

Contextualizing John Lyly's *Gallathea*



Activity was completed after students read *Gallathea* and was assigned as an optional extra credit assignment to help prepare students for their final essay.

Creators:

Erika Carbonara, Bernadette Kelly, and Simone Chess

Rationale:

Now that students have encountered a number of crossdressing narratives (Dugaw's ballads, *Hic Mulier*, *The Roaring Girl*, and *Gallathea*) it is time to examine these narratives in conjunction with each other, but also in conjunction with other narratives. Specifically, what can we learn about Lyly's *Gallathea* by comparing it with other representations of *Gallathea* and other crossdressing narratives? This assignment will give students the opportunity to prepare for the final project by asking them to analyze and critically engage with two distinct texts and then putting them in conversation with each other.

Activity:

- Distribute the list on the following page (consider adding applicable texts) to students after they have completed their reading of *Gallathea*.
- Have students select one of the texts to compare and contrast with *Gallathea*.
- Consider reinforcing how this assignment is similar to the final project and may be a helpful preparation for students to begin thinking critically about two separate texts.
- Students should answer the following questions in a 1-3-page response. (12 pt. font, 1 in. margins)
 - In what ways is *Gallathea* similar to your second text?
 - In what ways is *Gallathea* different than your second text?
 - How does each text construct these differences and similarities? Students may consider aspects of gender, sexuality, race, class, etc. Include specific examples from the texts.
 - What other components of these texts help to construct a narrative? Consider marginalia, paratext, titles, subtitles, etc.

Learning Objectives:

- Reading:
 - Students should be able to interpret and compare two texts side-by-side to establish similarities and differences.
- Analysis:
 - Students should be able to critically examine a text by drawing attention to specific textual instances that support their claims.
- Critical awareness:
 - Students should be able to situate their text within a cultural and historical moment, drawing attention to the ways in which issues of gender and sexuality are constructed and portrayed.

Additional Texts:

- “The Mariner’s Misfortune” (ballad #37 in Dugaw’s catalogue)
- “The Constant Lovers” (ballad #61 in Dugaw’s catalogue)
- “The London Merchant” (ballad #69 in Dugaw’s catalogue)
- “Rose the Red and White Lily” (ballad #70 in Dugaw’s catalogue)
- “Canada I O” (ballad #83 in Dugaw’s catalogue)
- “The Dublin Tragedy” (ballad #84 in Dugaw’s catalogue)
- “The Gallant She-Souldier” (ballad #99 in Dugaw’s catalogue)
- Moll Cutpurse in *The Roaring Girl* or in *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith*
- William Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*
- John Donne’s [“Sappho to Philaenis”](#)
- The 1395 case of Eleanor Rykener (start [here](#), but do a general google search, as well)
- *Gallathea*’s second publication in 1632 (found on EEBO, document # 2240879886)
- Theater production ([Gallathea performed by Rider University in 2016](#))
- Theater production ([Gallathea performed by ASC Theatre Camp in 2019](#))
- *Gallathea*’s origin story in Greek mythology (Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* is one potential source for this.)
- The character Galatea in *Justice League Unlimited* (Season 1, Episode 6: [“Fearful Symmetry”](#) Don’t neglect the title!)
- Short story in video format ([John Lyly's Gallathea for Five Year Olds](#))
- *Galatea* (video game)