

## José A. Pérez Díez

Doctoral researcher

[Shakespeare Institute \(/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/index.aspx\)](/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/index.aspx)



### About

**PhD title:** Spanish Literary Sources and Textual Echoes in English Jacobean Drama: A Critical Edition of John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *Love's Cure*

**Supervisor:** [Dr Martin Wiggins \(/staff/profiles/shakespeare/wiggins-martin.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/shakespeare/wiggins-martin.aspx)

**PhD English** (</postgraduate/courses/research/english/english-literature.aspx>)

**Hometown:** Madrid, Spain

### Qualifications

- Licenciado (5-year Degree) in English Philology (Complutense University of Madrid)
- MA in Shakespeare and Theatre (University of Birmingham)

### Research

My research is based on a systematic investigation of the mechanisms of circulation, reception and adaptation to the stage of Spanish literary material in England during the Jacobean period, from the signing of the Treaty of London in 1604, when full diplomatic relations between England and Spain were finally re-established. It aims at producing the first fully annotated, modernised edition of John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *Love's Cure, or The Martial Maid*, a play based on a Spanish *comedia*, *La fuerza de la costumbre (The Force of Custom)*, written by the Valencian dramatist Guillén de Castro. This play was not published in print in Spain until the spring of 1625, just a few months before Fletcher's death in August, which complicates the case for his authorship of the English adaptation and its dating. The play dramatises the story of a pair of siblings, a boy and a girl, who were brought up separately as members of the opposite sex; twenty years after their separation, they are reunited and encouraged to revert to the socially expected genders. The basic narrative of the play is given a distinctly tragicomic twist, very typical of some of Fletcher's other work, and it adopts the distinctly Spanish setting and characterisation also frequent in other Fletcher plays. *Love's Cure* is also one of the only four plays of the English Renaissance to have adopted a Spanish *comedia* as its narrative source, possibly being the earliest play-to-play adaptation of a Spanish source in English drama, and the most interesting case study for the investigation of Anglo-Spanish literary relations before the failure of the Spanish Match in 1623. My research is based on a systematic investigation of the mechanisms of circulation, reception and adaptation to the stage of Spanish literary material in England during the Jacobean period, from the signing of the Treaty of London in 1604, when full diplomatic relations between England and Spain were finally re-established. It aims at producing the first fully annotated, modernised edition of John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *Love's Cure, or The Martial Maid*, a play based on a Spanish *comedia*, *La fuerza de la costumbre (The Force of Custom)*, written by the Valencian dramatist Guillén de Castro. This play was not published in print in Spain until the spring of 1625, just a few months before Fletcher's death in August, which complicates the case for his authorship of the English adaptation and its dating. The play dramatises the story of a pair of siblings, a boy and a girl, who were brought up separately as members of the opposite sex; twenty years after their separation, they are reunited and encouraged to revert to the socially expected genders. The basic narrative of the play is given a distinctly tragicomic twist, very typical of some of Fletcher's other work, and it adopts the distinctly Spanish setting and characterisation also frequent in other Fletcher plays. *Love's Cure* is also one of the only four plays of the English Renaissance to have adopted a Spanish *comedia* as its narrative source, possibly being the earliest play-to-play adaptation of a Spanish source in English drama, and the most interesting case study for the investigation of Anglo-Spanish literary relations before the failure of the Spanish Match in 1623.

My thesis will take the work of George Walton Williams a step further: if his 1976 edition of the English play was the first fully critical edition in original spelling, I will be providing a much-needed complete annotation of the play, a full study of the process of adaptation based on an intimate knowledge of the Spanish original, and a fully modernised text in line with the latest trends in editorial practice. I will be, therefore, giving a special attention to the performance aspects and dramaturgy of the piece: as part of the thesis, I led a research project in 2012, kindly funded by the Centre for Learning and Academic Development of the University of Birmingham, to workshop and perform the play using original staging practices, including the use of an all-male cast, original period music, full Renaissance costumes provided by the Royal Shakespeare Company, and a reproduction of a Jacobean *frons scaenae* in the Hall of the Shakespeare Institute. The project revealed many aspects of the play that I had not considered, and vastly enriched my knowledge of its structure and staging potential. It also revealed the wonderful theatrical possibilities of this vibrant and exhilarating comedy generated by the creative clash of two antagonistic cultures in a crucial period of their history.

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My PhD project merited the award of an Anglo-Spanish Society Bursary in 2011.

"I have benefited from the superbly informed set of peers that compose the student body, some of which will be dear friends for life, and from the daily contact with the members of the staff of the Shakespeare Institute, all scholars of worldwide reputation. In addition, my experience here is continuously enhanced by the weekly activities of the play-reading group, whose value for scholarly and social purposes I cannot sufficiently praise, and also by my intense engagement with the Shakespeare Institute Players, our energetic dramatic society, of which I am proud to have been elected President for 2010/2011, 2011/12 and 2012/13."

