. Aristocratic women were the chief instigators and patrons of the salons and the chief target as readers.

It's difficult to say how much of an impact préciosité had on English literature before Henrietta Maria arrived in the country, but since the first part of d'Urfé's Astrée (which is a key text)\textsuperscript{15} was published as early as 1607, it would be wrong to assume that it had no impact at all.\textsuperscript{16} Fletcher regularly plundered French (and Spanish) romances for plots and situations for his plays: since he seems to have based The Tragedy of Valentinian and Monsieur Thomas (1610-13) on episodes from the Astrée, perhaps it isn't surprising that what seem to be précieux-influenced attitudes towards gender and sexuality crop up intermittently in his work, and that of his collaborators.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14} The salons of this time strove for the future of the language (through some verbal mannerisms and expressions which have lived on) and for the future of literature: they encouraged women to write, prepared the public for the classics and refined some minor genres. (p.174).

\textsuperscript{15} Gustav Lanson writes that 'la société précieuse est la réalité dont L'Astrée donne le roman' [précieux society is the reality which is given as romance in the Astrée], (Histoire de la littérature française (Paris, 1894), p.375). This is echoed by Roger Lathuillère: '[...] c'est dans l'Astrée que les premières précieuses ont trouvé les rudiments de leur doctrine' [...]it is in the Astrée that the first précieuses found the rudiments of their doctrine.] (La Préciosité: Étude Historique et Linguistique, p.355). Erica Veevers also credits the Astrée as having primary importance to préciosité (Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments (Cambridge, 1989), p.16).

\textsuperscript{16} See Erica Veevers, Images of Love and Religion, for a discussion of the impact of préciosité in England under Charles I.

\textsuperscript{17} I have already mentioned that Fletcher might have had d'Urfé's Celadon in mind in drawing the character of Alexis in The Faithful Shepherdess, see above, p.149.
Much of the criticism and commentary on *Love's Cure* has centred on its relationship to possible Spanish and Italian sources (an issue related to theories about authorship), whereas potential French influences have been neglected. The play is remarkable for its heterogeneity not only in that it is the result of multiple authorship, but also because these different authors seem to have produced a work influenced by unusually diverse sources. Not surprisingly, the meanings of the play are multivalent and sometimes conflicting. This reading will try to open up some neglected possibilities in what is being said.

There is ambiguity in many of the statements regarding the definition of Clara and Lucio's gender in the first half of the play. One example of this is given in the words of Eugenia near the end of Act I:

[... as she appears]

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18 For a summary of the debates on the probable sources of *Love's Cure* see Martin E. Erickson 'A Review of Scholarship Dealing with the Problem of a Spanish Source for *Love's Cure* in Waldo F. McNeir (ed.), *Studies in Comparative Literature*, Louisiana State University Studies, Humanities Series, no. 11 (Baton Rouge, 1962), pp. 102-119. For a summary of critical opinion on attribution see the textual introduction of the play by George Walton Williams in the Cambridge edition (vol. 3, pp. 3-11). Cyrus Hoy's view is that the play was an early collaboration of Beaumont and Fletcher's which was extensively revised by Massinger after Fletcher's death ('The Shares of Fletcher and his Collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon VI', *Studies in Bibliography* 14 (1961), 45-67). Hoy's linguistic reasons for attributing the play principally to Massinger are supported by the external evidence that '[t]he main situation of the play [...] derives from *La fuerza de la costumbre* by Guillén de Castro y Bellris, published in 1625 in Valencia' (Walton Williams, p. 5). Since Fletcher died of the plague in August 1625, it seems likely that another playwright (i.e. Massinger) must have completed *Love's Cure* drawing on the Spanish play for inspiration. However, the foreword to the 1625 publication of *La fuerza* states that it was not the first edition (see Erickson, p. 105-6): if this is true Fletcher may have had more of a hand in *Love's Cure* than is imagined. Moreover, there is the possibility that both *La fuerza* and *Love's Cure* had in common an unknown source. An Italian play dating from 1550, Luca Contile's *La Cesarea Gonzaga*, is similar in many ways. While I would not want to dismiss the notion that Massinger is the principal author of *Love's Cure*, the external evidence that this role could not have been Fletcher's is less conclusive than some critics seem to believe. As I argue above, p. 71 ff., in itself, linguistic evidence for attribution is by no means infallible.
The double-entendre is reminiscent of Viola's exclamation 'A little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man' when she thinks she will be forced to fight a duel in *Twelfth Night* (1601-2). Clara's bravery, boldness and the necessarily concomitant male genitalia are what she 'appears' to have 'more than woman': whereas Lucio's feminine weakness also implies a physical emasculation in his being 'less than man'. Eugenia's choice of verbs suggests that she makes a subtle distinction between the cases of Clara and Lucio. Clara only 'appears' to be more than woman, whereas Lucio 'is' less than man. Throughout the play the stigma of not conforming to conventional gender stereotypes falls more heavily on Lucio as an emasculated man than it does on his masculine sister. He is constantly threatened with violence if he doesn't reform. Under the right circumstances there could be a certain amount of kudos in a woman having certain masculine traits, whereas it is unequivocally shameful for a man to have feminine traits in much of the contemporary literature.

What does 'alter'd by custome' and 'transform'd by [...] life' imply? The accepted reading of the play seems to be that the behaviour 'natural' to the subject's gender has been temporarily perverted, but will inevitably be restored. But the words could also mean that biological gender itself is a superficial covering of the genderless

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19 III.iv.302-3. Another example is given by Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, talking of the response she expects when she and Nerissa, dressed as men, are seen by their husbands:

[...] they shall think we are accomplished
With that we lack. (III.iv.61-2).

The idea that woman is 'less than man' is a commonplace, though not necessarily always with a bawdy pun intended.

20 A notable exception is Sidney's Pyrocles, who remains in his female persona as Zelma for much of *The New Arcadia* (1593), and is even referred to as 'she' by Sidney. However, it's difficult to think of a man given any credit for pretending to be a woman in the Jacobean era, actors excepted.
subject (or one might say 'soul') within.21 'Nature' itself is secondary and superficial compared to a higher spiritual truth, according to Neoplatonism. There are different social expectations for men and women, but if for some reason these social expectations are exchanged then biology is no impediment to the formation of female gendered behaviour in a man and vice versa in Eugenia's statement. The play as a whole shows that what is 'natural' cannot come about without the help of social pressure.

This implied fluidity in the gender of Clara and Lucio is maintained throughout the play. They each have a vested interest in sticking to the gender role which society has assigned for them. Their return to expected gender roles is presented as choice based on the circumstances that they find themselves in, rather than an inevitable reversion. Moreover, they are both irrevocably marked by their experiences within the 'other' gender.

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21 Spenser's striking vision of the soul being clothed in the body, and in sin, as it enters the body, in The Faerie Queene (1590-96), may have some relevance to this question. Old Genius, the porter of the Garden of Adonis

[...] leteth in, he letteth out to wend,
All that to come into the world desire;
A thousand thousand naked babes attend
About him day and night, which doe require,
That he with fleshly weedes would them attire:
Such as him list, such as eternall fate
Ordained hath, he clothes with sinfull mire,
And sendeth forth to live in mortall state,
Til they againe returne take by the hinder gate. (III. vi. 32.)

The souls, before they are given their 'clothes' seem to be genderless.

In French Renaissance thinking on the subject there might be some significance in the fact that the soul is gendered feminine in French, not masculine or feminine depending on the person. D'Urfé's theories about gender and sexuality in the Astrée seem to suggest that the soul only acquires gender as it enters the body. However, another theory put forward by the character Celadon (which may be less representative of d'Urfé's views as a whole) divides the souls into masculine and feminine before they are born. (These theories in the Astrée are summarized by Servais Kevorkian in his Thématique de L'Astrée d'Honoré d'Urfé (Paris, 1991), p.120-1.)
Clara only gives up masculinity when Vitelli says it would be a 'hazard' to take her as a wife: he is frightened that if they married

[...] I must learn
To weare your petticoat, for you wil have
My breeches from me. (IV.ii.182-4)

Clara responds by abjuring 'all actions of a man'. Though she says that 'true love/
Hath...expel'd/ All but my naturall softnesse' (IV.ii.187-189) it seems likely that if Vitelli hadn't wanted her to change she might have remained the same. Love is an incentive rather than a cause of the change.

This is echoed in Lucio's transformation later in Act IV. Lucio remains cowardly (and therefore 'feminine') until Genevora berates him for it:

Kneel to thy rivall and thine enemy?
Away unworthy creature, I begin
To hate my selfe, for giving entrance to
A good opinion of thee [...] (IV.iv.45-48)

She tells him never to 'hope for grace' until he wins back her glove, 'a favour' which Lamorall has taken from Lucio. Lucio's response is to reject his feminine way of behaving:

My womanish soul, which hitherto hath governd
This coward flesh, I feele departing from me;
And in me by her beauty is inspird
A new, and masculine one: instructing me
What's fit to doe or suffer; powerfull love
That hast with loud, and yet a pleasing thunder
Rous'd sleeping manhood in me, thy new creature, [1.60]
Perfect thy worke so that I may make known
Nature (though long kept back) wil have her owne. (IV.iv.54-62)

Though Lucio says that a matching of socially prescribed male behaviour with his biologically male body is 'natural', it is clear that Nature might never have had 'her own' if Genevora had not delivered her ultimatum to Lucio a few lines earlier. At the
beginning of the passage he says that his male soul is newly created as his female soul
dies, but in line 60 that his male soul was there all along, merely sleeping while the
female soul ruled his body. Male behaviour is given value as 'natural' to him, and
female behaviour is derided as 'womanish' and cowardly: but nevertheless, in the
second metaphor both male and female are part of his identity, one lying dormant
while the other is active. The former metaphor implies that a change to socially-
acceptable male behaviour is final and irrevocable, whereas the latter implies that the
potential for both male and female behaviour exists in Lucio. This is an example of the
conflicting messages in the play: both possibilities are present in what Lucio says, and
yet one points to the view that once Lucio has conformed to the gender behaviour
expected of him, there is no possibility of reverting to his previous ambiguous state;
and the other to the much more radical idea that male and female behaviour in Lucio
is interchangeable at will.

This passage may also show the influence of préciosité. Genevora's beauty
inspires Lucio's soul, which in turn instructs him to behave differently -- more nobly,
it would seem. 'Powerfull love' with his clap of thunder and his 'worke' of 'Nature'
suggests God rather than Cupid. The sentiments in this passage are reminiscent of the
brand of Neoplatonic theory advocated by d'Urfé and St François de Sales, which
emphasises the role that women can play in drawing men to heaven. Worship of a
woman's beauty is seen as a kind of piety by Lucio, and by the précieux.

Another glance at 'platonic' love comes when Lucio demonstrates an
ignorance of sex in Act IV, scene iv.22 Genevora tells Lucio that she will kiss him if

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22 It seems likely that the idea of platonic love as non-sexual (still current today)
began in the wake of préciosité in the seventeenth-century. John Cleveland's satiric
poem 'The Antiplatonic' (1651) begins:

For shame, thou everlasting wooer,
Still saying grace and ne'er fall to her!

Significantly, the Antiplatonic later in the poem shows himself to be anti-feminist:

Virtue's no more in womankind
he agrees to remain satisfied at that. He responds:

Rest satisfide with a kisse? why, can a man
Desire more from a woman? Is there any
Pleasure beyond it? may I never live
If I know what it is. (IV.iv.8-11)

The innocence of Lucio's desire is reminiscent of the précieux ideal of love (between the habitués of the salons as well as the characters in their fictions), called 'amitié' (friendship), which was based on mutual respect. Male lovers would not expect anything back from the beloved except conversation and company. In the succeeding moments Lucio discovers that touching and kissing her sets him aflame, and asks

What would more strict embraces do? I know not,
And yet methinks to die so, were to ascend
To Heaven, through Paradise. (IV.iv.25-27)

The obvious pun on 'die' answers his earlier question of what pleasure can lie beyond kissing. Presumably his innocence is supposed to be a feminine attribute, and yet it is this that attracts Genevora to him, as demonstrated by her interjections 'Sweet Innocence' (IV.iv.11) and 'I ne'r saw/ A lovely man, till now' (IV.iv.16-17). The continual linking of sexual desire, not with sexual acts, but with spirituality is reminiscent of d'Urfé's romance. Lucio later refers to Genevora's glove as 'that, which as a relique/I ever would have worship'd, since 'twas yours' (V.ii.42-3). This attitude towards love and sexuality gives rise to an extreme woman-worship (shared with d'Urfé's brand of préciosité) which Genevora perhaps unsurprisingly finds enticing.

The most obvious reference to Lucio's précieux way of thinking comes in the final act. After presenting Genevora with the glove which he has won back from

But the green-sickness of the mind:
Philosophy, their new delight,
A kind of charcoal appetite.
Lamorall, Lucio proclaims

All that's good in me,
That heavenly love, the opposite to base lust,
Which would have all men worthy, hath created;
Which being by your beames of beauty form'd,
Cherish as your own creature. (V.ii.45-49)

The dense, strained, perhaps over-elaborate syntax is an attempt at courteous speech which marks out Lucio from the other characters. The passage could be paraphrased thus: 'Heavenly love (the opposite to base lust) would have all men worthy. Your beauty inspired heavenly love in me, therefore, you have created all that's good in me, and you should cherish me as your own creature.' 'Heavenly love' is seen as both a divine force of salvation and heterosexual desire. This is similar to the kind of philosophy put forward by Castiglione in *Il Libro de Cortegiano* (1528), and by Neoplatonists generally, but it is identical to the kind of love promoted by d'Urfé in the *Astrée*. Erica Veevers summarizes the place of women in d'Urfé's Neoplatonism as follows:

Sylvandre, the Platonist of the romance, explains that women are a link between the angelic intelligences and man, and that 'God has placed them on earth to draw us by them to Heaven [...] Adamas [the most important Druid priest in *L'Astrée*] can therefore assure Celadon that, although he may not understand the high mysteries of religion, he can take comfort from knowing that he is instinctively performing a religious duty by worshipping his mistress Astrée.

23 The following passage comes from Book IV of Sir Thomas Hoby's translation of *Il Libro de Cortegiano* — *The Courtyer* (1561):

Whereupon not thoroughly satisfied with this benefit [understanding of beauty in earthly love], love giveth unto the soule a greater happinesse. For like as through the particular beautie of one bodie hee guideth her to the universall beautie of all bodies: Even so in the least degree of perfection through particular understanding hee guideth her to the universall understanding.

(Burton A. Milligan (ed.), *Three Renaissance Classics*, (New York, 1953), p.612.)

24 *Images of Love and Religion*, p.17.
It is Genevora's beauty which has created the good in Lucio, and yet she rather than God Himself is worshipped, in the same way that Celadon worships Astrée. Lucio doesn't so much cast off his femininity altogether as give aspects of his effeminacy value by placing them in the context of précieux ideals.

These ideals are more faintly echoed in the relationship between Vitelli and Clara. Vitelli is a very 'male' man, full of almost ridiculous bravado, with a misogynist strain which reveals itself in his relationship with Malroda; and Clara is, of course, a very masculine woman. Neither of them could be called précieux by any stretch of the imagination, and yet similar forces to the ones that influence Lucio seem to be in operation. Vitelli's feelings for his mistress Malroda send him into a spiritual quandary:

Can I with rationall discourse sometimes
Advance my spirit into Heaven, before
'T has shook hands with my body, and yet blindly
Suffer my filthy flesh to master it,
With sight of such faire fraile beguiling objects? (III.iii.58-62)

It is because they are seen as impure and unworthy for love that Malroda and his previous lovers (or 'objects' as he calls them) are a distraction away from spiritual well-being in Vitelli. Only the virgin purity of Clara is able to improve him spiritually. 'Rationall discourse' may allow his spirit access to heaven, but divine inspiration (according to Neoplatonists) is a more immediate way of achieving the same thing. Préciosité put a strong emphasis on the power of the beauty of a virtuous woman as a way of bringing about this spiritual inspiration. Like a member of Plato's 'army of lovers', Vitelli's shame at having Clara 'the witnesse of [his] weaknesse' (IV.ii.152) is a further inspiration for him to behave better in future. At the moment she gives up her masculinity, he renounces 'whoring'.

The ending of Love's Cure seems quite different in tone to the rest of the play. The ambiguities in the representation of Clara and Lucio's gender seem to have been resolved so effectively that a different factor has to be introduced to provide the 'life
and death' situation at the end of the play, which is one of the hall-marks of tragicomedy.

Though different in tone, the final scene continues to discuss the central issue of the play: what it is to be true to one's masculinity or femininity. This time, however, instead of concentrating on the cross-dressed Lucio and Clara, the question draws in all the protagonists. The scene opens with a royal proclamation which orders that Alvarez and Vitelli 'be ready, each with his welchosen and beloved friend, arm'd at all points like Gentlemen' to fight 'this granted Duell' to resolve the long-standing feud between their two houses (V.iii.23-7). Alvarez, seconded by Lucio, and Vitelli, seconded by Lamorall, prepare to fight each other to the death while the women (Eugenia, Clara and Genevora) try to dissuade them.

Jonathan Dollimore describes the final confrontation in the following way:

[...]The women's pleas for peace only intensify the men's desire to fight. Within masculine sexuality the most significant other is the male — but it is a significance which still presupposes the female. Thus when the women threaten to kill themselves it's as if the currents of sexuality and violence, circulating between the men and sustaining sexual difference between male and female, are suddenly switched off; the threatened self-annihilation of the women is also a threatened breaking of the circuit. If they die the most necessary spectators and objects of masculine performance disappear. Also, in this reductio ad absurdum of masculine sexuality, men become redundant as the women threaten to perform phallic violence on themselves in order to forestall male violence [...].

This analysis is primarily concerned with the reductio ad absurdum of masculine sexuality, and sees the importance of the women only in terms of their presence as 'necessary spectators' to the male combatants. We've seen in Valentinian that women are often excluded by men from homosocial conflict, unless they are unlucky enough to become victims of it. Like the butler who 'did it' in the proverbial murder story, Eudoxa is in a position to murder Maximus because of her invisibility. Until she

25 'Subjectivity, Sexuality, and Transgression: The Jacobean Connection'
commits the murder, none of the men -- least of all Maximus -- seem to recognize that she is fully able to act on events that she witnesses. The men in Love's Cure, seem equally oblivious to the female 'spectators'. They neither ask for support from the women nor heed their requests to desist from the fight. Because the houses of Vitelli and Alvarez are about to be united by the exchange in marriage of Genevora and Clara, the revenge they plan to take on behalf of their families is now, paradoxically, damaging to them. The presence of the women emphasizes this contradiction, so, logically, the absence of the women would make it easier -- not more difficult, as Dollimore suggests -- for the men to get on with their fight.

Why, then, do the men give up the fight when the women threaten to kill themselves? The most obvious answer is that the women are not threatening to absent themselves from the fight so much as involve themselves fully in it. It becomes clear during the course of the scene that the final power struggle in this play is not between the houses of Alvarez and Vitelli, but is between what is presented as masculine virtue and feminine virtue in the play. Feminine virtue is ultimately shown to be more powerful.

The men's determination to fight is shown partly as a blood-lust. Vitelli, responding to Sayavedra who has tried to persuade them not to fight at the beginning of the scene, says

> [...] your breath cooles not a veine  
> In any one of us, but blowes the fire  
> Which nought but blood reciprocall can quench. (V.iii.53-5)

The rights and wrongs of the fight seem to be subordinated to valour, the older definition of 'virtue'. When Lucio threatens that he will cut off Lamorall's head to present it to Genevora, Alvarez claims him as 'Thy fathers true sonne': his murderous aggression has indubitably marked him out as properly conforming to his gender role.

Lucio is the only male character to attempt to give a justification of the fight on moral grounds. When Genevora pleads with Lucio not to attack her brother it is
evident from his response that his sense of honour and self-worth is dependent on engaging in this combat:

Life's but a word, a shadow, a melting dreame,  
Compar'd to essentiall, and eternall honour.  
Why, would you have me value it beyond  
Your brother? if I first cast down my sword  
May all my body here, be made one wound,  
And yet my soule not finde heaven thorough it. (V.iii.124-9)

Lucio is able to talk about abstract concepts of honour with ease, but when he addresses the specific situation his language becomes confusing and his logic tortuous. In the second sentence of the quotation the pronoun 'it' might refer to life or honour, and there is the secondary problem of whether 'Your brother' is to be read literally or as a contraction of 'the extent to which your brother values his life/honour'. He equates honour with bravery (or blood-lust), and doesn't answer her point that it would be 'more mercifull' (V.iii.111) to abandon the fight.

Lucio and Alvarez must fight because they have been challenged: it would be dishonourable not to do so. Vitelli must fight to avenge his uncle. (It is Vitelli's uncle and not his father who has been killed by Alvarez -- asking Vitelli not to avenge his father might have put too heavy a strain on the plot.) Strangely, given the precepts of Christian teaching, Lucio seems to feel that redemption is only possible through this aggressive behaviour. Much of the play so far has been devoted to showing us that to be cowardly, or rather to lack aggression, is unmanly. His soul is equated with his sense of honour, which is in turn inextricably bound up with his sense of what kind of behaviour is appropriate to masculinity. In joining in with the fight, all the men are vying with each other to show off their 'masculine' virtue.

Feminine virtue in this play has been shown in quite a different way. Clara and Vitelli demonstrate earlier in the play that women cannot behave aggressively to solve their problems without risking rejection from the men. To show her femininity Clara has had to subjugate her desires to Vitelli's. In the final scene the women go a step
further and direct their aggression on themselves, out of an altruistic desire to save their men. Genevora, standing with Clara, announces to the men 'The first blow given betwixt you, sheathes these swords/ In one another's bosoms' (V.iii.7-8). Eugenia orders the servant Bobadilla to shoot her at the same moment, crudely threatening that she will 'stick' him 'like a Pigge' if he hesitates (V.iii.181). Like the men, the women are able to show a bravery and stoicism in the face of danger and a lack of regard for earthly existence. And yet because their aggression is turned in on themselves for altruistic reasons their 'femininity' according to the terms of the play remains intact.

This attitude towards death and self-sacrifice echoes the ideas which were propagated in texts of the ars moriendi tradition. The art of dying well may have had a special appeal for women in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It certainly seems to have had an appeal for Mary Sidney, who translated three texts which were concerned with death: du Plessis Mornay’s Discours de la Vie et de la Mort (1581, trans. 1592), Garnier’s Marc Antoine (1578, trans. 1592) and Petrarch’s Trionfo della Morte (1351, trans. unpublished until 1977). In Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle, Mary Ellen Lamb discusses the ars moriendi tradition, and the ways in which Mary Sidney used it, describing the significance of Sidney’s choice of subject matter in the following way:

If women could not win public admiration for remarkable deeds in the outside world, they could at least attain dignity in their own eyes as constant heroines, giving of themselves, submerging their rage and sorrow beneath the smooth surface of equanimity. [...] Militant images of self-aggression and self-enclosure characterizing the adaptations of the constant heroine by authors connected with the countess of Pembroke reveal the destructive potential of this means of channelling rage.26

Perhaps not surprisingly, willingness to die out of loyalty for one's husband seems to have been especially valued, as Garnier's Cleopatra shows, and many other figures

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26 Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle (Wisconsin, 1990), p.140-141.
(Lucrece, Portia, and Alceste to name but three) who crop up in the literature of the period. Clara and Genevora both emphasize that they consider themselves married to Vitelli and Lucio 'wanting but ceremony' (V.iii.166). In making this emphasis, the playwrights have situated Genevora, Clara and Eugenia in a literary tradition of women who have given up their lives for their husbands' sakes, or one might say, a tradition of specifically 'female' heroism in literature.

The willingness of women to sacrifice themselves for men -- if not necessarily indicative of misogyny -- certainly oils the workings of a very repressive version of patriarchy. However, the women in Love's Cure are doing no more than duplicating the actions of the men in threatening to annihilate themselves. Though lined up in separate camps both genders subject themselves more or less to the same ordeal, essentially for the same purpose: to safeguard the patriarchal structure of their families. One could argue that in this case the men are as much victims of their value system as the women.

Moreover, the women's offer of sacrifice brings with it social cohesion and peace. Despite the injunction against suicide, their sacrifice is also ultimately more compatible with Christian notions of virtue than the men's. The men's offer of sacrifice, though presented as necessary and honourable, is ultimately very destructive and less altruistic. The actions of the women allow the men an escape route: if continuing the fight would mean the death of the women, it would be more honourable not to fight.

It is strongly hinted that it is Clara who thought of this scheme to stop the fight. In the previous scene Genevora receives a letter from her, asking Genevora to meet Clara to discuss something 'that may concern [...] life' (V.ii.17). Presumably when the women meet (a scene not represented) they agree to the suicide pact which they threaten to enact in the next scene. Within the fiction of the play, it might seem appropriate that it would take the bravery of a masculine woman to think up such a scheme. This aspect of Clara's character shows that women can learn how to behave better by emulating men. However, Vitelli's renunciation of his sexual
double standards under Clara's influence, the exoneration of Lucio as a man whose vestigial feminine qualities enrich his masculinity, and the climb-down of the men in the final scene when they are faced with a mirror image of their destructiveness presented by the women, strengthens the most enduring and powerful message in the play -- that men have much more to learn from women.
The Island Princess

It is very likely that as Fletcher was working on *The Island Princess* (1621), his chief collaborator, Massinger, was working with Dekker on *The Virgin Martyr* (1621), a play handling similar issues.1 The ways in which the two plays deal with the representation of gender make an illuminating contrast, as I hope to show.

The bare bones of the story of *The Island Princess* come from a work by Leonardo de Argensola, the *Conquista Delas Islas Malucas* (1609) which remained untranslated (at least into English) until the early eighteenth century.2 Le Sieur de Bellan wrote a much more elaborate version of the story *L'Histoire de Ruis Dias, & de Quixaire Princesse des Moluques*, which was printed at the back of a French translation (1615) of Cervantes' *Novelas Exemplares*.3

The plot in Fletcher's play broadly follows that of the sources for the first half of the play. Before the opening of the play the King of Tidore has been captured by the Governor of Ternata. His sister Quisara is in love with a Portuguese captain, Ruy Dias. She proclaims that she will marry whoever can rescue her brother (with the intention that Dias will succeed). In the sources Salama, a kinsman of Quisara's, rescues the king by sailing over to Ternata secretly in a small boat and setting the town on fire to create a diversion. In Fletcher's play it is a Portuguese man named

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1 *The Virgin Martyr* was published in late 1621 or early 1622 (Fredson Bowers (ed.), *The Virgin Martyr*, in Fredson Bowers (general ed.), *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker* (Cambridge, 1958), vol.3, p.367.) The earliest recorded performance date of *The Island Princess* was 26 December 1621. (George Walton Williams (ed.), *The Island Princess*, Bowers 5, p.541.)

2 *The Discovery and Conquest of the Molucco and Philippine Islands, Written in Spanish by Bartholomew Leonardo de Argensola*, 'Now Translated into English' was published in *A New Collection of Voyages and Travels: With Historical Accounts of Discoveries and Conquests in all Parts of the World* (London, 1708) -- the name of the translator and editor is not given. Translations from the Spanish quoted here are from this text.

3 Quotations given here are taken from the 1620 reprint.
Armusia who performs this feat and claims the princess's hand. She is angry with Dias, who asks his nephew Pyniero to kill Armusia: but when Pyniero meets the princess he decides to kill both Dias and Armusia for her sake. In the sources he kills Dias, but is killed himself by Salama, who by now has won the love of Quisara. In Fletcher's play, when Quisara gives her love to Armusia, Dias and Quisara retract the request they gave to Pyniero to kill Armusia. Dias and Pyniero are reconciled.

The ending of the play is quite different in tone. The Governor of Ternata seeks revenge by disguising himself as a priest and stirring up religious tensions. He has Armusia arrested and threatened with torture. Quisara converts to Christianity and follows him into bondage. Dias threatens to level the town if Armusia is not released. There is a deadlock until Pyniero pulls off the Governor's disguise. The Governor is imprisoned, Armusia released, and the play ends on a note of reconciliation between the Portuguese and the Islanders. None of this takes place in the sources.

At least one detail appears in the play which is in the original Spanish version but not in the French.¹ In the opening scene of the play, Pyniero imparts the

¹ There may be other details in the play from the original Spanish which are not included in French text (I have only been able to read the eighteenth-century English translation of the Spanish, so may have missed some details). Edward M. Wilson in an essay entitled 'Did John Fletcher Read Spanish' (Philological Quarterly 27 (1948)) claims that A.L. Stiefel showed that The Island Princess, though apparently based on the French novel: L'histoire de Ruis Dias et de Quixaire, Princesse des Moluques, contained some significant details from the novel's source: the Conquista de las Islas Malucas by Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola; the names of the characters in the play derive from the Spanish work and there is no reason to suppose that the French adaptation played any part in shaping Fletcher's design. (p.188).

Unfortunately, Stiefel's essay 'Über die Quelle von J. Fletchers, "Island Princess"' (Archiv 103 (1899), 277-308) is inaccessible to me because it is in German. I am suspicious of Wilson's remarks, however, as the names of the characters do not seem to be derived from the Spanish work, unless they also appear in the French work. In the Spanish, Quisara is sister to King Capabaguna, in the French the King is called Mole, in Fletcher's play her brother is only named 'King'. In the Spanish, Quisara marries her kinsman Salama. When Capabaguna dies he is succeeded by Cachil Mole.
information that the king was captured while 'rowing/ between both Lands [of Tidore and Ternata]' (Li.11-12). His interlocutor expresses surprise that 'such poore and base pleasures, /As tugging at an oare, or skill in steerage/ Should become Princes' (Li.16-18). Pyniero replies that this is not unusual in Tidore:

Base breedings love base pleasure;
They take as much delight in Baratto,
A little scurvy boate, to row her tithly,
And have the art to turne and wind her nimby,
Thinke it as noble too, though it be slavish,
And a dull labour that declines a Gentleman:
As we Portugalls, or the Spaniards do in riding,
In managing a great horse which is princely,
The French in Courtship, or the dancing English,
In carrying a faire presence. (I.i.18-27)

Though this at first seems to be a condemnation of the Islanders, it also 'undercuts presumptions of cultural absolutes and of European superiority', as Gordon McMullan remarks. Argensola makes a similar comment not at the ignominious moment of the king's capture, but in parenthesis at the triumphant moment in which Salama sails off with the king having rescued him from Ternata:

(Sin que obligue a ello la necesidad, suelen remar los Reyes en aquellas Islas.
Y como en España aprenden los nobles a correr, y hazer mal a los cavallos,
suelen los Principes Isleños en todo aquel Oriente, preciarse del manejo de los remos, y velas.)

In the French, Quisara also marries Salama, but it is he who succeeds Mole. In Fletcher's play Quisara marries the Portuguese Armusia, and there are no characters called Capabaguna, Mole or Salama. It may be significant that where the French version changes the names of the characters so does Fletcher: moreover Cervantes' Novelas Exemplares would most certainly have been of interest to Fletcher — there is no reason to think that he wouldn't have read the edition which contained Bellan's L'Historie de Ruis Dias. It seems most likely to me that Fletcher had read both the French and the Spanish versions of the story.


6 The translation of these words in The Discovery and Conquest of the Molucco and Philippine Islands (1708) reads:
Argensola implies that the strange customs of the Islanders can be understood and valued if compared to European values. Fletcher's Pyniero twists this round to suggest that European customs, stripped of their kudos and seen for what they are, are no less ridiculous than the Islanders'.

Pyniero's words are indicative of his role as a cynical chorus which he is to continue to play. He is very similar to Bosola in Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* (1613). Both of them are involved in some of the worst crimes in the two plays at the same time as judging the other characters and commenting on the action in a way which sets them apart from it. The scene in which Quisara encourages Dias's suit, her place at the centre of the power relations between the men despite her powerlessness, and the dignity with which she later copes with adversity are reminiscent of the characterisation of the Duchess in *The Duchess of Malfi*. It is very likely that the actors who played Bosola and the Duchess (John Lowin and Richard Sharpe) also played Pyniero and Quisara. Six of the eight actors listed as playing in *The Island Princess* had also played in *The Duchess of Malfi*, eight years previously.7

Pyniero's Bosola-like judgements and comments inevitably give the play an anti-romantic flavour which act as a sobering corrective to the atmosphere of high romance in the play as a whole. It is perhaps significant that Fletcher went back to the original 'history' (as Argensola's work is supposed to be) to find some of his

In those Islands it is usual for Kings to row, without being compell'd to it by Necessity; for as in Spain the Nobility learn to ride, so the Island Princes in all those Eastern Parts value themselves upon handling the Oars, and Sails. (p.101).

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7 *The Duchess of Malfi* was the earliest English play to be published with a list of actors assigned to individual roles. For a discussion of the casting of this play see John Russell Brown (ed.), *The Duchess of Malfi* (Manchester, 1974) pp. xviii-xxi. Cast lists were published in the second folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's works: the names were not assigned to any particular parts, though they may have been listed in order of the importance of the role. See G.E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, vol.3, pp.347-350 for a discussion of *The Island Princess*, including the cast list; ibid., vol.2, p.499 for the suggestion that John Lowin played Pyniero; and ibid., vol.2, p.569 for the suggestion that Richard Sharpe played Quisara.
ammunition for this. As with Valentinian, Fletcher seems to have found a French
prose romance inspiring as a source at the same time as using a much shorter 'history'
on which the story is based to tone down the romance aspects of the story for the
stage, and to give it a more tightly structured cohesion.

As with Love's Cure, at the end of the play the focus of interest moves away
from the central two characters (Lucio and Clara in Love's Cure and Quisara and Dias
in The Island Princess), to a confrontation in which all the main characters are
involved. Up to Act IV, the central interest is the love-life of the princess. After Act
IV the difference in religion between the Islanders and the Portuguese becomes the
central focus. The religious persecution of Armusia and the princess by the Islanders
under the Governor's instruction has nothing to do with either Argensola's history or
de Bellan's romance. It is, however, similar to the persecution of the Christians in The
Virgin Martyr, under the supervision of Theophilus and Sapritius.

In his essay 'The Power of Integrity in Massinger's Women', Ira Clark, who
calls Massinger the 'premier professional playwright of the late Jacobean and Caroline
theatre', argues that he demonstrates an unusually positive attitude to women in his
plays:

[...][H]is plays promote accommodations within [...]a paternalist tradition by
recognizing women as individuals with free choice of husbands and as
potential contributors to public as well as family matters. [...] [H]is plays
present these reforms with sympathy and admiration that seem to represent as
great a transformation as early Stuart society was capable of conceiving
without rebellion. (p.77)

Given Clark's evaluation of Massinger's representation of women, the radical view of
male and female roles which I have argued is presented in Love's Cure, for example,
might be seen as characteristic of Massinger's positive attitude towards women, rather

8 'The Power of Integrity in Massinger's Women', in Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S.
Travitsky (eds.), The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the
Canon (Amherst 1990), p.63.
than of Fletcher's. There is no sure way of knowing who wrote which lines in a collaboration. However, by comparing the representation of gender in *The Island Princess* and *The Virgin Martyr* it can be seen that Fletcher at times was more progressive in his sexual politics than Massinger.

*The Virgin Martyr* is set in the pre-Christian Roman Empire. Antoninus, the son of Sapritius — the Governor of Caesaria, has fallen in love with a Christian, Dorothea. Artemia, daughter of the Emperor Dioclesian, has fallen in love with Antoninus. As a result of Artemia's jealousy Dorothea and Antoninus are imprisoned. Dorothea is threatened with rape and tortured (she is beaten with clubs on stage) under the direction of Sapritius. Though she is divinely protected from these assaults, she is eventually executed. Antoninus, sick with love for Dorothea, dies. Theophilus, the most vicious of the persecutors (he has his own daughters tortured, and finally kills them for their Christianity) is sent fruit and flowers from paradise by Dorothea in the final act. As a result, he converts and is himself tortured on the rack on stage. Dorothea and the other victims descend from heaven to meet him as he dies. Dioclesian, though amazed at these events, vows to continue the persecution.

The violence against women, particularly Dorothea, in *The Virgin Martyr* is extreme. There is also violence against men (Theophilus on the rack in the final scene is particularly unnerving), but the plot centres on the sufferings of Dorothea. Though the whole point of the play is to show how belief in Christianity rescues her from terrible suffering and injustice, this might have been overshadowed on stage by what the audience would have seen: a woman being dragged about by the hair, beaten and threatened with rape. The play may have been intended to continue the *ars moriendi* tradition, but it is difficult to appreciate the dignity of a death after such brutal events. The violence in *The Island Princess* is much more muted. Though Armusia and Quisara are threatened with torture and death, events intercede and they remain safe.

One of the similarities between the two plays is that the characters are enthusiastic about their impending torture. Armusia declares that he is 'joyfull to accept' the 'worst and painefullst' of tortures (V.ii.86). Similarly, Dorothea declares...
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The sight of whips, rackes, gibbets, axes, fires
Are scaffoldings, by which my soule climbes vp
To an Eternall habitation. (Il.iii.167-9)

Just as belief in Christianity apparently makes these characters less subject to fear and
pain, they also seem less prone to sexual desire, which usually has the central
characters enthralled in a romance. Dorothea rejects Antoninus with great disdain
before he has converted:

He that I loue is richer; and for worth
You are to him lower then any slaue
Is to a Monarch. (Il.iii.85-7)

The torments of unrequited passion make Antoninus ill. He only recovers at the
moment when he converts to Christianity and can love Dorothea chastely:

[...] I feele a holy fire
That yeelds a comfortable heate within me.
I am quite alterd from the thing I was.
See I can stand, and goe alone, thus kneeleth
To heavenly Dorothea, touch her hand
With a religious kisse. (IV.ii.160-5)

When Quisara asks Armusia to convert to her religion he goes from
unreserved declarations of how much he loves her to being repelled by her:

Now Icontemne ye, and I hate my selfe
For looking on that face lasciviously,
And it lookes ugly now methinkes. (IV.v.102-4)

The first two lines form a complete statement -- the last line is presented almost as an
after-thought, as though it has just dawned on him that she is unattractive. Quisara's
beauty has no affect on him now because he has realised that it is leading him to
perdition. This idea relates to the importance of women's beauty in guiding the
spirituality of men, which I have discussed in relation to *Love's Cure*. Once she has converted Quisara regains Armusia's friendship but his words seem disinterested and abrupt compared to his impassioned declarations earlier in the play:

O blessed Lady, *{Embraces her:}*  
Since thou art won, let me begin my triumph,—  
Come clap your terrors on. *(V.ii.127-9)*

'Thou art won' undoubtedly refers to the fact that God, not Armusia, has won her love. Armusia's triumph will be their torture and death. That these are the last words he addresses to her in the play indicates the extent to which romantic love has become subordinate. As a potential religious martyr he has given way to a chaste and dispassionate regard for Quisara, reminiscent of the 'comfortable heate' of the 'holy fire' which replaces Antoninus's sexual passion for Dorothea at the moment of his conversion and their deaths in *The Virgin Martyr*.

The question of whether beauty will have a positive or negative affect on a lover's spiritual welfare is of central importance in both these plays. *The Virgin Martyr* takes the more usual course of presenting the woman as the passive love-object without any sexual desires of her own. She is the victim of men concerned for their position within the male social hierarchy, but because of her beauty she is able to convert Antoninus.

De Bellan's Quixaire (Quisara) inspires a particularly fervent worship in Peynere (Pyniero), but for the worse:

Quad à moy la passio que j'ay pour vous est arrivée à ce point que je vous estime ma Loy, mo Prince, mo salut, & ma Deesse. Ja n'ay point d'autre foy que vous, la seule & chere Idole de mo cœur. Que si je croyais que le sacrifice non seulement de Salama: Mais encore de mo Oncle me peut render propice ma Deesse, ce fer que je porte au costé auroit bien tost envoyé ces ames lasches augmenter le Royaume des ombres.  

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9 De Bellan, p.340:

As for me, the passion that I have for you has come to the point at which I value you as my law, my prince, my salvation, and my goddess. I have no
Peynere's idolatry suggests that his motives are impure: as a non-Christian Quixaire cannot inspire the kind of religious love with which, for example, Genevora inspires Lucio in *Love's Cure*. This aspect of Quisara's power over men is played down by Fletcher, until the moment that Armusia realises that he is in danger of bringing his 'soule to ruine' for the sake of the embraces of a woman (IV.v.82), and then he gives a speech in which he claims her face 'lookes like death it selfe' (IV.v.105). Her beauty has no effect on him, just as Dorothea has no desire for Antoninus.

*The Island Princess* is unusual in making the man the love-object who must draw the woman to spiritual well-being: it is Armusia who must inspire Quisara to reach a higher spiritual level. When a Guard is sent off stage to fetch tortures for Armusia, Quisara expresses her admiration for him:


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\begin{align*}
[\ldots] & \text{Keepe on your way, a virgin will assist ye,} \\
& \text{A virgin won by your faire constancy,} \\
& \text{And glorying that she is won so, will dye by ye;} \\
& \text{I have touch'd ye every way, tried ye most honest,} \\
& \text{Perfect, and good, chaste, blushing-chaste, and temperate,} \\
& \text{Valiant, without vaineglorie, modest, stayed,} \\
& \text{No rage, or light affection ruling in you;} \\
& \text{Indeed, the perfect schoole of worth I find ye,} \\
& \text{The temple of true honour.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The virtues of being constant, honest and temperate were equally desirable in either sex, but being valiant was a virtue more associated with masculinity, and being 'blushing-chaste' and 'modest' would certainly have been more associated with femininity.\(^{10}\) Quisara's appreciation of Armusia's virtues stem from her love for him, other faith than you, the only and dear idol of my heart. If I believed that the sacrifice not only of Salama, but also of my Uncle could give me favour, my goddess, this steel which I carry by my side would soon send those cowardly souls to add to the kingdom of the shadows.

\(^{10}\) Philip Finkelpearl remarks that some of Armusia's virtues 'would have been called "female" by the roaring boy cavaliers of the seventeenth century' (*Court and Country Politics in the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher*, p.241).

In Fletcher's *The Chances* (1617), John, having been introduced to the beautiful heroine by his friend Frederick as 'valiant to defend,/ And modest to
as men in other literature of the period are inspired by women.

Like the reversal of roles in *Love’s Cure* it immediately suggests a parity between the sexes in terms of what virtues and vices men and women are capable of, and as a consequence the line dividing what is expected of each gender becomes less distinct: not only is it seen desirable for women to be brave and assertive in certain cases, but also for men to be 'blushing-chaste'. It is not impossible that Fletcher meant us to recognize a type of 'new man' in Armusia, not least because of his feminine sounding name. The name may have been considered appropriate for a heroic man who nevertheless seems to have certain feminine characteristics, a type which was fashionable in literature influenced by pastoral tragicomedy and *préciosité*.

*The Virgin Martyr* seems to be rooted strongly in the English protestant martyr tradition, and as such seems rather unforgiving in what it demands from its heroines. *Préciosité*, though essentially part of the counter-reformation movement in France, was altogether more liberal -- one might say more decadent -- in its attitude towards gender and sexuality. *The Island Princess* might be seen as a fusion of these two modes, on the one hand still requiring altruistic self-sacrifice from its heroine (unlike d'Urfé's heroines, who -- on the whole -- are rather selfish by comparison), but on the other imbuing its hero with traditionally feminine virtues (such as willingness to die, modesty and chastity -- very much in the style of d'Urfé's Celadon).

Conversely with as your blushes' (II.iii.43-4), is extremely angry with him, saying aside 'this commendation! Has broke the neck of all my hopes' (II.iii.45-6), and later berating him soundly:

Art thou not an Asse?
And modest as her blushes? What block-head
Would e're have popt out such a dry Apologie,
For his dear friend? and to a Gentlewoman,
A woman of her youth, and delicacy,
They are arguments to draw them to abhorre us. (II.iii.78-83)

Although Fletcher sometimes seriously attributes female virtues to the heroes of his tragedies and tragicomedies, as this passage shows, he was also quite capable of exploiting the disjunction between this feminised version of masculinity and more conventional notions of male virility for comic effect.
What is striking in both *Love's Cure* and *The Island Princess* is that the heroes prove themselves partly through these traditionally feminine qualities. It seems quite likely that such heroes would have appealed to women in the audience: the plays may have been written with that in mind, or perhaps the playwrights were simply following contemporary romance fashions. Whether it was Fletcher, Massinger, or indeed Beaumont, who set the tone and determined the outcome of the 'transvestite challenge' in *Love's Cure*, the play stands as testimony to the playwrights' openness to explorations of gender and sexuality in continental romance.
Women and Jacobean Masque: The Missing Years

Critical interest in court masque has tended to focus on the first decade of James's reign and on the reign of Charles I. After the marriage of Elizabeth and the death of Prince Henry, Queen Anne stopped commissioning and participating in masques. Court entertainments centred on Prince Charles, Buckingham and James himself, closing down the artistic and political variety of the earlier Jacobean masques. Men, far more than women, were celebrated in court masques in the second decade of the reign, and though the female relatives of James's favourites continued to play an important part in court life, there is evidence to suggest that on the whole James discouraged women from court. When Charles I came to the throne, Henrietta Maria's interest in masque led to its renewal as a feminocentric form. The second decade of James's reign can be seen as an hiatus, both in terms of women's contributions to masques and in the modern critical debates on the parts that women played in masque.¹

This period is just as important for an investigation into the nature of the participation of women in Jacobean masque as the earlier period, if not more so. Moreover, it coincides with the period in which Fletcher (with the help of his collaborators) gained ascendance as the chief playwright for the King's Men, and consequently became the most popular and successful London playwright of his day. Two of the hallmarks of Fletcherian drama are the use of masques and masque-like effects, and the radical behaviour of female characters. The radical examples of female agency in Fletcherian romance drama (which are often best exemplified during the masques within plays, or masque-like moments) were undoubtedly qualified by the fact that the plays were all-male productions. However, the strong female agency epitomised by female masquers in romance drama does seem to reproduce in some ways the behaviour of real female masquers, especially as they had been in the first decade of James's reign.

Aristocratic women performers in masques were credited with the success of masques they commissioned as empowered courtiers in their own right. On the (Cambridge, 1989) for a discussion of the participation of women in Caroline masques.

2 See for example, the Venetian Ambassador Zorzi Giustinian's account of the Masque of Queens:

I must just touch on the splendour of the spectacle, which was worthy of her Majesty's greatness. The apparatus and the cunning of the stage machinery was a miracle, the abundance and beauty of the lights immense, the music and dance most sumptuous. But what beggared all else and possibly exceeded the public expectation was the wealth of pearls and jewels that adorned the Queen and her ladies [...]. So well composed and ordered was it all that it is evident that the mind of her Majesty, the authoress of the whole, is gifted no less highly than her person. She reaped universal applause and the King constantly showed his approval.

(Horatio F. Brown (ed.), Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy — Venetian — 1607-1610 (London, 1904), vol. 11, p. 86, letter number 154.)

The phrase 'authoress of the whole' indicates that Giustinian thought that Anne had
other hand, they are sometimes thought of as silent, passive, richly adorned cyphers in their masques, desired objects whose principal function was to glorify their male counterparts. Fletcher and his collaborators exploit the tension between these two roles in the way that they represent women as masque performers and organisers in their plays. The radical behaviour of the female masquers in the plays of Fletcher and his collaborators ought not to be imputed simply to their imagination: they were undoubtedly inspired by the behaviour of contemporary women to some extent.

Copies of masques and use of masque-like elements within plays became ubiquitous not only because of the dramatic possibilities they offered (especially for female characters), but also because play-goers' fascination with court masques meant there was a demand for this sort of entertainment to be included in plays. The introduction of masques into plays may have been especially attractive for citizens' wives, who formed an important component of masque audiences, as well as theatre audiences.

complete control over the proceedings, even though it was well known that Jonson and Jones were immediately responsible for the composition and design of the masque.

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3 For example, Suzanne Gossett writes that 'In the Masque of Queens Bel-Anna has no individual merit except as a projection of James' -- a surprising remark in the light of Giustinian's comment. ("Man-maid, begone!": Women in Masques, English Literary Renaissance 18 (1988), p.101.)

4 See Richard Levin's 'Women in the Renaissance Theatre Audience', Shakespeare Quarterly 40 (1989) 165-174, for a discussion of the importance of women in the audiences of London playhouses, and my own discussion of the attendance of citizens' wives at court masques, below pp.220 ff.. Inga-Stina Ewbank begins her essay on masques in plays with the following epigraph from Shirley's comedy Changes or Love in a Maze (1631/2):

Dancer. A masque will be delightful to the ladies.
Capenvit. Oh, sir, what plays are taking without these
Pretty devices? Many gentlemen
Are not, as in the days of understanding,
Now satisfied without a jig, which since
They cannot, with their honour, call for after
The play, they look to be serv'd up in the middle:
Your dance is the best language of some comedies,
Jean Howard argues that women asserted themselves as 'desiring subjects' by going to the theatre. This is perhaps even more obvious in the case of women who attended masques. It is likely that there was a large overlap between the audiences of court masques and those of the private (and even the public) playhouses. The wealthy, of whatever social class, probably attended performances at all three venues. At masques, though invited places near to the King were difficult to come by and hard fought over (especially by foreign diplomats), an undistinguished place in

And footing runs away with all; a scene
Express'd with life of art, and squared to nature,
Is dull and phlegmatic poetry.


By the Caroline era, masques within plays were evidently well established as an element that would appeal to the less sophisticated members of the audience, particularly women.

5 Howard writes

Whether or not they were accompanied by husbands or fathers, women at the theater were not "at home", but in public, where they could become objects of desire, certainly, but also desiring subjects, stimulated to want what was on display at the theater.

(The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England (London, 1994), p.79.)


The Globe company [i.e.the King's Men], even in the decade before 1609, was summoned to play at Court twice as often as any other company, in fact as often as all the other companies put together. It is unlikely that those who favoured them so much at Court would have ignored them at the Globe. The rich and the poor audiences were not mutually exclusive; rather the rich went to hall [i.e.private theatres] and amphitheatre playhouse [i.e.public theatres] alike, the poor more exclusively to the amphitheatres. (p.215-16)

E.K. Chambers remarks that Queen Anne herself visited the theatre (The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), vol.1, p.7), though he doesn't reveal where he found this information. Her biographer, Ethel Carleton Williams, also calls her 'a keen theatre-goer' but only cites instances of acting companies playing for her, rather than her going to the theatre (Anne Of Denmark: Wife of James VI of Scotland: James I of England (London, 1970), p.88).
the hall seems to have been available to anyone who could persuade the door-keepers to let them in. Inigo Jones's Banqueting House, built in 1619, has a separate entrance on Whitehall which leads directly up to the balcony, presumably so that citizens could enter without the aristocratic and invited guests having to mix with them.

According to contemporary accounts and satires citizens' wives were willing to risk discomfort, humiliation and even assault in order to see court masques. This is vividly illustrated by Fletcher in his depiction of citizens' wives attempting to get in to see a court masque in Act II, scenes iv and vi of *A Wife for a Month* (1624). These scenes give a colourful impression of the crowds striving to enter and the difficulty that the servants have in keeping them behind the doors. In scene vi Camillo proves to be more gullible than the other courtiers who have been sent to oversee the servants at the door. He imagines that some 'curtall'd queanes in hired clothes' (II,vi,16) are ladies. The court fool Tony reports that 'They come out of Spaine' (I.1.17) and the courtier Menallo orders him to 'Keep 'em in breath for an Embassadour,/ Me thinks my nose shakes at their memories' (II.18-19). Loss of one's nose was commonly invoked as a symptom of syphilis, and Menallo is implying that he would like the prostitutes to give the Spanish ambassador venereal disease.

Menallo's exhortation to put the prostitutes in the way of the ambassador is no doubt Fletcher's comment on the fact that the unpopular Spanish ambassadors were given precedence over other guests at court masques, often causing squabbles between

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7 E.K. Chambers writes that 'subject to the limitations of space and the discretion of the door-keepers, the performances [of masques at court] seem to have been open to all comers.' (*The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford, 1923), vol.1, p.205.)

8 See, for example, *The Custom of the Country* (1619), in which the male prostitute Rutillio meets some other male prostitutes and fears for his nose:

Blow your face tenderly,
Your nose will ne're endure it: mercy ô me,
What are men change'd to here? is my nose fast yet?
Mee thinks it shakes it'h [sic] hilt[s] [...] (IV.v.27-30)
The couriers are keen to let the citizen's wives enter but not their husbands. Camillo says 'Kepe back those Citizens, and let their wives in; Their hansome wives' (II.vi.5-6). One husband tries to gain admittance by pretending he is one of the musicians, and another by saying that he has 'sweet-meats for the banquet' (II.vi.21). Camillo rebukes them by saying 'Bold Rascalls, offer to disturbe your wives?' (II.vi.24). The implication is that as well as being sexually attractive the wives are sexually available without their husbands. Tony suggests that they are also sexually voracious and have venereal disease:

*Menallo.* Take the women aside, and talk with 'em in privat, Give 'em that they came for.

*Tony.* The whole Court cannot do it; Besides, the next Maske if we use 'em so, They'll come by millions to expect our largesse; We have broke a hundred heads.

*Cleanthes.* Are they so tender?

*Tony.* But 'twas behinde, before they have all murrions. (II.vi.8-13)

Menallo's leering 'Give 'em that they came for' is followed up by Tony's image of millions thronging to receive the courtiers' 'largesse'. The use of the past tense in 'We

9 On Twelfth Night 1622, for example, the Spanish Ambassador Gondemar and the French Ambassador's wife and niece were present at Jonson's *Masque of Augurs*, but most of the other Ambassadors 'were not invited with respect to the incompatibility between them and the Spanish.' (Sir John Finett, quoted by John Nichols in *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First* (London, 1828), vol.4, p.735). When the masque was repeated on 6th May 1622 the French ambassador was invited, but he refused to go, writing to James that 'his stomach would not [...] agree with cold meat' (Nichols 4, p.763n). Though cold meat may have been the expected fare at masques (see Fletcher's reference to 'a cold supper' in *The Elder Brother*, discussed below, p.225), as Sir John Finett suggests, the French ambassador was also 'pointing at the invitation and presence of the Spanish Ambassador in the first place at the same Maske the Christmas before, now repeated' (*Finetti Philoxenis*, pp.104-106, quoted by Nichols 4, p.763n.). At this repetition of the masque, only the two Spanish ambassadors were allowed to sit near the right side of the King 'the rest of them were bestowed together with the States' and other strangers promiscuously on a scaffold behind the King, over the entrance there on the left-hand of his Majesty.' (Sir John Finett, quoted by Nichols 4, p.763).
have broke a hundred heads' implies that they have already had to fight the women off, or alternatively that they have broken a hundred maidenheads. Cleanthes' 'Are they so tender' could mean 'are their heads so vulnerable that they can be so easily hurt?' or 'are they so young that they still have maidenheads?'. Tony's 'twas behinde' could mean that he was talking about sexual parts rather than their heads all along, or that they were more vulnerable when hit from behind. '[B]efore they have all murrions' means either that their heads are protected by helmets (morions) to prevent them from being broken, or that their faces are diseased (murrains means cattle disease) and therefore one wouldn't want to have a sexual encounter with them from the front.

The puns in the passage are clever and intricate but brutally misogynist. The courtiers would like to think that the women's eagerness to be at the masque with or without their husbands is a sign of their sexual availability. When we hear the citizens and their wives speak in the earlier scene (II.iv) it is left ambiguous whether they are ignorant of the dangers or if they are indeed sexually immoral.

Fletcher is not the only writer to suggest that citizens' wives would be allowed in to see court masques in exchange for sexual favours. In Field's induction to Four Plays, Or Moral Representations, in One (1613), Don Frigozo, a courtier overseeing who should be allowed in for the royal entertainment, exclaims 'Down with those City-Gentlemen, &c. [sic] Out with those cuckolds, I say, and in with their wives at the back-door.' (Induction, ll.2-4). In the antimasque to Jonson's Love Restored (1612) Robin Goodfellow describes his various attempts to get into the masque, including taking on the shape of a citizen's wife:

By this time I saw a fine citizens wife, or two, let in; and that figure prouok'd mee exceedingly to take it: which I had no sooner done, but one o' the Black-guard had his hand in my vestrie, and was groping of me as nimbly as the Christmas cut-purse. He thought he might be bold with me, because I had not a husband in sight to squeake to. I was glad to forgoe my forme, to be rid of his hot steeming affection, it so smelt o'the boyling-house.10

10 Love Restored, Herford and Simpson 7, p.380.
Unable to endure this assault, Robin has to resort to another disguise. Both Fletcher and Jonson use the word 'squeak' to describe the noise that a citizen's wife makes when assaulted at a masque, indicating that both saw the comic rather than serious implications of these incidents. That such events were not confined to fiction is attested to in Dudley Carleton's report of a masque on 27th December 1604, in which 'One woeman among the rest lost her honesty for which she was caried to the porters lodge being surprised at her bassnes on the top of the taras'. Carleton's language makes it sound as though she was capable of losing 'her honesty' all on her own. What happened to her afterwards, and indeed what became of the man involved, is not recorded.

In A Wife for a Month, the citizens and their wives are mocked for being stupidly oblivious to the sexually dangerous atmosphere of the court, or alternatively for being so sexually immoral themselves that they are happy to go along with it. Perhaps they are meant to have a titillating mixture of sexual ignorance and knowingness — like the Barbara Windsor characters in Carry On films. The courtiers in A Wife for a Month are not stupid, but they are shown to be manipulative, lecherous and immoral. However, since the King's Men made most of their money from courtiers and citizens it seems likely no serious reproof was meant, and none would have been taken by either of these groups. Comedy is often insulting to its audience, after all.

Judging by the number of calls for masque-like effects in Fletcher's plays, it seems likely that the King's Men had the technology, the artistry and the money to put on a tolerable imitation. There is an intriguing reference in The Elder Brother (1625)

11 In A Wife for a Month, Tony tells one of the citizen's wives 'You must not squeak' (II.iv.17).

12 The references to citizens' wives in Four Plays in One, Love Restored and Carleton's letter are all cited by E.K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, vol.1, p.206n.
which suggests that not only masques within plays, but also masques by themselves were staged at private playhouses for citizens (or rather, for their wives), complete with some kind of banquet, as was conventional at court masques.

Throughout the first half of *The Elder Brother* there are references to the preparation of a masque which will accompany the wedding of Angellina and Eustace. Fletcher is playing with audience expectation by not providing one when the wedding arrangements fail at the last moment. Miramont, the uncle of the jilted bridegroom suggests that the masquers go elsewhere:

_Egremont._ Pox, could he [the groom's father] not stay till th'Masque was past? w'are ready.

_Whatt a skirvie trick's this?_  
_Miramont._ O you may vanish,  
_Performe it at some Hall, where the Citizens wives_  
_May see't for sixe pence a piece, and a cold supper._ (III.v.222-226)

Middleton and Rowley's *The World Tossed at Tennis* (1618-19), Dekker and Ford's *The Sun's Darling* (1624) and Nabbes' *Microcosmus* (1637) were masques which were written specifically for the theatre, as was Fletcher and Field's *Four Plays in One*. However, I don't know of any other evidence to indicate that masques written for weddings might also be performed for paying customers. Six pence was the cheapest entry fee for the Blackfriars -- is it possible that private playhouses were responsible for such occasions? The mention of a cold supper suggests that citizens' wives would get a downgraded version of the full masque experience, which usually included a feast (of cold food, see for example, above, p.222, n.9). Perhaps a citizen could recoup some of the cost of a wedding masque by putting it on 'at some Hall' and charging an entry fee. The possibility remains that Miramont is merely being whimsical, and that no such events took place.

The popularity of masques among citizens' wives was no doubt partly the result of their curiosity about and their desire to emulate the aristocratic women who appeared in court masques and formed an important component of the invited
Though both aristocratic women and citizens' wives were criticised for their eagerness to display themselves at masques in a way that many thought unbecoming or even unchaste, this was one of the few arenas in early seventeenth-century life in which the rules of conventional female modesty were relaxed.

Evidence of women taking speaking parts in Jacobean masques, at a time when women were expected to keep silent in front of large audiences is one indication of this. In her essay "'Man-maid, begone!': Women in Masques' Suzanne Gossett assumes that the first woman to take a vocal (in this case, singing rather than speaking) part in a masque was Madame Coniack who took the role of Circe in Aurelian Townshend's *Tempe Restored* in 1632, and this view seems to be generally accepted. However, there is some evidence that Jacobean women did occasionally speak or sing at masque performances. Taken cumulatively, this evidence forms a significant addition to the list of isolated instances of women speaking on stage which are customarily cited in discussions of the subject.

(Continued on p.227)


14 See Appendix B for a summary of the evidence for performing women in this period, below pp.272-274.
Sir John Harington's notorious description of the revelry which accompanied a visit of Anne's brother, Christian IV of Denmark, to James's court in 1606 is worth quoting at length as a subversive (and, one can't help thinking, wittily embellished)
account of court festivities which seems to include women who take speaking parts in a performance little to their credit:

*My Good Friend,*

In compliance with your asking, now shall you accept my poor accounte of rich doings. I came here a day or two before the Danish King came, and from the day he did come untill this hour, I have been well nigh overwhelmed with carousal and sports of all kinds. [...] We had women, and indeed wine too, of such plenty, as would have astonished each sober beholder. [...] The ladies abandon their sobriety, and are seen to roll about in intoxication. [...] One day, a great feast was held, and, after dinner, the representation of Solomon his Temple and the coming of the Queen of Sheba was made, or (as I may better say) was meant to have been made, before their Majesties, by device of the Earl of Salisbury and others. -- But, alas! as all earthly thinges do fail to poor mortals in enjoyment, so did prove our presentment hereof. The Lady who did play the Queens part, did carry most precious gifts to both their Majesties; but, forgetting the steppes arising to the canopy, overset her caskets into his Danish Majesties lap, and fell at his feet, tho I rather think it was in his face. Much was the hurry and confusion; cloths and napkins were at hand, to make all clean. His Majesty then got up and woud dance with the Queen of Sheba; but he fell down and humbled himself before her, and was carried to an inner chamber and laid on a bed of state [...]. The entertainment and show went forward, and most of the presenters went backward, or fell down; wine did so occupy their upper chambers. Now did appear, in rich dress, Hope, Faith, and Charity: Hope did assay to speak, but wine rendered her endeavours so feeble that she withdrew, and hoped the King would excuse her brevity: Faith was then all alone, for I am certain she was not joyned with good works, and left the court in a staggering condition: Charity came to the King's feet, and seemed to cover the multitude of sins her sisters had committed; in some sorte she made obeysance and broght giftes, but said she would return home again, as there was no gift which heaven had not already given his Majesty. She then returnd to Hope and Faith, who were both sick and spewing in the lower hall. Next came Victory, in bright armour, and presented a rich sword to the King [...]. But Victory did not triumph long; for, after much lamentable utterance, she was led away like a silly captive, and laid to sleep in the outer steps of the anti-chamber. Now did Peace make entry, and strive to get foremoste to the King; but I grieve to tell how great wrath she did discover unto those of her attendants; and, much contrary to her semblance, most rudely made war with her olive branch, and laid on the pates of those who did oppose her coming.

 [...] The great ladies do go well-masked, and indeed it be the only show of their modesty, to conceal their countenance; but, alack, they meet with such countenance to uphold their strange doings, that I marvel not at ought that happens. [...] I do often say (but not aloud) that the Danes have again conquered the Britains, for I see no man, or woman either, that can now command himself or herself. I wish I was at home: -- *O rus, quando te*
aspiciam? [O country, when will I behold thee?]^{15}

It is unlikely, but not inconceivable firstly that Harington would have spoken of the Queen of Sheba as a 'Lady', and used the feminine pronoun throughout to describe the other performers if they had been female impersonators and secondly that paid actors would have got as drunk as the courtiers who hired them. The performers may have been court ladies -- their drunkenness and immodesty is likened to that of the performers. A third possibility is that the actresses in the masque were courtesans: Harington says that they 'had women' in the opening paragraph, suggesting that courtesans as well as court ladies were present at the revelry.^{16} Whether the performers were women, and if so, where they came from and what they did when they were not performing in front of royalty, may never be known.

Harington's comic emphasis on the inability of the women performers to live up to the roles they have taken appears again, many years later, in Fletcher and Rowley's *The Maid in the Mill* (1623). A masque in Act II, scene ii (attributed to Rowley) depicts the judgement of Paris. One of the characters unexpectedly arrives dressed as Mars and kidnaps Florimell -- the maid in the mill of the title -- who is playing Venus in the masque. The audience on stage take her cries for help as part of the masque entertainment, giving the abductor time to make his escape with her. Silence from masquers was traditional, and the masque audience has already been told that the Goddesses are 'dumb, for Ladies must not speak here' (II.ii.138), yet the all-male spectators of the masque within the play assume that Florimell is robustly carrying out a scripted part of the performance. They fail to spring to her rescue because they lack certainty about the role of women in masques.

One of the gentlemen watching the masque, Martine, comments that Venus's

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^{15} Letter from Sir John Harington to Mr. Secretary Barlow, in Robert Ashton (ed.), *James I By His Contemporaries: An account of his career and character as seen by some of his contemporaries* (London, 1969), pp.242-244.

^{16} I am indebted to Sophie Tomlinson for this suggestion.
cries for help are 'very improper' since 'Venus/ Never cries out when she conjoynes
with Mars' (II.185-6). Martine is right to point out that Florimell's screams are not
compatible with the legend that Venus is the willing lover of Mars. Rather than
voicing serious concern about her, however, his comments are a continuation of the
witty but acid commentary by the aristocrats watching the masque (reminiscent of the
cruel upper-class audiences of the play in A Midsummer Night's Dream or the
pageant in Love's Labour's Lost). Martine, like Harington, believes he is merely
watching a female performer who is unable to live up to the part she has been given.

When the stage audience of the masque finally realises that Florimell has
indeed been abducted, the female characters playing Juno and Minerva (Ismenia and
Aminta) are thrown into confusion:

Ismenia. | Alas my courage was so counterfeit
It might have been struck from me with a feather,
Juno ne'er had so weak a presenter.

Aminta. | Sure I was ne'er the wiser for Minerva,
That I find yet about me. (II.ii.224-8)

The humour of both Harington and Rowley depends on how they represent the
disjunction between women as performers and the figures they impersonate.

Because it was a rarity for a woman to take a speaking role in a performance,
it is surprising that Harington doesn't comment on it. There are two possible reasons
for this: either Harington assumed his correspondent Barlow would take it for granted
that the actors were female impersonators (their ambiguous gender perhaps adding to
the moral repugnance of the situation), or (contrary to what other records suggest)
women took speaking roles in performances often enough for it not to be remarkable
in itself. It is very difficult to tell from some descriptions of masques if women or
female impersonators are being referred to. For example, Jonson contrasts his 'Anti-
Masque of Boyes' who had appeared in the Haddington Masque in 1608 with that of
the 'twelve Women, in the habite of Haggs, or Witches' in his introduction to The
Masque of Queens (1609), a choice of words which hardly suggests female
impersonators, and yet commentators seem to take it for granted that he does mean female impersonators.\textsuperscript{17}

It's certainly possible that lower-class women took speaking parts in masques and pageants more than we are aware of (since the names of lower-class performers were not often recorded). Ismenia and Aminta pretend to be country wenches when they take part in the masque in \textit{The Maid in the Mill}, and Florimell, at this stage of the play, believes herself to be merely a miller's daughter. The class position the female characters have assumed in the play allows them to take part in the masque.

The silence that was traditional for female masquers is broken many times in masques and masque-like moments by female characters (who would have been played by boys) in plays by Fletcher and his collaborators. Alathe in Fletcher's \textit{The Night Walker} (1611, revised 1633 by Shirley), which I discuss in more depth in the next section, is an example. The common situation in early seventeenth-century romance drama in which a boy actor takes the role of a women who disguises herself as a boy, is given an extra spin by Alathe's central role in a kind of masque which she herself helps to create. Taking a speaking part in such a performance is seen as no more exceptional than the rest of Alathe's feigned behaviour as a boy servant. As in \textit{The Maid in the Mill}, her supposed status as a member of the servant class seems to be one of the factors which frees her to take a speaking part.

There may have been low-class professional women performers as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century. In his discussion of Elizabethan masques E.K. Chambers notes a reference to a 'tronchwoman' -- presumably a female version of the more usual 'truchman' (the spokesman who would give an introductory speech to explain the symbolism of the silent aristocratic masquers).\textsuperscript{18} There are also some instances of women taking singing roles in royal entertainments in the Tudor

\textsuperscript{17} Herford and Simpson 7, p.282.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{The Elizabethan Stage} vol. 1, p.190.
period.\(^{19}\)

There are a couple of examples of masquers themselves (rather than paid performers) taking speaking parts. A loose leaf in a copy of Marston's masque for the Countess Derby at Castle Ashby in 1607 indicates that at some stage in the masque the Countess spoke a verse of thanks to the female masquers and they each addressed a complimentary verse to her.\(^{20}\) It is possible that such things occurred more frequently than the surviving records of masques would suggest — aristocratic women may not have wished their speaking parts to be published. Fletcher most likely knew of the masque, even if he did not see it, as he had strong connections with the Huntingdon family.\(^{21}\)

Robert White's *Masque of Cupid's Banishment* (1617) performed by members of the Ladies' Hall at Greenwich is perhaps the most significant surviving Jacobean masque which includes speaking and singing parts for female masquers. The Ladies' Hall is the first known example of a girls' school in England. Unfortunately the scant information which is given in White's description of the masque is about all that is known about the institution.\(^{22}\) What is known is that many

\(^{19}\) At the Scottish marriage celebrations of James and Anne in 1590 it is recorded that 'nine maidens, brauely arraied in cloth of silver and gold, representing the nine Muses, [...] sung verie sweete musique' (see Robert Ashton (ed.), *James I By His Contemporaries: An account of his career and character as seen by some of his contemporaries* (London, 1969), p.91). In 1601, Sir William Knollys entertained Queen Elizabeth with 'many devices of singing, dancing, and playing-wenchtes, and such like' (cited by T.S.Graves, op.cit., p.189-90). Graves remarks that 'the employment of girls in pageants and similar public entertainment got up on the occasion of the royal entry and like events was apparently a common practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' (p.187).

\(^{20}\) See Nichols 2, p.152.


girls' schools had been established to the north of London by 1635, and by the Restoration period Hackney became known -- no doubt with an element of sarcasm -- as 'The Ladies' University of Female Arts.' The number of these schools which had already appeared by the 1630s suggests that Ladies' Hall may not have been the only (or even the first) school for girls during the Jacobean period.

Two of the masquers playing Diana's nymphs in the masque sing a song, as do the masquers who play wood nymphs later in the masque. It should be remembered that these were not hired performers, but (for the most part) daughters of court and government officials, including two of Anne's god-daughters. Ann Watkins, who plays the part of Fortune in the masque, delivers a few lines of speech:

We are engaged to Time for this occasion
That meets our wishes with such good success.
For this great courtesy I'll create
Some unexpected joy to crown thy hours,
Thy minutes, I'll so turn upon this wheel of mine
That men hereafter shall call thee happy Time.
Hymen, Mercury, how welcome you are hither.
We can no more express than we already have. (l.139-146)

The speech seems oddly truncated -- it is not impossible that White had to edit a longer version of it in order to reduce Watkin's speaking role to a minimum. Her role


23 Dorothy Gardiner cites a record in 1620 of a school for girls in Kent (op.cit., p.217), and another at Stepney in 1628 (p.210). She also mentions that 'schools for citizens' children were so numerous about Enfield and Waltham that they were regarded as a possible source of danger to the royal household at Theobald's, during the outbreak of plague in 1635' (p.211).

24 Ibid., p.211.

25 Cerasano and Wynne-Davies give more details in their notes to Cupid's Banishment, p.196-7. McGee also gives details, pp.259-60.
as Fortune is benign, her speech short and modest: she is not part of the anti-masque (as is Madame Coniack in *Tempe Restored*). Her name appears at the head of the female masquers, not with the names of the male speaking performers (who also seem to be well-born rather than merely hired performers). These facts suggest that she was either a tutor or a student of the Ladies Hall, rather than a paid performer. Her role, though brief, gives an indication of the fragility of the prohibition against women speaking in masques. It could be argued that if Ann Watkins was a student at the school, her youth might have excused her from the usual social prohibitions against performing women: however, it was not unusual for masquers to start performing at a young age, and anyway aristocratic children were often treated more or less in the same way as adults.

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26 Not surprisingly, most of the named female court masquers in the Jacobean period seem to be aged from their late teens to their early thirties, though there are some exceptions. For example, Frances, Countess of Essex was 16 when she performed in *The Masque of Queens* (1609), as was the Earl of Arundel when he performed in *Hymenaei* (1606). Ten-year-old Prince Henry was "taken out" [...] and "tost from hand to hand like a tennis ball" by the court ladies performing in Daniel's *The Vision of Twelve Goddesses* (1604). Princess Elizabeth was only 14 when she made her masquing debut in Daniel's *Tethys Festival* (1610). Prince Charles, aged 10, also made his first masque appearance in *Tethys Festival*. Alongside him appeared 'eight little ladies near of his stature'. Sir John Finett (who was so impressed he thought there were twelve of them) commented 'the little Ladies performed their dance to the amazement of all beholders, considering the tenderness of their years, and the many intricate changes of the dance; which was so disposed, that which way soever the changes went, the little Duke [Charles] was still found to be in the midst of these little dancers.' (Nichols 2, p.360). According to Finett, the girls were 'all of them the daughters of Earls or Barons', but children from less exalted social positions also took part in masques. Not only were the parts of female impersonators taken by boys (presumably from acting companies), but there were also boy dancers, such as the 'little boyes dressed like bottelles [bottles]' mentioned in a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton from Sir Edward Harwood (Ashton, p.237) and the 'twelve masked boys in the guise of frogs' (in a letter from Horatio Busino, reprinted by Ashton, p.240), who appeared in Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* (1618).

27 Bentley's suggestion (which is followed by Cerasano and Wynne-Davies) that White would have been singled out for attack because of the activities of his young ladies' (*The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* 5, p.1258) is unfounded. The defensiveness of his dedication and prologue is conventional for masques. I know of no reason why the masquers would be attacked more than any other female masquers (unless because of the innovation of Ann Watkins' short speech, which is mentioned...
Notwithstanding the fascinating example of White's *Cupid's Banishment* there are comparatively few examples of women taking central roles in masques after 1614 compared to the early years of the reign.\(^\text{28}\) Anne took no leading parts in masques after 1611, and was not 'taken out' (by masquers to dance) after 1613. The masques sponsored by James in the second decade of his reign were for male masquers only, though the masquers continued to take out female aristocrats to dance as part of the performance. Consequently, women were still important guests at masques, and the beauty and social skills of various young women, which was set off to best advantage at masques, was sometimes used by their male relatives in their attempts to gain favour and attention from James in the later years of his reign.

Buckingham's female relatives were especially important guests at masques, though they did not take masquing roles. Jonson's *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* (1621) was first performed at the newly acquired seat of the favourite, Burley-on-the-Hill. Buckingham and other courtiers, disguised as gypsies, read the fortunes of James, Charles and the female relatives of Buckingham: his wife; his mother; the wife of his father-in-law; his brother's wife; his brother's mother-in-law and the latter's neither by Bentley, nor McGee, nor (more surprisingly, given the subject of their book) by Cerasano and Wynne-Davies).

See Leah Sinanoglou Marcus *Childhood and Cultural Despair: A Theme and Variations in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Pittsburgh, 1978) for a discussion of how 'upper-class children in particular were encouraged to put away childish things' (p.6) from an alarmingly early age in the Tudor and Jacobean periods.

Suzanne Gossett goes so far as to claim that after 1614 'James' reign saw no more queen's masques or masques for women.' ("Man Maid Begone!": Women in Masques', *English Literary Renaissance* 18 (1988), p.113.) Orgel and Strong write that 'there were no masques of ladies' in the ten years after 1614 (*Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court* 1, p.44). Barbara Lewalski makes the following comment on the situation:

> After this [Campion's masque of 26th December 1613] the Queen produced no more Christmastide court masques, in part because Prince Henry -- and later Buckingham -- were eager to take charge, abetted by James, who much preferred to watch male dancers. In court masques after 1613 the Queen's ladies were relegated to the minor roles of dancing partners in the revels. (*Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), p.41.)
young stepmother.29

Other women also shone at masques, despite not taking parts as masquers. At Christmas in 1622, it was rumoured that William Cecil (Lord Burghley) escaped the King's order that the nobility spend Christmas in the country, because his daughter Diana's attendance at the court masque was desired.30 On 25th January 1623 Chamberlain wrote that Mademoiselle St.Luc, the niece of the French Ambassador, 'bare a principall part' in the 'dauncing and feasting' of the 1622-3 Christmas season.31 She was a great success at court and received gifts of jewelry from the King, Charles and Buckingham (and others). Chamberlain also reports that the date of Jonson's Time Vindicated to Himself and to his Honours (1623) was set specifically to allow St Luc and the Ambassador's wife to attend before they had to return to France. Chamberlain evidently saw these two incidents as minor political coups for the Cecilian and pro-French factions respectively.

During this period there are a few examples of masques not financed by James which did include women masquers, notably -- of course -- White's Cupid's Banishment. Chamberlain mentions a masque put on for the King and court near Bury by a group of ladies on 16th February 1620.32 It's likely that there were other masques on a smaller scale than the Jonson/Jones extravaganzas, of which no records survive: Lady Hatton's feasts and entertainments, such as the one organised in order to try and interest Buckingham in Diana Cecil at the beginning of January 1619, seem likely occasions for such performances, though no specific mention of a masque

29 By name (respectively) these were: Katherine, Marchioness of Buckingham; Mary, Countess of Buckingham; Cecily, Countess of Rutland; Lady Frances Purbeck; Lady Elizabeth Hatton; and Frances, Countess of Exeter.


32 McClure 2, p.288.
The same letter in which Chamberlain mentions the Bury masque also reports James's threat to 'fall upon theyre husbands, parents, or frends' if sermons, ballads and players all fail to curb 'the insolence and impudence of women'. It is possible that his anger was provoked by the women masquers themselves. Aristocratic women were certainly among the 'highlianded women' whom James enjoyed 'taking downe'. He sometimes singled them out for particularly ostentatious shows of hostility. A proclamation issued in December 1622 ordering courtiers to stay away from the court at Christmas was followed up in February 1623 by another, ordering wives and families of courtiers to stay away from court all year round. Chamberlain mentions this in the same letter which describes the social success of Mademoiselle St Luc. Like the letter describing the Bury masque and the proclamation against women, the concurrent events suggest a complex relationship between James's relationship with individual women and his attitude to women in general.

In a recent article Stephen Orgel discusses a portrait of Anne, painted in 1617 by Paul van Somer, showing her wearing a broad-brimmed hat, short hair and pointed

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33 McClure 2, pp.199-200. Chamberlain also describes Lady Hatton's entertainment of James in his letter of 15th November 1617 (McClure 2, p.117), and on 1st January 1620 he writes of her plans 'to make a feast with dauncing and revelling every Thursday night till Lent' (McClure 2, p.279).

34 See Chamberlain's letter of 20th February 1619 concerning the wife of Sir George Calvert, Secretary of the Privy Council (McClure 2, p.216).

35 Chamberlain writes that this is 'durus sermo' to the women, and will hardly be digested' (McClure 2, p.475). Another example of James directing his misogyny specifically at aristocratic women occurred on the 30th January 1621, when James travelled from Whitehall to Westminster for the first assembly of Parliament for seven years. Sir Simonds D'Ewes wrote in his diary that though James 'spake often and lovingly to the people standing thick and three-fold on all sides to behold him' (an unusual occurrence), he cursed a group of 'Gentlewomen and Ladies' who were watching him from a window. D'Ewes also notes that James took no notice of any other great ladies who came to watch him, except for the wife and mother of Buckingham (Nichols 4, p.650).
Orgel writes that this attire could not have pleased James, who in 1620 gave strict instructions to the clergy:

[...] to inveigh vehemently and bitterly in their sermons against the insolence of our women, and their wearing of brode brim hats, pointed doublats, their hair cut short or shorne, and some of them stillettees or poniards, and such other trinkets of like moment, adding with all that ye pulpit admonitions will not reforme them he wold proceed by another course [...] (McClure 2, 286-7)

A few days before Anne died, he made even more surprising remarks in view of his wife's Catholicism. In a letter of 14th February 1619 Chamberlain reports that James told the Judges:

...to have special care of the Papists, and likewise of their wives; for he said the women were the nourishers of Papistry in this Kingdom, and that a Papist woman and a whore were voces convertibles, which our Catholic Ladies take very ill [...]37

As with the masquing ladies at Bury, whether Anne was one of the sources of his annoyance or was excluded from it will probably never be known.38 Notwithstanding his affection for certain women (particularly the female relatives of Buckingham), James was known for his misogyny. An expression of this ambivalent attitude towards women can be found in Jonson's The Gypsies Metamorphosed, in which the compliments paid by the 'gypsies' to Buckingham's female relatives sit awkwardly alongside very unflattering references to women in the rest of the piece, evidently aimed at pleasing James.

Although taken singly these incidents may not signify much, taken


37 John Nichols reprints this letter (vol. 3, p.529), but I can't find it in McClure's edition of Chamberlain's letters (perhaps Nichols gives the wrong date).

38 The immediate source of his annoyance was the trial of the Catholic Lady Lake and members of her family and staff for making false accusations and forgeries with the intention of incriminating her son-in-law (See Nichols 3, pp.193 and 526-8).
cumulatively they seem to indicate a growing hostility to women on the part of James which must have affected the atmosphere of the court. In a letter of 3rd January 1618, Chamberlain mentions 'a maske of nine Ladies' which they had organised 'at theyre owne cost' led by Lady Hay as Queen of the Amazons (McClure 2, pp.125-6). He goes on to report that 'whatsoever the cause was, neither the Quene nor King did like or allow of yt and so all is dasht'. It seems likely James's unwillingness to see such performances at court may have been a factor in the cancelling of the masque. James's highly ambivalent feelings towards women were undoubtedly partly responsible for the decline of the court masque as a feminocentric form in the later years of his reign.

Fletcher and his collaborators were able to give an alternative to the court in which a wide variety of masques with different political meanings could be seen, and in which female characters (played by female impersonators) constituted an important part. As I will argue in the next section, in addition to providing an alternative politics to the court masques, the masques within plays of Fletcher and his collaborators continue the tradition of celebrating femininity through masque, which James's increasingly misogynist attitudes curtailed in the court masques of the last years of his reign.
Fletcher and Masque

In his conversations with Drummond in 1619, Jonson claimed 'That next himself, only Fletcher and Chapman could make a mask'.¹ This is intriguing since no masque by Fletcher has been discovered. It is not impossible that Fletcher is the author of a masque that was given by Sir Thomas Beaumont in 1618 at his house in Coleorton, but the most recent study suggests it was by a local poet and clergyman, Thomas Pestell.² Suzanne Gossett argues that Jonson's praise was the result of his admiration for the way that Fletcher wrote masques in his plays, going so far as to suggest that 'Jonson was acknowledging the talents of Fletcher because he was himself indebted to them'.³

The use of masque in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon, as the work of Gossett and others demonstrates, is pervasive, experimental, sometimes complex and often very successful.⁴ However, masques and masque-like elements in plays

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² The Coleorton Masque (1618) is reproduced in David Lindley (ed.), Court Masques: Jacobean and Caroline Entertainments 1605-1640 (Oxford, 1995), pp.126-135. Philip Finkelpearl suggested that this masque is indeed by Fletcher (Court and Country Politics in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher (Princeton, 1990), p.38n). Gordon McMullan discusses the play in the context of Fletcher and his patrons in The Politics of Unease (Amherst, 1994) but suggests that 'the text is too brief for a comprehensive linguistic comparison with his plays' which would be needed to settle the question of authorship (p.283, n.71). However, Philip Finkelpearl has since published an essay attributing the masque to Thomas Pestell: 'The Authorship of the Anonymous Coleorton Masque of 1618', Notes and Queries, 40 (1993), 224-6.

³ The Influence of the Jacobean Masque on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher (New York, 1988), p.179. Gossett doesn't mention that in the dedication to the reader in The Alchemist Jonson complains about plays in which 'the Concupiscence of Daunces, and Antickes so raigneth, as to runne away from Nature, and be afraid of her', suggesting that he may have been hostile to masque inserts in plays, despite his praise of Fletcher (Herford and Simpson 5, p.291).

⁴ Other critics who have written on the subject are: Inga-Stina Ewbank, "These
appeared long before Fletcher began to make use of them. He collaborated with other playwrights who introduced masques into their joint work in the early years of his career: Beaumont wrote the masque in *The Maid's Tragedy* (1610) and the antimasque in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613); Shakespeare was responsible for the masque-like moments in Acts I and V of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

In *Henry VIII* (1613) and *The Coxcomb* (1608-10) Fletcher employs a masked dance to introduce lovers to each other. This very basic use of masque has little to do with the way he developed masques within plays later in his career. He also collaborated with Field on *Four Plays, or Moral Representations, in One* (1613), which though more spectacular to watch than the dances in *The Coxcomb* and *Henry VIII*, still fell short of the sophistication of his later use of masque.

The masque-like episode of Act IV, scene v in *The Night Walker* (1611) is unusual among Fletcher’s early works in that it reflects some of the ways he used masque in later plays. In this scene, the bigamist and usurer Justice Algripe is


5 There is an appendix to the second volume of *The Show Within* which gives an impressively comprehensive list of shows, including masques, within plays in the period 1550-1642, which are too numerous to list here.


7 Shirley revised the play, but not substantively (with the exception of a few lines, including those satirizing Prynne's *Histriomastix: The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragedie* (1632) in III.iii). See Cyrus Hoy’s introduction to *The Night Walker* in Bowers 7, pp.513-530.
drugged and then shown a kind of masque to get him to repent and make amends for his cruelty to the heroine of the play. This is staged by another of Algripe's victims, Lurcher, and his boy servant, Snap, who later turns out to be Alathe, Lurcher's sister, who has been abandoned by Algripe. There is discordant music and two Furies enter, who tell Algripe to commit suicide. Next, there is music of recorders and Alathe (as Snap) enters, dressed as an Angel, to persuade Algripe to repent. Finally, Algripe is drugged again and taken home to bed, so that when he wakes up he thinks it has all been a vision.

The scene is clearly echoed in *The Queen of Corinth* (1617), when Merione is subjected to a kind of grim antimasque and is drugged to disorient her after she has been raped. Though at one level the audience knows that the 'masques' in these very different plays have been staged by characters within the fiction to achieve specific ends, at another level, they symbolically enact the psychological state of the central character on stage. For the duration of the masque the action is transferred from the level of realism which the play has established to a symbolic enactment of a character's state of mind.

It will already be apparent that I am using the term 'masque' rather loosely. There are condensed imitations of court masques in some of Fletcher's plays, as well as parodies of court masque. At other times he uses music, dancing and costumes to produce masque-like effects, and the characters on stage often refer to masque when this happens. In addition his characters use the terms 'masque' and 'masquer' metaphorically.

The changes of tone occasioned by Fletcher's use of masque, or masque-like effects, often signal important (and often ominous) turning points of plot and transformations in character. Algripe reforms as a result of his 'strange visions,/ That should convert him from his Heathen courses' (V.i.16-17) and Merione, unsurprisingly, is also irrevocably altered by her experience. There are many other examples. Things start to go awry between Cleopatra and Caesar when they watch a masque in *The False One* (1621). Martino is cured when his Doctor stages a masque
in *A Very Woman* (c.1617?). In *The Double Marriage* (1620) there are masque-like moments when the villainous Martia appears to the imprisoned hero Virolet, and when Virolet divorces Juliana later in the play: both important turning points in the plot.

Unlike in Shakespeare's plays within plays, in Fletcher's masques within plays the characters are often unable to tell that they are watching a fiction. Sometimes the masque-like effects are explained to the audience but not to the characters on stage, such as when Alinda and Juletta appear disguised to Roderigo and Pedro in Act V of *The Pilgrim* (1621). Music which is playing 'in honour of the Kings great day' (V.iv.97) happens to start up just as the disguised heroines make their exit, giving the two men the impression that they have had a supernatural experience.

More often, masque effects are only partially explained. In *The Night Walker* for example, we know that Snap and Lurcher have set up the show to reform Algripe, and even that Snap has access to the costumes of player-boys (IV.i.110). However, we do not discover who takes the parts of the two Furies, nor who creates the 'Discordant noises' or the music of recorders, nor who has written the script. Perhaps we are meant to think that Lurcher has skilfully arranged it all beforehand, or perhaps we are meant to feel that there is something genuinely magical about this moment of Algripe's conversion.

In other plays, the masque-like effects are not explained at all. When Martia makes her entrance to test the imprisoned Virolet in *The Double Marriage* there is the stage direction 'Within strange cries, horrid noyse, Trumpets' (s.d., II.iv.82), which convinces Virolet and his companion Ascanio that they are about to die. When Martia rather than Death appears, Virolet still imagines her to be Death, though '[t]he face oth' [sic] Maske is alter'd' (II.iv.84). The strange cries, noises and trumpets are not explained: it is possible that we are supposed to think that Martia arranges them to accompany her entry so that she would appear more frightening to the captives. However, there is no indication in the text that this is the case. An obvious explanation is that they are introduced to increase tension in the audience, much as a
sound track on a modern film does.

There have been few discussions of the politics of Fletcher's use of masque. In his book *Princes to Act: Royal Audience and Royal Performance 1578-1792* (Baltimore, 1993) Matthew Wikander discusses the politics of the masque in *The Maid's Tragedy* and links it with a mention of masque in *Philaster* and 'what seems to be a call for a masque' (p. 86) in *A King and No King*. He does not remark on the fact that the references to masque he chooses all come from scenes attributed to Beaumont, nor does he comment on the wealth of material on masque in Fletcher's later plays.

Gordon McMullan draws attention to Fletcher's comments on masque in a verse letter from the playwright to the Countess of Huntingdon, written around 1620:

[Fletcher] criticizes [...] the court masque (the form he and Beaumont had recognized years before to be "tied to rules/Of flatterie") and makes sarcastic reference to the "expence" of the entertainment, "nor whether ytt bee paid for ten yeere hence." (p.21)

The statement that masque is 'tied to rules/Of flatterie' is given by Beaumont to Strato at the opening of *The Maid's Tragedy*. Though Beaumont is thought to have written these lines, it is understandable that McMullan links them with Fletcher's dismissal of masque in his letter to the Countess. The expense of court entertainments caused consternation, particularly later on in the reign as James's financial position worsened.

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8 Quoted in *The Politics of Unease*, pp.17-8. Masque is listed among things Fletcher (in a form of *occupatio*) says he will not write about, including the latest gossip about the nobility, and whether there will be war with Spain:

[...] Knights, and Lords
praye by yo' Leaues, I will not treate of yo'
Ye are too teachy: nor whether ytt bee true
wee shall haue warrs w'th Spaine: (I wolde wee might:)
nor whoe shall daunce i'th maske; nor whoe shall write
those braue things done: nor summe up the Expence;
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those braue things done: nor summe up the Expence;
nor whether ytt bee paid for ten yeere hence.
Fletcher's plays are undoubtedly 'cynical of court and assertions of absolutism', as McMullan remarks (p.35), and masque was intimately associated with both of these things.

However, Jonson's poem 'To Sir Robert Wroth' is also dismissive of masque in very similar terms to Fletcher's letter to the Countess of Huntingdon. Both poems ought to be read in the tradition of panegyrics to the landed aristocrat which celebrate their country houses in idealised, pastoral terms. Anti-court sentiment loses some of its impact when read in this context, since courtly values were often juxtaposed with what were supposed to be pastoral values. Jonson had much invested in masque, and we know from the prefaces to some of his masques that he felt strongly about the value of them: by the same token it would be unwise to take Fletcher's opinion about masque from his poem to the Countess alone.

Fletcher was obviously fascinated with the masque form, though the masques within his plays have very different political meanings to court masques. His frequent and varied use of masque combined with his cynicism of the 'court and assertions of absolutism' suggest that his attitude to the court -- and by extension, his political views in general -- are complicated and ambivalent.

Wikander draws together Keith Sturgess's view that Beaumont and Fletcher began a trend in which there was a progressive 'closing of ranks' in the private

9 Jonson's poem begins

How blest art thou, canst love the countrey, WROTH,
    Whether by choice, or fate, or both;
And, though so neere the citie, and the court,
    Art tane with neithers vice, nor sport:
That at great times, art no ambitious guest
    Of Sherifffes dinner, or Maiors feast.
Nor com'st to view the better cloth of state;
    The richer hangings, or crowne-plate;
Nor throng'st (when masquing is) to haue a sight
    Of the short brauerie of the night;
To view the jewells, stuffes, the paines, the wit
    There wasted, some not paid for yet!
('To Sir Robert Wroth', The Forest, Herford and Simpson 5, pp.96-7.)
playhouses, 'as their audiences defined themselves more clearly as a coterie' (p.64) with J.F.Danby's argument that Beaumont and Fletcher were writing specifically for a young audience (p.87). Focusing on the year 1613, Wikander suggests that Beaumont and Fletcher reflected the views of a 'particular gathering of young people' who, disillusioned by the death of Henry, felt that 'their world was dangerously incoherent' and 'might [...] have questioned order and authority with something like the frenzy of Beaumont and Fletcher's lost protagonists' (p.87).

Though Wikander may be right about the youthfulness of the 1613 court audience, the implication that this was the beginning of a trend which gained momentum through to the 1630s seems misguided to me. The death of Prince Henry at the end of 1612, the departure of Elizabeth for Bohemia in 1613 and the beginning of Anne's gradual retirement from court life do signal the beginning of a new era, but it is not one which pandered to youthful disorder or 'adolescent intensities'. Those who appreciated youthful and/or feminocentric possibilities in the patronage of Henry, Elizabeth and Anne had to make do with Charles after the death of Henry and the marriage of Elizabeth, who had reached the age of seventeen and was beginning to play a leading part in masques. Charles' intimacy with James and Buckingham must have made the political possibilities of court entertainment seem very monochromatic under this triumvirate compared to what they had been five years earlier. One reason for the ubiquity of masques in Fletcher's later plays might well be that he was catering for an audience which had enjoyed the court masques in 1613 and before, and was eager for similar excitement and variety which was lacking in the court masques of the later years of James' reign.

Sara Pearl's discussion of Jonson's masques of 1620-25 adds weight to this

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10 I agree with Philip Finkelpearl, who argues that a distinct 'courtly' drama only evolved when Charles I succeeded to the throne ('The Role of the Court in the Development of Jacobean Drama' Criticism 24 (1982), 138-158.

11 Wikander, quoting Danby, p.87.
 theory. In 1620 the first English newspapers disseminating news from Europe became available in Britain. James issued a proclamation in 1620 forbidding the 'Lavish and Licentious Speech of Matters of State', which were 'no Theames or subjects fit for vulgar persons', being 'far beyond their reach or capacity'. Pearl argues that Jonson echoed this attitude to discussion of royal policy in his masques:

[...] Jonson's masques [...] provide a sustained debate on a set of issues of intense interest to both James and Jonson. They propose the view that comment of matters of state was beyond the capacities of ordinary people, that such matters involved a concept of higher truth available only to James. As the interpreter of royal policy, Jonson continues to cast himself as the same 'high, and aloof' poet one encounters in the plays and non-dramatic verse, above the mass of mankind, and in this way very like the king. [...] All of [Jonson's masques written between 1620 and 1625] remind the audience that they must be educated into an understanding of Jonson's art, just as they must submit themselves to the mysteries attendant on James's kingship. (pp.60-61)

Jonson's masques of this period may well 'stand out as among the most imaginative and intellectually challenging of Jonson's masque-writing career' (as Pearl argues, p.76), but their primary aim seems to have been to make the inner workings of the court seem like a closed world, and to stifle debate about, and criticism of, the court. Whether in conscious opposition to Jonson or not, Fletcher's masques tend to expose the inner workings of the societies (often corrupt courts) which produce them.

The way the masque is represented in Fletcher's *A Wife for a Month* (1624) draws attention to King Frederick as a corrupting influence on his court. Whereas Jacobean court masques strove to represent the court as 'a heau'n on earth' and to show James as a paragon of virtue, in *A Wife for a Month* the atmosphere of the court

12 Sara Pearl 'Sounding to present occasions: Jonson's masques of 1620-5', in David Lindley (ed.), *The Court Masque* (Manchester, 1984), pp.60-77.


14 Astraea uses this phrase of James's court in Jonson's *The Golden Age Restored* (1616), Herford and Simpson 7, p.429.
at the staging of the masque is sexually corrupt and the masque itself unleashes the
destructive force associated with Cupid in what seems to be a symbolic rendering of
Frederick's state of mind. 15

The central concern of the play is the 'unnatural and libidinous' desires of
Frederick. 16 Gordon McMullan points out that Evanthe — the heroine of the play
and intended victim of his lust — defends herself in political terms in one speech. She
links Frederick's unrestrained lusts with the political danger of a monarch's power if
not restrained by parliament. 17 Since many people, even those who had considerable
power at court, felt various degrees of uneasiness about absolutism, this was an
aspect of the play which would have united many members of the audience.

However, Fletcher has a lightness of touch in linking his political views with
the plots of his plays. The main thrust of the plot, in which powerless but beautiful
(female) virtue triumphs over seemingly omnipotent, lecherous (male) evil is attractive
to all social groups, particularly to women. Charles I is said to have read Beaumont
and Fletcher plays whilst in prison, even though his politics were certainly not the
same as Fletcher's. The plays of Fletcher and his collaborators often seem to bring
together unlikely bedfellows: the bawdy puns of courtiers and the politically acute

15 In Cupid's Banishment (1617), Cupid is seen as a negative force to be driven out.
Fletcher takes a similar attitude to Cupid in A Wife for A Month, except that Cupid is
not banished: instead he voluntarily submits to being tied up to avoid making 'too
great a waste of beauty' (II.vi.31-32).

16 He is described as 'unnatural and libidinous' in the dramatis personae.

17 Evanthe tells Frederick

[...] get wantonness confir'd
By Act of Parliament an honesty,
And so receiv'd by all, Ile harken to ye. (I.i.120-122)

McMullan comments 'Her argument depends entirely upon a political situation in
which the absolute tendencies of the monarch, expressed in sexual metaphor as is
Fletcher's habit, are tempered by the reasonable response that a parliament might
guarantee' (p.175).
speech of Evanthe are juxtaposed in *A Wife for a Month* with a plot which is an
anodyne triumph of good over evil.

In Fletcher's plays masques and references to masques are often the moments
when we get the clearest insights into the corruption of the court and of the monarch
in particular. In *A Wife for a Month* Frederick says very little at the end of the
masque — he merely invites the newly weds to the banquet (which usually
accompanied masques) and tells the groom 'when that's ended Sir,/ I'll see you a bed'
(II.vi.48-49). Though seeing a newly wed couple to bed was common enough,
Frederick's murderous interest in their sex-life gives the custom a slightly gruesome
twist. Frederick's lack of comment on the masque itself is similar to Caesar's after
being shown a masque by Ptolomy in Fletcher's earlier play *The False One*. In both
cases their lack of response to the masque bespeaks a profound engagement with it
rather than a lack of interest.

In *The False One*, Ptolomy, jealous of his sister's power over Caesar, decides
to tempt him with wealth by showing him a masque. The masque does indeed
diminish the power that Cleopatra's beauty has over Caesar, but it also divides
Ptolomy's followers, which in turn gives Caesar the 'just cause' he needs to 'visit

It is not impossible that in Frederick there is an echo of James's sometimes
worryingly prurient interest in newly married couples. Dudley Carleton gives the
following account of the events following the marriage of Sir Philip Herbert and
Susan, daughter of the Earl of Oxford:

They [the newly weds] were lodged in the Councill-chamber, where the King,
in his shirt and night-gown, gave them a *reveille matin* before they were up,
and *spent a good time in or upon the bed*, chuse which you will believe. No
ceremony was omitted of bride-cakes, points, garters, and gloves, which have
been ever since the livery of the Court; and at night there was sewing into the
sheet, casting off the bride's left hose, with many other petty sorceries.
(Nichols 1, p.471, his italics)

Similar events followed other weddings at court, including the wedding of the
Princess Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine. Chamberlain wrote to Dudley Carleton
'The next morning the King went to visit these young turtles that were coupled on
St. Valentines day, and did strictly examine him whether he were his true sonne in law,
and was sufficiently assured' (McClure 1, p.424).
These euphemisms of Caesar's, uttered almost absent-mindedly during the masque, indicate that he is looking for an excuse to bring an occupying army to Egypt to carry off some of its wealth.

The corrupting power of money is suggested by the language that Ptolomy uses to introduce the masque:

We owe for all this wealth to the olde Nylus:
We need no dropping raine to cheer the husband-man,
Nor Merchant that ploughs up the Sea, to seeke us;
Within the wealthy wombe of reverent Nylus,
All this is nourished: who to do thee honour,
Comes to discover his seven Deities,
(His conceal'd heads) unto thee: see with pleasure
The matchlesse wealth of this Land. (III.iv.22-29)

This introduction anticipates the masque itself in its mixture of grotesque and religious language. The image of the male figure of Nylus with an endlessly fertile womb and seven heads is monstrous rather than reassuringly lavish, as Ptolomy presumably intends it to be. The images of overabundance are developed in the masque itself, particularly in the symbol of the overflowing river, which often signifies vaunting ambition: thus it could be argued that this masque is another of Fletcher's dramatizations of a state of mind. Caesar has to leave as soon as the masque is finished, saying as he goes 'The wonder of this wealth, so troubles me,/ I am not well: good-night' (III.iv.100-101). Caesar's exit and the way that Ptolomy calls for lights is reminiscent of Claudius's reaction to the mousetrap in *Hamlet* (1600-1601).

However, though the events of this scene lead one to think that Caesar's 'fatal flaw' (greed or ambition?) has been exposed by the masque, on the contrary, the masque is the catalyst which breaks the spell that Cleopatra's beauty has cast over him to make him effeminately inactive. The false one of the title is not, in the end, Caesar, although the epithet seems to linger over him tantalizingly during the masque scene, as it does over most of the other protagonists in the play at one time or another.

One of the turning points in the plot of *The Tragedy of Sir John Van Olden*
Barnavelt (1619) is also accompanied by masque-like effects—a song, a dance, and the scattering of flowers. This is a scene ascribed to Massinger, yet he and Fletcher wrote the play very quickly together, and Fletcher may well have had a hand in planning the scene.\(^{19}\) Though royalty is present when the celebration begins, it is in honour of the prince's enemy, Barnavelt of the title, and the Prince remains incognito. As the Prince of Orange stands aside, a Burger declares

> Strow, strow: more Garlonds, and more flowres,  
> Up with the Bowghes; 'sacramant [sic] I will have  
> My noble Frends house, Mounseiur Barnavelts  
> As well deckt as his Excellencies Court:  
> For though they have got him in prison, he deserves  
> As well as any. (IV.iv.15-20)

This is a turning point in the plot in that support for Barnavelt is represented as relatively humane and attractive, whereas the Prince behaves in a clearly conspiratorial and rather underhand way. This is also the last time that Barnavelt appears powerful: that the celebration is in his honour rather than the Prince's, and that his home is compared to the court, are indications that Barnavelt's power threatens the Prince.

The scene is sandwiched between the arrest of Barnavelt and his trial: in both scenes he appears to be dignified, articulate and even heroic. By contrast, the Prince is seen quietly giving a captain instructions to blackmail one of Barnavelt's supporters: just before the flowers are strewn, the Prince orders a Captain to tell Mordesbargen (whose kidnapping and imprisonment he arranged) that if he will give evidence against Barnavelt 'all favour/ That I can wyn him, shall prepare a way/ To quallifie his [Mordesbargen's] fault' (IV.iv.8-10). Mordesbargen may escape with his life if he testifies against Barnavelt.

Moreover, unaware that the Prince is present, the Burger who speaks the lines

\(^{19}\) In his introduction to the play Fredson Bowers conjectures that it was written in less than two months (Bowers 8, p.486).
given above goes on to say that Barnavelt will become more powerful and will seek revenge when the trial is over. The Prince expresses the intention to 'make use' (IV.iv.27) of what he has heard to further incriminate Barnavelt (it's interesting that the Prince thinks that the conjectures of one of Barnavelt's supporters might be used as incriminating evidence -- it supports the idea that Fletcher felt that slander implicated the victim -- see above p.144 ff. and p.167 ff.). While Barnavelt has the affection of the people, the Prince is making sure that he will prevail in the power games. The way that Fletcher and Massinger negotiate their way through the politics of this contemporary incident provides a unique insight into their own political values.

It is rare in Fletcher's work that we see a prince watching a masque which is both in his honour and to his honour. There are, however, some examples which, though still resistant to this, come nearer to it than the plays discussed so far.

Fletcher's handling of the royal audience in *Four Plays, or Moral Representations, in One* exemplifies his reluctance to fit into the expected pattern. It is all the more significant in this play because Field has already established the royal audience who will pass appreciative comments on the entertainments presented to them, yet Fletcher makes *The Triumph of Death* in particular difficult for them to respond to with

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20 The structure of the first three of the *Four Plays in One* may owe something to Italian *intermezzi*, in which spectacular and masque-like effects were juxtaposed with ordinary drama (see above, p.122, n.33). The final play, *The Triumph of Time* is allegorical throughout. In his introduction to the play Cyrus Hoy suggests that it 'is the most explicitly masque-like of all the *Four Plays* with an element of allegorical pageantry poised midway between the sophistication of a Stuart Court masque and the exuberant literalism of a contemporary Lord Mayor's show' (Bowers 8, p.227). In Fletcher's other contribution, *The Triumph of Death*, the action competes for the audience's attention with the spectacular effects of the 'Triumphs' on either side of it, by the use of extreme melodrama.
meaning and dignity. Emanuel, the King of Portugal, gives a few lines to explain the
moral of *The Triumph of Death* before the masque-like 'triumph', as though he was
indeed able to learn something from it. But *The Triumph of Death* is essentially about
the abuse of power, and with its extraordinarily messy and violent ending it is hardly
the usual kind of stuff presented to Kings at court masques. One wonders how the
stage audience of the newly married King and Queen are supposed to react as
Gabriella hurls Lavall's freshly torn-out heart down onto the stage. 21

Emanuel's lines at the end of *The Triumph of Time* are even more intriguing,
since he sees the allegory he has just watched as a comment on the weaknesses of
'Kings and Princes', which doesn't bear a direct relation to what we have just been
shown. Both monologues by Emanuel at the endings of the plays are very different in
tone to the more relaxed comments of Field's King and Queen at the endings of his
plays, which may suggest that Fletcher was much less happy than Field with the
format.

There is a masque in the honour of the usurping emperor Maximus in Act V
of Fletcher's *The Tragedy of Valentinian*, which includes a kind of coronation.
During the masque he drinks to the soldiers who have aided his *coup* and to his wife
(Eudoxa, the widow of the previous emperor, Valentinian), unaware that Eudoxa has
poisoned his drink in revenge for her husband's murder. As soon as the masque is
over he falls dead. As I discuss above (p.182), perhaps strangely, Eudoxa is hailed as
a heroine for taking this action. The masque which was supposed to be in Maximus's
honour turns out to be the moment of his doom.

*The Prophetess* (1622) is another play set in ancient Rome, this time a
collaboration of Fletcher and Massinger, which has many masque-like moments in it

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21 The moment when Gabriella throws Lavall's heart down to the Duke may well
have had an influence on Ford at the dramatic climax of *Tis Pity She's a Whore*
(1626?). As Giovanni enters with Annabella's heart on his dagger, he describes
himself as 'trimm'd in reeking blood,'*That triumphs over death* -- my italics, (V.vi.9-
which culminate in a final scene by Fletcher in which an inoffensive masque is presented to a happy and appreciative monarch. Except for Emanuel in *Four Plays* this is the only time it happens in Fletcher's work. However, the prophetess of the title, Delphia, who presides over the masque, has a morally ambiguous role throughout the play, and her omnipotence makes the ending rather bewildering. Dioclesian, the Emperor in whose honour the masque is given, seems finally to be merely her puppet.

The play is indebted to *The Tempest* (1611) in many ways: this is particularly apparent in the final scene. Like Prospero, Delphia puts on a pastoral masque of spirits to entertain Dioclesian and his consort Drusilla, who is a daughter-figure for Delphia. Like Prospero she breaks it off when she becomes aware of a rebellious conspiracy. Unlike Prospero she allows it to resume until the moment when the conspirators arrive, giving the impression that she is totally in control. She doesn't break her staff and drown her book at the end. This is worrying, in view of her behaviour earlier in the play when she forces Dioclesian to accept Drusilla as a partner.

Delphia tells Dioclesian that it was she who created the masque-like effects at his inauguration as Emperor:

'Twas I, that at thy great Inauguration,
Hung in the air unseen: 'twas I that honoured thee
With various Musicks, and sweet sounding airs [...] (III.i. 142-144)

Delphia not only performs in her masques, but is the architect of them, as well as the most important person present. It was not uncommon for contemporaries to credit a masque's patron with artistic responsibility for it (see above pp.218-9, n.2). Delphia uses her combined artistic and political power to demonstrate her alarming omnipotence through masques and masque-like effects.

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22 See McMullan, p.182 ff.
There are many other negative associations clinging to masque in Fletcher's other plays. Masque is used as a metaphor for emptiness, or pretence in *The Elder Brother*:

Nere talke to me, you are no men but Masquers,  
Shapes, shadowes, and the signes of men, court bubbles,  
That every breath or breakes or blowes away,  
You have no soules, no metall in your bloods [...] (IV.i.1-4)

These lines are spoken by Brisac, the father of the jilted bridegroom Eustace, to his son's fellow courtiers. Many aspects of court life are condemned in *The Elder Brother*, and in this quotation, masquing is associated with deception and everything worthless and ephemeral. However, though Eustace rejects his courtier friends, he doesn't reject courtliness itself so much as reinvent it in an idealised way, reminiscent of Lucio's courtly behaviour in *Love's Cure*. In the end masquing and courtliness are not the object of satire in *The Elder Brother* so much as inadequate versions of masculinity, as in so many of Fletcher's plays.

Fletcher sometimes uses references to masque ironically -- for example when some sort of travesty of marriage is to take place. In Fletcher and Massinger's *The Double Marriage*, when Virolet brings on stage lawyers and his new bride Martia in order to divorce Juliana, his father says 'What Masque is this? what admirable beauty?' (III.iii.149). Later in the play, Castruchio, who pretends to be the king, says 'let me have a Masque of Cuckolds enter' (V.i.52). Since early on in the play we see the real king, Ferrand, ordering the rape of a group of married women by his guards out of caprice, a masque of cuckolds seems appropriate enough. Marriage in this play represents stability, loyalty and virtue which is unacceptable in the anarchy created by the corrupt absolutism of Ferrand. Masque is invoked at the destruction of marriage, rather than at its celebration.

In *The Custom of the Country* (1619), the custom referred to in the title is

That when a maid is contracted
And ready for the tye o'th Church, the Governour, 
He that commands in chiefe, must have her maiden-head 
Or ransome it for mony at his pleasure. (I.i.29-32)

Zenocia is to be married to Arnoldo, and Count Clodio (the Governor) demands his droit du seigneur without giving the option of ransome. Zenocia's father Charino, spreads funeral blacks over the bridal bed, rather than flowers, and says 'This is no masque of mirth, but murdered honour' (I.ii.10) — another example of the ironic use of reference to masque. Clodio asks Charino to make sure his daughter has 'put on all her beauties, All her enticements' (I.iii.46-7). When she immediately appears 'with Bow and Quiver' he thinks that it's some sort of show to titillate him:

What Masque is this? 
What pretty fancy to provoke me high? (I.ii.51-2)

This is reminiscent of the line given to the King in one of the few scenes by Fletcher in The Maid's Tragedy. He asks 'What prettie new device is this, Evadne?' (V.i.47) when Evadne ties him to the bed before stabbing him. Zenocia is armed ready for her escape, not to arouse Clodio. As in the previous examples Clodio sees his destruction of marriage in terms of masque.

However, masque is also seen as having redemptive effects in some of Fletcher's plays. In The Little French Lawyer (1621) Anabell and Lamira are subjected to an ordeal which appears to be destructive. They are imprisoned, threatened with rape and are shown Beaupre (Lamira's brother) and Verdoone (Anabell's cousin) 'bound and halters about their necks' (s.d., V.i.48). Lamira cries out 'What mask of death is this?' (V.i.49). However, their ordeal humbles Lamira, who had been too proud (according to her fiancé) and their captors want to marry them, an ending which seems acceptable to both women. Contrary to expectation,

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23 Masque is also used as a means for a couple to elope in Wit at Several Weapons: I don't discuss it here because the attributions of Cyrus Hoy and others suggest that Fletcher had little to do with the play (see Bowers 7, p.301).
the 'masque' does have the effect of drawing the characters together harmoniously.

Masque-like effects in *The Nice Valour* (1616?), *The Mad Lover* (1616) and *A Very Woman* (1616/1617?) have a more obviously therapeutic quality. In each case masque is used to try and cure madness. There is some debate about the whether *The Nice Valour* belongs to the Beaumont and Fletcher canon: though Cyrus Hoy favours Middleton as author, Gossett argues that the plot concerning 'the Passionate Madman (he has no other name) most strongly shows Fletcher's inspiration' (p.169). The Madman's abandoned and pregnant 'lady' follows him through the play disguised as Cupid in the hope of curing him by enacting masque-like visions for him. In Fletcher's *The Mad Lover* the soldier Stremon arranges a masque in the hope of curing the general Memmon of his love sickness. In Fletcher and Massinger's *A Very Woman* a doctor uses a kind of masque to cure the prince, Martino, of his mental illness. The doctor not only performs in his own masque, but he is said to be an artist (IV.ii.162), a philosopher, an architect and a poet (II.177-178): that is, he has all the artistic and philosophical qualities needed to provide the ideal masque. Martino tells him

Doctor, thou hast perfected a Bodies cure  
T'amaze the world; and almost cur'd a Mind  
Neer phrensie. With delight I now perceive  
You for my recreation have invented  
The several Objects, which my Melancholy  
Sometimes did think you conjur'd, otherwhiles  
Imagin'd 'em Chimera's.  

While watching the Doctor's conjurings, Martino is unable to tell what is reality and what is his own hallucination. The Doctor manages to achieve an ideal kind of

24 Both Inga-Stina Ewbank and Suzanne Gossett discuss *The Mad Lover* and *The Nice Valour* in this context, but both unaccountably ignore *A Very Woman*.

25 Lady Anne Clifford records seeing this play at court in her diary on 25th January 1617. Unfortunately she doesn't pass any comment on it. (Vita Sackville-West (ed.), *The Diary of Lady Anne Clifford* (London, 1923, repr. 1924), p.47.)
masque in which a sense of wonder has a transformative effect on the mind of the beholder.

Transformation and wonder are essential elements in the closing scenes of tragicomedies as well as in masques. Though more often than not, Fletcher did not write the final acts of collaborative plays, there is a kind of sympathy between masque and Fletcherian tragicomedy. To give a couple of examples, there are masque-like moments of wonder and transformation when Maria reveals herself, after being thought dead, at the end of *The Night Walker*. In Fletcher and Massinger's *The Sea Voyage* (1622), just as terrible crimes are about to be committed the atmosphere is transformed to one of 'joy and wonder' (V.iv.62) when relatives are reconciled after many years of separation. This act of the play was written by Massinger, though there is evidence that Fletcher revised the play after the collaboration.26

*The Queen of Corinth*, by Fletcher, Massinger and Field, offers one of the most obvious examples of a masque-like movement in the final stages of the tragicomic plots of Fletcher and his collaborators. Though the final act is by Massinger, and it is impossible to know how much, if anything, Fletcher had to do with it, it is certainly worth mentioning in this context. The law in Corinth is that a rape victim may choose whether her assailant is executed or forced to marry her. Beliza, dressed in black, and Merione, in white, both claim that Theanor has raped them. Beliza would like him to be executed and Merione would like him to marry her. The repentant Theanor suggests he first be married to Merione and then executed. However, the courtier Euphanes reveals that Merione stood in for Beliza in a version of the bed-trick, so that Theanor has raped Merione twice: the women have staged the trial in order to humiliate Theanor and make him repentant. It has the desired effect -- Theanor agrees to marry Merione -- and Euphanes is able to say:

I hop'd the imminent danger of the Prince,
To which his loose unquenched heats had brought him,

26 See the introduction by Fredson Bowers, in Bowers 9, p.5.
Being pursu'd unto the latest tryall
Would worke in him compunction, which it has done;
And these two Ladies in their feign'd contentions,
To your delight I hope, have serv'd as Maskers
To their owne Nuptialls.  (V.iv.216-22)

This masque has its counterpart in the antimasque (attributed to Fletcher) staged by
Theanor earlier in the play to disorient Merione after her rape. The earlier masque
perverts the course of justice, whilst the final one makes it possible. The earlier
masque is designed to bring about mental collapse in a victim of a crime, the final one
is designed to bring about the reformation and rehabilitation of the perpetrator. The
scene illustrates the way in which the endings of tragicomedies and masques often
coincide in their effort to produce a sense of wonder, transformation and finally
clarity.

Fletcher's play Women Pleas'd (1618, thought to be a revision of an earlier
play either by Fletcher or another dramatist) takes the basic elements of its plot from
Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath's Tale'. The heroine, Belvidere, disguises herself as an old
and ugly beldam in order to help her suitor Silvio win the favour of her mother the
Duchess of Florence. Belvidere first appears to Silvio in her disguise after haunting
him with music, in a scene (IV, ii) which is strongly echoed in Alinda and Juletta's
appearance to Roderigo and Pedro in Act V of The Pilgrim. Whilst still disguised as
an old woman, in the final act Belvidere gives Silvio the answer to her mother's
question ('Tell me what is that onely thing,/ For which all women long' (V.i.127-8))
that he must die for if he cannot answer, and then forces him to agree to marry her.
To the astonishment of all -- particularly her mother who had spent the play trying to
marry her to the Duke of Siena -- Belvidere is led in for her marriage in her true form
by 'a Masquerado of severall Shapes and Daunces' (s.d., V.iii.32). Silvio asks her why
she disguised herself in such a way. She replies

    In that shape most secure still,
    I followed all your fortunes, serv'd, and counsell'd ye,
    I met ye at the Farmers [where Silvio was in hiding] first a Country wench,
    Where fearing to be knowne I tooke that habit,
As Gordon McMullan remarks, the play 'focuses upon the romantic concerns of interpretation and magic' (p. 126). In the final scene that magic is strongly underwritten by the female agency of Belvidere and Rhodope with the help of masque techniques. The Dutchess of Florence wisely joins in with the spirit of harmony and reconciliation -- she proposes to and is accepted by the Duke of Siena, the man whom she had spent most of the play attempting to match with her daughter. One of the male characters, struck by Florence's proposal to Siena, remarks to his fellow 'Come Lopez, let us give our wives the breeches too, / For they will have 'em' (V.iii.104-5). The romantic and comic ending is achieved by giving women 'their sovereign wills', the awkwardness of the daughter's will triumphing over her mother's obfuscated by the magical reconciliatory powers of masque.

In *The Influence of the Jacobean Masque on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* Suzanne Gossett develops a convincing argument to show how masque and Jacobean dramatic romance have an affinity which goes beyond simple insertions of masques into plays. However, perhaps there is a further argument to be made about the generic effects of the role of women in masques within plays. Masques staged by romantic heroines -- though not present in every case -- seem to be a recurring event in Fletcherian romance. When romantic heroines use masque to attain their desires, a happy outcome seems to be assured (The Night Walker, The Custom of the Country, The Nice Valour, The Pilgrim, The Queen of Corinth and Women Pleas'd). There is only one case of an evil woman successfully using masque-effects for her own ends (Martia in The Double Marriage), and this play ends tragically. The tone of the ending of Valentinian is also decidedly tragic: however, Eudoxa's poisoning of her husband during the masque at the close of the play is seen by the other characters not as destructive, but as regenerative, an act which restores order. The women in The Sea Voyage are about to commit murder amidst masque-like effects, but they are
interrupted at the last moment and all ends happily. Alathe as an angel in *The Night Walker*, Zenocia as Diana in *The Custom of the Country*, Delphia in *The Prophetess*, Belvidere in *Women Pleas'd* and the women in *The Queen of Corinth* are all empowered by the various kinds of masques or masque-like shows to bring about transformations which are crucial for resolutions of romance plots.\(^{27}\)

There are a few masques staged by men which result in positive transformations: the doctor's therapeutic 'masque' in *A Very Woman* is a notable example, as is the masque (if it can be called that) of the 'reputed Wizard' Peter Vechio which reunites the heroine, Constantia, with her husband, the Duke of Ferrara, in the final act of Fletcher's *The Chances* (1617). This performance has the air of a prank, however, rather than a serious transformative action -- Vechio explains to the gentlemen present that 'those [...] [...] you thought spirits, were my neighbours children' (V.iii.166-7) and that his 'end is mirth,/ And pleasing, if I can, all parties' (V.iii.176-7), whilst Constantia -- consistent with her behaviour throughout the play -- remains passive and submissive. *The Chances* has much more in common with earlier plays whose principal subject is male friendship and rivalry than with the plays in which women take powerful roles in masques. The same could be said of the masque which humbles the women in preparation for their marriage in *The Little French Lawyer*. The masque that Stremon stages to cure Memmon of his lovesickness in *The Mad Lover* is a better example of a masque staged by a man in order to effect a positive transformation, though it is ineffective (Memmon is cured of his unrequited love by other means). It is perhaps significant that the aim of this masque is to turn a man away from love, rather than towards it, as in many of the transformative masques staged by women.

\(^{27}\) The lady who masquerades as Cupid in *The Nice Valour* is unsuccessful in her attempt to cure her lover of his madness. He is eventually cured by being beaten up. Inga-Stina Ewbank (seemingly unaware of *A Very Woman*) comments 'Obviously Fletcher found the idea of the therapeutic masque dramatically useful but, ultimately, psychologically unsound' (p.436).
Though other plays in which male-inspired masques may turn out to have happy endings -- *A Wife for a Month, The Queen of Corinth, The False One* -- this is despite, rather than because of, the male masque itself. Masques within plays staged by men tend to appear in tragedies or the dangerously tragic parts of tragicomedies.

Fletcher was evidently both attracted and repelled by masque. He often associated it with needless expense, dangerously powerful monarchs, sexual corruption, deception and moral emptiness in his dramas, but it was also an economical and spectacular way of representing these things. It was an important part of Fletcher's repertoire of dramatic techniques, not least because of its affinities with the tragicomic mode. Moreover, it is likely that the audiences for court masques were an important part of Fletcher's audience: not only courtiers, but also citizens and their wives. Fletcher not only brought the pro-parliamentary and anti-Spanish political views of the citizens to court, he also brought masques in his plays from the court to the city. His use of masque is a defining part of his art, and indeed a defining part of what we think of as typical entertainment at the Blackfriars. His most frequently recurring uses of masque seem to have been on the one hand masques by men to display destructive power, and on the other, masques by women to achieve constructive, romantic ends. By following this pattern, many of the masques within plays of Fletcher and his collaborators would have gone some way to satisfy the desires of the audience to see masques which celebrated femininity and anti-absolutist politics, both lacking in the misogynist and reactionary court masques of the later years of James's rule.
Conclusion

My study of Fletcher's *Bondouca* (which of all his work seems most clearly to show the influence of Shakespeare), *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and what can be gleaned about the lost *Cardenio* (the two romance plays on which Shakespeare and Fletcher collaborated), has focused on the intense male homosocial relationships, for the most part rivalries, which dominate the plays. The characterisation of the women cannot be understood without seeing them in terms of the exigencies of the male struggles for ascendancy. My feeling is that these plays, which are built primarily around relationships between men, are not only the result of male authorship (men, after all, can write feminocentric, if not feminist texts) but the product of the exclusively masculine writing and acting fraternity which, for pragmatic and psychological reasons, would have made various kinds of male rivalry an obvious choice of plot motif.

The characterisation of the Jailor's Daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is striking because though at one level she is a prime example of a woman forced to fit in with the competing demands of the men around her, at another the solution to her predicament that the men find is unorthodox and throws into question one of the central tenets of patriarchy, the value of pre-marital virginity in women. For my purposes, her case is also interesting because the medical literature to which this plot line is indebted, though far from feminist, is feminocentric -- that is, primarily concerned with women. Though not revolutionary, it nudges back the boundaries of acceptable gender behaviour, as does some of the feminocentric romance material whose influence on Fletcher from time to time throughout his career is the subject of this thesis.

In my discussion of pastoral tragicomedy, I found that though the society in Lady Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory* is underwritten by classist and sexist codes of behaviour, she seems to tackle the problems of patriarchy from a distinctively feminine point of view (though she is far from creating the 'feminine dream world'
which some critics have seen in the play). In Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* the society is much more egalitarian, both in terms of class and gender, than in *Love's Victory*, but the emphasis which Fletcher puts on both male and female chastity seems to be designed to suit the demands of his political symbolism rather than the result of any real sympathy with the plight of women under the sexual double standard. However, Fletcher's interest in male chastity (which he shares with Wroth and other writers of pastoral tragicomedy) develops in later plays to become one of the most distinctive elements of his romance-influenced work.

The way that gender and sexuality are represented in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* clearly shows the influence of Fletcher's work in pastoral tragicomedy, though the playwrights are more innovative in their representation of the impact of feminine values on the hero than in their representation of the two heroines. This is also true of *Love's Cure* and *The Island Princess*, though the *précieux*-influenced ideals of these plays go further than simply giving their romantic heroes the feminine attributes of modesty and chastity. The final act of *Love's Cure* shows the triumph of women and feminine values over the men and male values, whereas in *The Island Princess*, Armusia's feminine attributes put him in the position of being the desired object rather than the predatory male, as is usual in romantic plays. Both these plays depend on the radical use of contemporary ideas about gender to provide interest and surprise in the tragicomic endings. The tragedy *Valentinian* is similar to them in this respect -- Eudoxa's surprise murder of her husband (not in the sources) provides a *coup de théâtre* dependent on the fact that the audience would not be expecting such a dramatic and forceful act of female agency. It shows Fletcher's ability to transcend his romance sources in his representation of gender, if it suits his dramatic requirements.

Women are shown at their most powerful in some of the ubiquitous masques and masque-like effects of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon. They are also occasionally victimised through the use of masque, and even the plays which are most radical in their depiction of women as masquers are not necessarily very feminist
taken as a whole, but nevertheless the eagerness of Fletcher and his collaborators to exploit the dramatic potential of the Stuart female masquer's unusually public and self-affirming role is an exciting phenomenon hitherto overlooked in discussions of the representation of gender in their works.

The way I've presented the thesis might imply a progression, from *Bonduca* (one of Fletcher's most misogynist plays), right through to the masque-influenced plays which show female agency in an especially positive light. However, it's as well to remember that there is no simple progression in the work of Fletcher and his collaborators. For example, *Bonduca* was most likely written after *The Faithful Shepherdess* (Fletcher's first serious exploration of a feminocentric romance mode), even if you accept my early dating of 1609 for the former; and the plays which show women acting and directing their own masques are scattered throughout his career. Fletcher's romance sources inspired his more radical representations of women when it suited his purposes. To show how Fletcher and his collaborators used radical elements of Jacobean romance is not necessarily to argue that they were feminist, though I think it does belie the reputation of the canon as at best retrograde and at worst rebarbative.

The impact that women in the audience had on the playwrights can most clearly be seen in the way that Fletcher and his collaborators chose to represent them in masques. Not only did the masques within plays offer a different politics to the court masques, but they continued to put women (that is, boy actors playing women) and femininity at their centre, in contrast with court masques which became very politically conservative and male-oriented after the death of Prince Henry, the marriage of Princess Elizabeth and the retirement of Anne. The line between the women characters as objects of desire and subjects with their own needs and aspirations becomes blurred in these masques within plays. It seems likely that inspiration for this way of representing women may have come from real-life women masquers early in James's reign, and also in the sporadic instances of masquing ladies in the later part of his reign. There was evidently a demand from the audiences (and
particularly women in the audiences) for this kind of drama.

McLuskie's conclusion that Beaumont and Fletcher's new kind of drama was appealing to women in the audience because of a 'more pleasing image of women' in the plays, an image undermined by their continued subjection to their male 'partners in wit', seems to depend mainly on a reading of the comedies. A more genuinely empowered kind of femininity might be found in the masquing ladies of the tragicomedies. This isn't to imply that Beaumont and Fletcher were writing specifically for a courtly coterie, however, since there is plenty of evidence to suggest that citizens' wives enjoyed masques, and even the groundlings of the Globe would have appreciated the costumes and heightened sense of drama that the masque-like moments of plays would have produced, even if they wouldn't have been able to compare them to real court masques.

Neither does the use of romance texts necessarily imply a coterie audience of literate and sophisticated romance readers. Though romance readers would, no doubt, have enjoyed the adaptations or rather re-workings of romance stories and conventions, the failure of *The Faithful Shepherdess* amply demonstrated that the plays had to stand up on their own without relying on their context within the continental traditions which were such an inspiration to Fletcher and his collaborators. That the playwrights were successfully able to introduce such un-English elements as *préciieux*-influenced attitudes to masculine sexuality is perhaps as much a tribute to their skill as it was to changing attitudes to gender and sexuality, or to a knowledge of continental romance traditions in their audience.

Jacobean romance (including masque and pastoral tragicomedy, but with the exception of Shakespeare's last plays) has been characterised as effete and insubstantial nonsense for the intellectually unsophisticated. Could it be merely coincidence that it was in the Jacobean period that a process of identification of romance with a specifically female audience began, which has gathered momentum right to the present day? It seems entirely possible to me that the masquing ladies and blushing chaste heroes of Fletcherian tragicomedy have offended the masculine
sensibilities of the literary-critical establishment. Feminocentric forms are among those which have tended to be marginalised by conventional literary history. The impact of Jacobean romance on many Jacobean writers should be reassessed: I hope that this thesis has shown that its influence on the 'Beaumont and Fletcher' canon is not necessarily incompatible with their new-found 'radicalism' in politics, and that they are not as retrograde in their attitudes to gender and sexuality as some critics have suggested. In addition, the thesis has brought to light two further areas of research which deserve fuller investigation. Lady Mary Wroth's work needs to be re-examined in the light of French pastoral romance: she was evidently indebted to Montreux, a figure who seems to have been overlooked by scholars who have sought to explain her literary context, and the influence of other French literature on her ought to be explored. My chapter on pastoral tragicomedy also suggested to me that the aims, achievements and particularly the rise to success of a figure as important to our culture as Inigo Jones will never be fully understood without an investigation of his involvement with female patrons and feminocentric art. An unprejudiced assessment of the impact of feminocentric romance forms on Jacobean culture is important not just in order to formulate a history of women, but also in order fully to understand the history of our culture as a whole.
Notes on Quotations and Chronology

All quotations from the Beaumont and Fletcher canon (excluding *The Two Noble Kinsmen*) have been taken from Fredson Bowers (ed.), *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, 9 vols, Cambridge, 1966-1994. The final (10th) volume is due to appear soon. All quotations from Shakespeare (including *The Two Noble Kinsmen*) have been taken from G.Blakemore Evans (ed.), *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston, 1974). For details of individual plays, see the bibliography.

Speech prefixes for quotations from *The Riverside Shakespeare* have been given in full. The names of characters in plays from the Beaumont and Fletcher canon have been spelt according to how they appear in the dramatis personae, unless a variant appears in a quotation (including speech prefixes in quotations).

I have silently modernized i/j, u/v except when quoting from modern editions, and I have modernized the long 's' where necessary in all quotations. Otherwise, all spelling remains as in the original texts.

Where square brackets already exist in a quotation, I have substituted them for { } brackets: square brackets always indicate my intervention in a quotation.

Unless otherwise indicated, the dates and basic attributions of plays in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon have been taken from Gordon McMullan's 'Chronology for the Plays of John Fletcher and His Collaborators' in *The Politics of Unease* (Amherst, 1994), pp.267-269, and the dates of Shakespeare's plays have been taken from the chronology in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, pp.47-56.
Appendix A

The following comments give an indication of the diversity of critical thought on *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.

A. Lynne Magnusson sees Fletcher as a parasite on the magisterial Shakespeare:

One might speculate about whether problems in collaborating with Fletcher contribute to the collapse from a beginning in heroic drama [finely crafted by Shakespeare] to an ending in farce — or to an ending whose irony is parasitical upon the magisterial conception of the opening. One cannot always determine whether the Fletcherian ridiculous is a calculated or an unconscious effect [...]'' ('The Collapse of Shakespeare's High Style in the Two Noble Kinsmen', *English Studies in Canada* 12 (1987), p.389.)

Theodore Spencer sees Fletcher as an unscrupulous opportunist and Shakespeare as half-exhausted:

Fletcher's share in the play, about three-fifths of the whole, is an accomplished, suave, sentimental piece of craftsmanship; he manages his contrasts with his usual unscrupulous and effective opportunism; there is no depth, there are no emotional reverberations and there is no vision. Shakespeare treats his part of the story very differently; his lines are slow, and dense, compared with Fletcher's easy liqueescence; they have a deliberate yet vague grandeur, a remote and half-exhausted exaltation; they are expressed through a rhetoric that is the poetry of a man who has finished with action.

('Shakespeare's Last Plays' in *Shakespeare and the Nature of Man* (New York, 1942, repr.1967), p.190)

Edward Armstrong also suggests that Shakespeare's creative talents were failing when he made his contribution to the play:

The imagery of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is explained by what Shakespeare says of himself in *The Tempest* and, in turn, it confirms that here he is speaking personally. 'The beating mind' is beginning to be aware of approaching infirmity and 'the old brain is troubled.' As a tree may burst into a wealth of flowers before it dies so *The Tempest* richly displays Shakespeare's genius at that turning point when he was aware that he had done the work he had set out to do. Urged on, it may be, by others and, perhaps, against his own judgement he might collaborate and still write finely, but Ariel had been dismissed and Prospero's staff was broken.


De Quincey argues that Shakespeare's scenes in the play are 'perhaps the most superb work in the language' and 'are finished in a more elaborate style of excellence than any other almost of Shaksper's most felicitous scenes'. (*Treatise on Rhetoric* (1896-7),

In a much qualified version of essentially the same view Kenneth Muir writes

> It is not a play that adds anything to [Shakespeare's] reputation; but no other English dramatist, then or since then, has equalled the dramatic verse in the first scenes of Act I and Act V.

*(Shakespeare as Collaborator* (London, 1960), p. 147.)

On the subplot F.E. Halliday writes:

> Shakespeare sets the play in motion and introduces the main characters, leaving the elaboration of the middle scenes to Fletcher, but then returns to write the final act. Fletcher is thus responsible for the ridiculous and revolting sub-plot of the jailer's distracted daughter, a theme and a treatment that are as characteristic of him as they are foreign to Shakespeare [...]


Alfred Harbage also suggests that Shakespeare had little to do with those parts of the play that Fletcher wrote:

> The portions of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* assigned severally to Shakespeare and Fletcher are as distinct in their sexual emphasis as in their versification. The Jailer's Daughter is disrespectfully used only in those scenes thought to be Fletcher's'.

*(Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (Indiana, 1952), pp. 357-8.)

Ann Thompson sees the story of Palamon and Arcite as being Shakespeare's choice of subject:

> Thus Fletcher's treatment of the story of Palamon and Arcite owes more to his desire to write a commercial tragicomedy than to any deep interest in the source. This is not surprising, especially if, as seems most likely, the story was not his own choice.


Frank Kermode implies that Fletcher had control of the play, even if Shakespeare did make some contributions:

> *The Two Noble Kinsmen* with its flippant Prologue and Epilogue, belongs in some ways to a later age than Shakespeare's. The first scene is always attributed to Shakespeare, but it is difficult to believe that he *planned* it, with its slow, falsely posed, ceremonial appeal by the three young queens; indeed, the *ordinance* of the whole work suggests the peculiar talents of Fletcher.

Lois Potter suggests that the separation of the main plot and subplot, with the large number of soliloquies in the latter, seem designed to facilitate collaboration between two people who did not expect to have much opportunity to talk much. (Introduction to the Arden 3 edition -- due to be published 1996).

Appendix B

Thornton Shirley Graves, 'Women on the Pre-Restoration Stage' *Studies in Philology* 22 (1925), 184-197 for a summary of many of the isolated instances of performing women, particularly for examples from the first half of the sixteenth-century.

Some Italian tumblers of 1574 included women (Chambers 1, p.371). On 22nd February 1583 Richard Madox saw a 'scurrilie play set out al by one virgin, which there proved a fyemarten without a voice, so that we stayed not the matter.' (Chambers 1, p.371). On 19th November 1602 Chamberlain wrote to Dudley Carleton, describing a confidence trick in which one 'Venner, of Lincolns Inne' sold tickets at an extortionate price for a play which he called *England's Joy* 'to be acted only by certain gentlemen and gentlewomen of account': no such play was acted, and Venner who attempted to escape with the ill-gotten gains, was eventually brought before the Lord Chief Justice. Thomas Coryate wrote in *Crudities* (1611) that he saw women act in Venice 'a thing I never saw before, though I have heard that it hath been sometimes used in London.' (Chambers 1, p.371). The epilogue of Dekker and Middleton's *The Roaring Girle* (1611) announces that Moll Frith 'her selfe some few dayes hence,/ Shall on this Stage [The Fortune] appear. Her court testimony of 27th January 1612 indicates she did indeed appear on stage:

[...] being at a play about 3 quarters of a year since at the Fortune in man's apparel & in her boots & with a sword by her side, she told the company there present that she thought many of them were of the opinion that she was a man, but if any of them would come to her lodging they should find that she is a woman & some other immodest & lascivious speeches she also used at that time. And also sat there upon the stage in the public view of all the people there present in man's apparel & played upon her lute & sang a song.

E.K. Chambers makes the claim that women acted in Daniel's *Hymen's Triumph* (1614) — see above p.114, n.24. Though there seems to be no evidence for this, aristocratic women did act in other private performances of pastoral tragicomedies (see above p.113). In 1629 a visiting group of French actors which included women performed at the Blackfriars, the Red Bull and the Fortune. According to a letter of 8th November by Thomas Brande:

> those women, did attempt, thereby giving just offence to all vertuous and well-disposed persons in this town, to act a certain lacivious and unchaste comedye, in the French tonge at the Blackfryers. Glad I am to saye they were hissed, hooted, and pippin-pelted from the stage […]

(G.E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage: Dramatic Companies and Players*, vol.1, p.25.)

William Prynne writes of the same incident in *Histriomastix* (London, 1633) 'they had such French-women actors, in a play not long since personated in Blackfriars Playhouse, to which there was great resort' (p.214).

Women in London were unusually vocal when it came to acting as witnesses at court (a rather theatrical activity in some ways, as Moll Frith's testimony demonstrates). In the first court scene in Jonson's *Volpone* the virtuous and submissive Celia remains silent whereas the appalling Lady Politic is all too articulate. David Cressy, writing of the period 1560 to 1700, points out that '[w]hereas women were responsible for no more than a fifth of the depositions made in rural areas, in London they appeared almost as frequently as the men': 43% of depositions were made by women compared to 57% made by men in London (*Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980), p.115). London women were obviously more like Lady Politic than Celia in this respect.

On the subject of different types of 'theatrical' activity, T.S. Graves points out that 'it is well to keep in mind […] the considerable number of female "freaks" that
were exhibited for money in London and elsewhere in Elizabethan England' (op.cit., p.187).

For documents which express disapproval of women acting, or even attending playhouses, see S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (eds.), *Renaissance Drama by Women: Texts and Documents* (London, 1996). The great anxiety provoked by these sporadic instances of performing women suggests that the prohibitions against women acting continually needed to be reinforced.
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