Gaming the Stage

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INTRODUCTION


2. Medievalists have debated the extent to which games and dramatic plays could be clearly distinguished from one another before the sixteenth century. See especially Glending Olson, “Plays as Play: A Medieval Ethical Theory of Performance and the Intellectual Context of the Tretise of Miraclis Pleyinge,” Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies 26 (1995): 195–221; V. A. Kolve, The Play Called “Corpus Christi” (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1966), esp. chap. 2; Lawrence M. Clopper, Drama, Play, and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). I am suggesting that this overlap extends, albeit in some different ways, beyond the medieval period. Historians of early modern theater have examined the ways other forms of recreation were implicated in theatrical production, with some, such as Glynn Wickham, even arguing that early modern plays were treated less as literature than as game.


7. Among the titles currently available are dance games like Just Dance, Dance Central, and Dance Dance Revolution; singing games like Disney Sing It, SingStar, and Karaoke Revolution; and musical instrument games like Guitar
Hero, Rock Band, and Rocksmith. The only motion capture game that uses theatrical plays and performance for content is Play the Knave, a project from the University of California, Davis, ModLab and for which I am the director. It is discussed further in the present book’s Epilogue.


A Theatrical Experiment, ed. Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 115–26, and Christie Carson, “Technology as a Bridge to Audience Participation?” in Performance and Technology: Practices of Virtual Embodiment and Interactivity, ed. Susan Broadhurst and Josephine Machon (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 181–93, which argue that Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre, in contrast to more established and well-funded London theaters such as the RSC, has successfully embraced “the new digital aesthetic which demands at least a sense of democracy and fuller individual participation” (“Democratizing,” 121).

18. Friedrich A. Kittler, Discourse Networks 1800/1900, trans. Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990); and Friedrich A. Kittler, Gramophone, Film, Typewriter, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999). Kittler’s work has been foundational for the emerging field of media archaeology even as his insights about literary texts as archives have generally been abandoned.
19. The two most prominent attempts to use theater and drama to theorize digital media are Brenda Laurel, Computers as Theatre (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1993) and Murray, Hamlet on the Holodeck. Both books emphasize drama’s narrative elements, however, and do not attend to the phenomenological experience of theater. This emphasis on narrative has been criticized by many scholars in game studies, consequently convincing many such scholars that theater is an insufficient model for games. My book rescues theater from this charge by putting dramatic narratives into dialogue with theatrical form.
21. Sitting pastimes are mentioned in at least three dozen plays from the period, with just over half of these presenting an actual game onstage. Games of cards, chess, and especially dice are prominent also in Restoration drama.
and can be found, of course, in plenty of modern drama as well. The term “sitting pastimes” is used, for instance, in the third book of King James I, *Basilikon Dōron; or, His Majesties Instructions To His Dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince* (London, 1603), which refers to dice, cards, tables, and chess as “sitting house pastimes” (122). See also Sir William Forrest’s “The Poesye of Princylye Practice,” which describes “tables, chesse, or cardis” as “syttyng pastymes.” Cited in E. S. Taylor, *The History of Playing Cards, with Anecdotes of Their Use in Conjuring, Fortune-Telling, and Card-Sharping* [1865] (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1973), 292. Throughout this book, when citing early modern texts, I have modernized i/j and u/v but otherwise retained early spelling.


25. Ibid., 41.

26. A useful touchstone for this approach is Bruce R. Smith’s method of historical phenomenology, which reminds us that “[i]ncluded in the situatedness of the observer . . . are the feelings of the observer in the face of what he or she sees” (13). Historical phenomenology not only opens up different sorts of questions but calls for different methods of critical analysis as it urges scholars not only to historically contextualize but also “inhabit the evidence” (37; his emphasis). See Bruce R. Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). For a trenchant application of historical phenomenology to the study of spectator affect in the early modern theater, see Allison P. Hobgood, *Passionate Playgoing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).


28. I am influenced here by Smith’s view in *Phenomenal Shakespeare* of the present and the early modern past “not as separate compartments but as relative points along a continuum” (36).

29. For interesting discussions of the implications of prepayment in the commercial theater, see Hedrick, “Real Entertainment”; and Richard Preiss, “Interi-

30. Michael D. Bristol, “Theater and Popular Culture,” in A New History of Early English Drama, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 231–48, argues that early modern audiences were well prepared for this “transformation of otherwise familiar performance practices into merchandise” through their exposure to London’s flourishing commodity culture, which, like the commercial theater, enabled consumers to obtain “desired goods or amenities outside the complex networks of reciprocal obligation that prevail in a traditional community” (247). The argument is further elucidated in Bristol, Big-Time Shakespeare, esp. 30–41. While I concur that professional theaters aimed to turn plays into commodities, I doubt that the transition was as easy as Bristol implies.


33. Richard Preiss, Clowning and Authorship in Early Modern Theatre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Preiss claims this meant plays were not commodities. I would maintain, though, that the experience of destroying something could itself be commodified entertainment, as it certainly has become in many modern entertainments, such as shooting games.

34. These studies are usually overreliant on theories of play by Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950) and by Roger Caillois, Man, Play and Games, trans. Meyer Barash (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001). Examples of studies that approach play broadly include Louis A. Montrose, “‘Sport by Sport O’erthrown’: Love’s Labour’s Lost and the Politics of Play,” Texas Studies in Literature and Language 18.4


38. Boluk and LeMieux, Metagaming, esp. Introduction.

MA: MIT Press, 2007) and Chris Salter, *Entangled: Technology and the Transformation of Performance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010) provide longer histories of performance and media, they focus primarily on post-nineteenth-century performance practices. *Gaming the Stage* aims to open up the field of media and performance to a wider set of voices, setting a precedent for contributions to this field by other scholars working on traditional theater in pre- or nondigital cultures.


42. That said, one is hard-pressed to call even the parlor of an early modern household private insofar as servants moved in and out of these spaces. See Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

43. The foundational study is Clifford Geertz, “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1972). Notably, even Geertz turns to Shakespeare’s plays to illustrate his argument about how men negotiate social relations through the Balinese cockfight.


48. Lorna Hutson argues along similar lines that early modern plays dramatize characters engaging in “false inference” to make audiences “aware of the contingency of fictional characters’ access to knowledge about one another,” subsequently prompting more intense imaginative and inferential work on the part of audiences. Lorna Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 314. I fol-
low Hutson in maintaining that rather than being a “crisis of representation” (309), as other critics have maintained, the audience’s inability to gather information brought “new liveliness and power to the fictions” (2) of the early modern commercial stage. Paul Menzer makes a related argument about the production of character, arguing that “early modern theatrical performance ultimately casts doubt upon ‘outwardness’ and requires the spectator to believe in what he or she cannot see.” Paul Menzer, “The Actor’s Inhibition: Early Modern Acting and the Rhetoric of Restraint,” Renaissance Drama 35 (2006): 83–111, esp. 106.

49. Jeremy Lopez argues that individual audience members were more similar than they were different, bringing to the theater a self-reflexive mode of spectatorship that plays could “rely on and manipulate.” Jeremy Lopez, Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 14. Along similar lines, Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare’s England: A Collaborative Debate (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)—though they disagree about whether early modern audience members gelled as a communal group or maintained their sense of individuality—share the view that plays and/or their actors managed their distracted audience members to refocus their attentions on the play. Paul Menzer, in his “Crowd Control,” expands on Dawson’s interests in unified audiences, maintaining that commercial theaters were highly successful in domesticating audiences by converting individuals into a “crowd,” a “complacent audience” that was primed and ready to be transported by the play. Paul Menzer, “Crowd Control,” in Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558–1642, ed. Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 19–36, at 24. See also earlier scholarship on audience response, such as Jean E. Howard, Shakespeare's Art of Orchestration: Stage Technique and Audience Response (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); Ralph Berry, Shakespeare and the Awareness of the Audience (London: Macmillan, 1985); and Phyllis Rackin, “The Role of Audience in Shakespeare’s Richard II,” Shakespeare Quarterly 36.3 (1985): 262–81.

50. Gina Bloom, Voice in Motion: Staging Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). See also Allison Deutermann, Listening for Theatrical Form in Early Modern England (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), which considers the ways dramas encouraged audiences to be discriminating listeners, arguing that this kind of resistant audition came to be a marker of social distinction and was associated especially with the genre of tragedy. Low and Myhill, in the introduction to their collection, reach a similar conclusion about the audience as a “vital partner in the production of meaning” (10) by underscoring differences among audience members and their interpretive power. Hobgood, Passionate Playgoing, also argues for greater spectator agency through a focus on spectator affect, concluding that “emotively palpable and powerful” playgoers attended “not as disciplined receivers,” but as “potent and productive co-creators of the drama they attended” (28).

51. Charles Whitney, Early Responses to Renaissance Drama (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) points out that audience members, individuated in their responses to the theater, made of the plays what they wanted, and their
written responses evince perspectives that don’t necessarily align with the responses actors, playwrights, or theater entrepreneurs hoped they would have. Richard Preiss goes even further, making the case for audiences’ “unilateral seizure of control over the stage” (Clowning and Authorship, 37), often with the aim of destroying the play being staged for them. Preiss’s view of audiences inverts Menzer’s, but it is predicated on the same conception of theater as, in effect, combat, where audiences face off against actors, playwrights, and theater managers. As Preiss puts it, the “relation between theatre and audience is not ‘partnership,’ but competition” (27). See also Meredith Anne Skura, Shakespeare the Actor and the Purposes of Playing (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993); Paul Yachnin, Stage-Wrights: Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton, and the Making of Theatrical Value (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

52. Preiss argues that neutralizing overentitled audiences—whose agency threatened the emergence of the play as an aesthetic and economic object—could not be done within the “mimetic field of the play” and thus it was left to the platea figure of the clown to manage and reinforce the line between producers and consumers (81). However, game scenes, I argue, evince an effort on the part of theater’s producers to manage the audience’s participatory energies through the play itself. On the platea and its association with nonillusionistic performances in which an actor appeals to the world beyond the fictional play, see Weimann, Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition. The argument is extended in Robert Weimann, Author’s Pen and Actor’s Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare’s Theatre, ed. Helen Higbee and William West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).


55. Thomas Elyot, The Boke Named the Governour (London, 1537 [1531]).
57. Ibid.
59. The term is from Jesper Juul, A Casual Revolution: Reinventing Video Games and Their Players (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010).

CHAPTER 1. GAMING HISTORY

1. Key histories of cards include Catherine Perry Hargrave, A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming, reprint ed. (New York:


4. The “magic circle” view of gaming was first articulated by Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, but it was popularized in game studies by Salen and Zimmerman, *Rules of Play*. See also the concept of a “lusory attitude” advanced in Bernard Suits, *The Grasshopper: Games, Life, and Utopia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), esp. chap. 3.

5. Whether or not appearing under the sexy labels of presentism, historical phenomenology, or unhistoricism, much scholarship has begun to emphasize continuities between past and present and the ways our current, modern concerns inform the way we study the past. The concept of gaming can help to make sense of these purportedly different movements.

6. Getting beyond the ideology of the magic circle, game studies scholars Boluk and LeMieux (*Metagaming*) call attention to the metagame, which they argue to be crucial to gameplay, indeed constitutive of it in the case of video-games. Metagames comprise the range of practices gamers employ to improve their odds of winning, essentially ways of gaming the system.

7. Taylor, *History of Playing Cards, with Anecdotes*, supplies extensive evidence that the English learned of playing cards from the French. Among the earliest evidence of cards in England is a quarto book dating from 1490–1500, whose cover was partly constructed out of old playing cards in the French style. In addition, unlike the Italians and Spanish, whose four suits were Cups, Money, Swords, and Sticks, the English used the four suits found on French cards: Coeur, Carreau, Pique, and Trèfle, rendered in English as Hearts, Diamonds, Spades, and Clubs. French card makers, particularly from Rouen, supplied cards and card making know-how to the English well into the seventeenth century. Walter Morley Fletcher, “On Some Old Playing Cards Found in Trinity College,” *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 11.3 (1907): 454–64, provides a detailed history of Rouen’s centrality to card making and distribution in England. See also Benham, *Playing Cards*, who cites early records from the Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards fining several members for employing “foreigners and strangers” (63),
whom most historians agree were card makers from France and particularly from Rouen.


10. This version of the game originated in India and was known as chaturanga.


12. Among the earliest European chess pieces are the Lewis chessmen, approximately seventy of which are owned by the British Museum, which purchased them after they were found on the Isle of Lewis in the nineteenth century. They originated most likely in twelfth-century Iceland and are made of walrus tusk. A number of chess pieces produced in thirteenth-century Europe were made of ivory. Francis Willughby’s manuscript on gaming describes chess tables made of black ebony, with white squares made of ivory or bone. It also describes the triangles or “points” on the backgammon board, half white and half red, “made of red brasil” (i.e., brazilwood). The manuscript is printed in Cram et al., eds., *Willughby’s Book of Games*.

13. Some of the earliest medieval chessboards were engraved into standing tables to be used solely for gaming; similar gaming tables were produced throughout the early modern period for use in noble households.

14. The V&A museum in London has numerous examples, many of which are made with ornate designs and expensive materials; as the museum catalog points out, there were probably much cheaper versions that simply haven’t survived. Willughby describes them in great detail in his manuscript, where he also gives a thorough and precise description of the object: opened up, the board is about 22 in. long, 13 in. broad, and almost 2 in. thick, with one side (inside) for tables and one side for chess. He also describes how the ledge on the tables side is higher so as to “keepe the dice from flying out and the table men from slipping of” (Cram et al., eds., *Willughby’s Book of Games*, 110).

15. Ibid., 128. There was a close relationship between card makers and pasteboard makers. In fact, when the Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards was incorporated in 1628, they set down in their bylaws that all pasteboard makers had to report to the company regularly regarding the kind of paper they were making into pasteboard and had to pay 2d. per ream to the Company or suffer fairly significant penalties (40s. per month) for noncompliance (Benham, *Playing Cards*, 61). Interestingly this was the same amount that card makers were fined if discovered for the third time to be producing false cards—which says something about how much control card makers could exercise over pasteboard makers.

16. In one case in England, some early seventeenth-century cards were dis-
covered under an old staircase that was excavated in Cambridge’s Trinity College. See Fletcher, “Old Playing Cards.”

17. For example, four vocal parts for a song appear on the backs of cards dated to the early seventeenth century (Hoffmann, Playing Card, 9).


21. James Cleland, Hērō-paideia; or, The Institution of a Young Noble Man (Oxford, 1607), 227. Cleland cites James I directly in advocating against chess for noblemen because it “is an overwise and philosophicall follie” that rather than “free mens heades for a time from passionat thoughts of their affaires, it doeth on the contrarie fil & trouble mens braines” with schemes of how to play well (230).


23. Chess might still carry more of an air of elitism than do cards and backgammon, but it is played widely by people from a range of social classes. Many American city parks have standing chess tables available for passersby. The popularity of chess among less privileged groups was represented in an episode of the popular television show The Wire, which shows members of an inner city gang playing chess while they wait for drug customers.

24. “De memoria et reminiscencia naturali et artificiosa” (British Library, Royal 12 B. XX, article 3).


30. Taylor, History of Playing Cards, with Anecdotes, 189.

31. The decks, in various states of production, are all held by the British Museum and comprise Le Jeu des fables ou de la métamorphose, depicting mythical figures; Le Jeu des rois de France or Le Jeu de l’histoire de France, showing the various French kings and ending with Louis XIV; Le Jeu des reynes renommées, concerned with queens and other renowned women, from all times and all places; and Le Jeu de la géographie. For descriptions, see William Hughes Willshire, A
Descriptive Catalogue of Playing and Other Cards in the British Museum (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1876), 127.


33. Mentioned as an item in the catalog of works that is prefixed to William Maxwell, Admirable and Notable Prophecies (London, 1615), as is noted in William Andrew Chatto, Facts and Speculations on the Origin and History of Playing Cards (London: John Russell Smith, 1848), 139 n. 3.


36. Ibid., sigs. A2v, A3r. The codex version is catalogued as E. 174. Descartes helped produce a set of geometrical playing cards that were probably sold alongside his book Of the Geometrical Playing Cards (published from his manuscript copy in 1697).


38. Burton pronounces chess to be “fit for idle Gentlewomen, Soul’diers in Garrison, and Courtiers that have nought but love matters to busie themselves about,” but not for scholars, as it is “too troublesome for some mens braines, too full of anxiety, all out as bad as study.” Robert Burton (as Democritus Junior), Anatomy of Melancholy, 5th ed. (Oxford, 1638 [1621]), 272–3 (part. 2, sect. 2, memb. 4). In Basilikon Dōron James discourages his son from playing chess because, unlike other games that “free mens heads for a time, from the fashious thoughts on their affaires; it by the contrary filleth and troubleth mens heads with as many fashious toyes of the playe, as before it was filled with thoughts on his affaires” (125).


40. For an excellent discussion of current videogames that enable people to contribute to scientific research on nanotechnology while they play, see Colin Milburn, Mondo Nano: Fun and Games in the World of Digital Matter (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

41. Leah S. Marcus, The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) lays out carefully these political and religious debates about holiday pastimes, examining how seventeenth-century poets participated in them. These debates look a bit different, however, when approached through the narrower lens of sitting pastimes.

42. Taylor, History of Playing Cards, with Anecdotes, 217, 43.

43. Ibid., 217, 218.

44. Ibid., 219, 220.

45. Murray, Board-Games Other than Chess, 119.

46. Benham, Playing Cards, 26; Taylor, History of Playing Cards, with Anecdotes, 220–1.

47. Ibid., 25.
49. See Murray, *Board-Games Other than Chess*, 119.
50. Joyce Goggin, “A History of Otherness: Tarot and Playing Cards from Early Modern Europe,” *Journal for the Academic Study of Magic* 1.1 (2003): 45–74. writes, “taxation strategies have been devised and revised to funnel gaming losses back into the greater economy, as a means of inducing irresponsible individuals to increase general and personal wealth rather dissipating it” (61).
51. In 1581, Henri III of France imposed a duty on cards for export, and a royal edict the following year heavily taxed cards exported from Rouen. These regulations caused many Rouen card makers to move their businesses to England so they could avoid the tax, which, even when reduced following protests, was still eight deniers a pack for England. On English taxes on imports, see Taylor, *History of Playing Cards, with Anecdotes*, 226. On French taxes on exports, see Fletcher, “Old Playing Cards,” 460.
56. Benham notes that in the records of Archdeacons’ Visitations in England in the late sixteenth century, there are hundreds of cases mentioned of card play on Sundays. He finds evidence of groups of men (between two and eight players) getting into trouble for playing cards, tables, and other games when they should have been at services (Playing Cards, 27).
58. Ibid., 103; my emphasis.
65. For an excellent study of French attitudes toward chance (medieval through modern) as these were expressed via various discourses on gambling, see Kavanagh, *Dice, Cards, Wheels*.
66. Cessolis, *Game and Playe of Chesse*, was printed by William Caxton.
Vertue (London, 1581) groups cards together with dice and bowling, presenting them as equally destructive to men’s souls. Thomas Wilcox, A Glasse for Gamesters: And Namelie for Suche as Delight in Cards & Dice (London, 1581) condemns cards alongside dice as unlawful because they are “games of chau[n]ce or fortune (as we call it)” (sig. B6v). To those who maintain that they need these games to refresh themselves, he counters that this indicates the games are providing too much pleasure and suggests that those desiring refreshment play chess instead.

69. Samuel Bird, A Friendlie Communication or Dialogue between Paule and De-mas Wherein Is Disputed How We Are to Use the Pleasures of This Life (London, 1580), sig. D3v.


72. Lambert Daneau, True and Christian Friendshippe . . . Together Also with a Right Excellent Invective of the Same Author, Against the Wicked Exercise of Diceplay, and other Prophane Gaming. Trans. Thomas Newton (London, 1586), sig. F4r. Daneau includes cards among condemned games only when they are used for games of hazard. Dudley Fenner, A Short and Profitable Treatise of Lawfull and Unlawfull Recreations, and of the Right Use and Abuse of Those That Are Lawfull (London, 1590) is more restrictive, allowing the “exercise of wit, honest ridles” (sig. A5r), but condemning cards along with dice because they involve recreating with lots, which is God’s exclusive domain.

73. James Balmford, A Short and Plaine Dialogue Concerning the Unlawfulness of Playing at Cards or Tables, or Any Other Game Consisting in Chance (London, 1593), sig. A4v.

74. Ibid., sigs. A6v–A7r.


76. Ibid., 143. John Downe’s Treatise in Defense of Lots (published posthumously in a 1633 collection) also sidesteps kibitzing about particular games and boldly states that “Lots both Mixt and Meer are lawfull even in the lightest matters: and consequently that cards and dice, and tables, and all other Games of the like nature, are lawfull, and may be used for recreation.” John Downe, Certaine Treatises of the Late Reverend and Learned Divine, Mr John Downe . . . Published at the Instance of His Friends (Oxford, 1633), 3.

77. Gataker, A Just Defence, 146.

78. Downe, Treatise in Defense of Lots, 51.


80. Ibid., 167.


82. The Nicholas Breton poem “Farewell to Town” describes a young man who bids “farewell to all gallant games / Primero and Imperial” (names of card games) after having been reduced to poverty. Nicholas Breton, The Workes of a Young Wyt, Trust up with a Fardell of Pretie Fancies, Profitable to Young Poetes,
Prejudicial to No Man, And Pleasaunt to Every Man, to Passe Away Idle Tyme Withall (London, 1577), sig. 12r.


88. Ibid., sigs. G5r–v.

89. The key medieval study is Jenny Adams, *Power Play: The Literature and Politics of Chess in the Late Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). Much of the work on early modern English political allegories of chess focuses on Middleton’s play and is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of the present book.


94. Edward Gayton, *Chartæ Scriptæ; or, A New Game at Cards Call’d Play by the Booke* (London, 1645), sig. B1v.

95. Ibid., sig. B2v. Another interesting political pamphlet of the 1640s, although not quite as extensive in its use of the card analogy, is George Wither, *Prosopopoeia Britannicus: Britan’s Genius, or Good-Angel, Personated; Reasoning and Advising, Touching the Games Now Playing, and the Adventures Now at Hazard in these Islands* (London, 1648).

96. Henry Neville, *Shuffling, Cutting, and Dealing in a Game at Pickquet* ([London], 1659). Even after the Restoration the trope continues to be useful. Anon., *The Plotting Cards Reviv’d; or, The New Game at Forty One* (London, 1681), a political pamphlet in the form of song lyrics, analogizes that England is playing, once again, a game of cards, but a “preposterous” one (verse 4), where Kings and Queens as well as diamonds and hearts are devalued, while the “baset” (verse 6) cards, like the black ones and the deuces and treys are “now esteem’d / Prime ones to win the Day” (verse 6).

97. Examples of decks of all of these (in various states of production) are
held by the British Museum, and descriptions can be found in Willshire, Descriptive Catalogue.

98. The edition was printed on four large engraved sheets, three of which are held by the Royal Geographical Society, but they were meant to be cut and mounted, and the British Museum holds several cut packs. Geography decks like these take advantage of the fact that cards are an excellent medium for presenting detailed visual material.


101. Geographical Cards (London: F. H. van Hove, 1675), Willshire, Descriptive Catalogue, 237, sect. E. 178. The deck presents an interesting visual echo with another English set c. 1661, which has England’s reigning monarch, Queen Henrietta Maria, depicted on the American Colonies card.


103. The statements throw doubt on the claim made by the modern publishers of this deck, whose own prefatory materials claim that the cards are for “instruction to the young, rather than for serious play.” Robert Morden, Facsimile of Morden’s Playing Cards (Lympne Castle, Kent, UK: Harry Margary, 1972). Cf. Hargrave, History of Playing Cards, 175.

104. See Worthen, Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance.

105. Arthur Saul, The Famous Game of Chesse-Play, Truely Discovered, and All Doubts Resolved; So That by Reading This Small Booke Thou Shalt Profit More Than by the Playing a Thousand Mates. An Exercise Full of Delight; Fit for Princes, or Any Person of What Qualitie Soever (London, 1614), sig. C3v.

106. See Eales, Chess, 51–2, on the spread of chess.

107. Even published texts replicate this format. Gioachino Greco’s release of Royall Game of Chesse-Play, trans. Francis Beale (London, 1656), is very straightforward in laying out key laws for gameplay, with little narrative/fictional embellishment.


109. Eales argues that print devalued these texts; writers could make more money by selling the manuscripts to patrons, who wanted to keep new strategies for themselves so as to improve their own playing (Eales, Chess, 86).

operates, it would seem, as a crib sheet that a player might consult to remember basic guidelines read earlier in the book. Listed in numerical order, as with similar such documents, each law is very brief, and many return to key concepts from the first section, effectively serving as a condensed version of it.

111. Greco, Royall Game of Cheesse-Play, dedication.

112. John Cotgrave, Wits Interpreter, the English Parnassus; or, A Sure Guide to Those Admirable Accomplishments That Compleat Our English Gentry, 2nd ed. (London, 1662 [1655]), 368. Although Cotgrave uses “rules” in the way we have come to understand them today—what earlier writers would have termed “laws”—he still imagines his instructional book to be of use during gameplay. He proposes a scenario where, during a particular match, questions arise about how to proceed, and his book can be consulted, in dialogue with players’ “Reason.”

113. Charles Cotton, The Compleat Gamester; Instructions How to Play at Billiards, Trucks, Bowls, and Chess: Together with All Manner of Usual and Most Gentile Games Either on Cards or Dice: To Which Is Added, the Arts and Mysteries of Riding, Racing, Archery, and Cock-Fighting (London, 1674), sig. I1v.

114. See Consalvo, Cheating. Boluk and LeMieux argue, in fact, that it is the metagame—essentially, the gaming of the rules—that makes videogames into games at all. While some might consider metagaming to be cheating because it involves working around the game’s recognized laws, the line between cheating and fun is blurry enough that the distinction cannot hold.

115. Cram et al., eds., Willughby’s Book of Games, 113.

116. Cleland, Institution of a Young Noble Man, 227. This is the same logic found in early modern “coney-catching” pamphlets, but I’d argue that it serves a very different purpose in the history of gaming, where cheating, while an ethical problem, is also crucial to game development.


118. Cram et al., eds., Willughby’s Book of Games, 114.


120. Ibid., 210.

121. Gilbert Walker, Mihil Mumchance, His Discoverie of the Art of Cheating in False Dyce Play, and Other Unlawfull Games: With a Discourse of the Figging Craft (London, 1597), sig. E1v. The Folger catalog notes say this is essentially a reprint of A Manifest Detection of the Moste Vyle and Detestable Use of Diceplay, and Other Practises Lyke the Same (c. 1555), which has been attributed (dubiously) to Gilbert Walker.

122. Ibid., sig. A4v.


126. Eales, Chess, 56, 83, 87.

127. Damiano, Pleasaunt and Wittie Playe, 3.

128. On Vida’s theatrical retelling of the tale, see Mario A. di Cesare, “Introduction,” in The Game of Chess: Marco Girolamo Vida’s “Scacchia ludus,” with Eng-


132. Ibid., 13.

133. Eales, Chess, 97.

134. In Diana Taylor, The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), performance studies scholar Taylor presents the archive and the repertoire as containing two different forms of knowledge—the archive as a space of static texts, the repertoire as a space of moving bodies—but other scholars in performance studies have explored the ways the archive is itself shaped by bodily performances. For instance, Barbara Hodgdon views the archive of material objects associated with past theatrical performances—costumes, promptbooks, programs, photographs—as “gestures toward a future reenactment.” Barbara Hodgdon, Shakespeare, Performance, and the Archive (New York: Routledge, 2016), 11.

135. Hodgdon articulates this method powerfully when she presents herself not only as an archaeologist, trying to unearth these traces for what they once meant, but also as a performer who inhabits traces of performance in the archive: “As I attempt to discern performance’s ‘walking shadows,’ its subjects and subjectivities, I work toward a performative re-wrighting, re-imagining, replaying, the force of performance processes” (11).


CHAPTER 2

1. Although critics of the play often mention the card game as among Heywood’s most theatrically interesting scenes, few say much about it, and those


8. At the same time, Goffman, “Where the Action Is,” reminds us that the success of any one participant in the game is unpredictable, for if personal relationships are information games requiring strategy, no one can be expected to play well every time (even the most skilled players lose occasionally), and, we might add, not everyone will agree on what constitutes cheating. Indeed, the card games dramatized in both *Gammer* and *A Woman Killed with Kindness* are plagued by cheating, which turns out to be more the norm than the exception in early modern representations of card play.

10. Goffman argues, in fact, that although all theater audiences “actively collaborate in sustaining this playful unknowingness . . . [t]hose who have already read or seen the play carry this cooperativeness one step further; they put themselves as much as possible back into a state of ignorance.” Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 136.


18. On how the classical model of friendship was taken up by women, see Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).


20. For a discussion of how dismissals of cross-gender and cross-class friendship reveal the homoerotics of ideal male friendship, see Masten, *Textual Intercourse*, esp. chap. 2.


22. As Whitworth observes in the introduction to his edition (xiii), the play regularly uses offstage action in this way.


24. Hutson’s *Invention of Suspicion* briefly discusses the play in the context of “intrigue plots” that ask readers and audiences to perform “detective work,” work she argues approximates the forensic models being articulated by mid- to late sixteenth-century legal bodies (156). Hutson’s argument about the play and more generally about how sixteenth-century dramatists used “revelation—a change in the contours of knowledge—to produce a sense of the contingencies of knowing” (290) dovetails nicely with my argument about drama as a game of imperfect information.


27. Many editors miss this reference in part because they render thong as throng, even though the edit does not make sense syntactically. Unless otherwise noted, all references to Shakespeare’s plays are taken from *The Norton Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997).

28. I agree here with Carol Thomas Neely, *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), who argues that Diccon, rather than being in cahoots with the audience in mocking the play’s low characters, in fact, turns the tables on the audience. He “makes everyone he encounters eat shit” (32).


31. We do not have clear evidence of the time of year Gammer was first performed, but according to G. C. Moore Smith, *College Plays Performed in the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), great numbers of plays were performed at Cambridge during the Christmas season. For instance, at Trinity in 1560, it was mandated that five plays be given during the twelve days of Christmas (21). By 1621 there is a decree on the
books at Corpus Christi College confining English plays to the Christmas holidays (42).


34. Curtis Perry, “Commodity and Commonwealth in *Gammer Gurton’s Needle,*” *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 42.2 (2002): 217–34. Perry doesn’t discuss cards explicitly, but they are precisely the kind of trivial, leisure-based commodity items about which reformers complained.

35. Fletcher, “Old Playing Cards.”


38. This is the argument made by Robinson, “Art and Meaning.”


42. See Robinson, “Art and Meaning.”


Scriptæ, a royalist treatise, mocks such criticism of card play, which, the verse suggests, prevents religious zealots from recognizing that cards can, in fact, teach spiritual lessons:

The Cards are hallow'd now, all but the name.
Here are Religious Kings and Queens, we may
Worke out Salvation, while we seeme to Play.
Blest Reformation! see how Grace gets in
By th’very meanes which did intice to sin.
Now may in godly sort the Zealous mate
Deale with a Brother yet Communicate.
They that forbad th’Prophaner Ace and Duce,
Should they see these, they would command their Use.
Virtue thus Conquers Vice by an unknowne way,
And Satan’s beaten now at his owne Play.
What good may wee not hope for, when we heare,
A Sermon Preach’d by Nicholas Benie’re?

The card analogy is used even more extensively in royalist satire. For instance, see Anon., The Bloody Game at Cards [London], c. 1642.


49. On “knave” as the male equivalent of whore or “quean,” see Rebecca Ann Bach, Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature Before Heterosexuality (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 74.

50. The precise nature of Anne’s role in the scheme is left ambiguous, though she would be essential to Wendoll’s foul play. In modern-day bridge, of which Vide Ruff was a precursor, the person to the right of the dealer often shuffles and the one to the left cuts the deck. This deters the dealer, who has the most control of the cards, from cheating. If early moderns followed this practice, then Wendoll shuffles, working covertly with Anne, who cuts the deck to benefit his hand. Francis Willughby’s seventeenth-century manuscript of games has the dealer in charge of shuffling and assigns the task of cutting cards to the person who last dealt a round and is sitting to the dealer’s right hand. See Cram et al., eds., Willughby’s Book of Games, 134. If that is the case, then Wendoll isn’t directly involved in “setting” the cards, which would only increase Anne’s culpability in the cheating scheme.

51. We can assume the seating plan based on the game actions. Wendoll and Anne are paired against Frankford and Cranwell. Since Frankford deals and Anne cuts, presumably Anne is to the left of Frankford and Wendoll is to his right. Willughby writes, “the generall custome is to goe round from the left hand [of the dealer]. And the reason is because hee that sits next on the left hand of the dealer has his right hand readie to receive the cards from him” when it is time to cut the deck (Cram et al., eds., Willughby’s Book of Games, 132–3).

52. If we take the definition of rub to mean “to take all the cards of one suit,” then Anne would have to have played a lower-valued heart. This would not
change the outcome of the game in any significant way, though, since her heart is still lower than Wendoll’s. See “rub, v.2,” OED Online, June 2017 (Oxford University Press), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/168278?rskey=Qoam1o&result=5 (accessed 9 January 2018).


56. We might be reminded here of Margreta de Grazia’s argument about the early modern soliloquy as a moment of sharing rather than eavesdropping. Though we are tempted to think that we are gaining some insight into the character’s “real” thoughts and feelings, the soliloquy is a performance of intimacy, and in fact produces a sense of depth of character. Margreta de Grazia, “The Motive for Interiority: Shakespeare’s Sonnets and Hamlet,” Style 23.3 (1989): 430–44. Preiss, “Interiority,” also considers inscrutability as a marker of that attribute, as does Hutson in her discussion of how forensic rhetoric produced a sense of character depth in late sixteenth-century English drama (Invention of Suspicion, esp. chap. 5).

58. Subha Mukherji, *Law and Representation in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) also considers the play’s use of a theatrical idiom to contemplate problems of evidence; but she, like Maus and others, focuses on the offstage scene of adultery that Frankford, but not the audience, witnesses.


60. Others have shown, of course, that the rhetoric of perfect affinity was less an expression of ideal friendship than a subtle way of negotiating friendship’s practical imperfections and material challenges. See Bray, *Friend*, and also Stewart, *Close Readers*, who explores how sixteenth-century humanists negotiated their way into higher status by claiming the “moral highground of the Ciceronian amicus” (125), all the while consolidating their power through traditional patriarchal means, by marrying into established families.


63. Ibid., sig. A7r.

64. Montaigne, 13.


66. My argument corresponds somewhat with Tom MacFaul, *Male Friendship in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): that early modern dramas, though they may take up the humanist rhetoric of friendship as a relationship among equals, do so only to critique that model, suggesting instead that friendships involve the recognition of the other’s difference from the self. Though he does not discuss *A Woman Killed with*
Kindness in any detail, MacFaul convincingly shows how other plays treat the humanist discourse of parity with suspicion, dramatizing the way the bonds of friendship flourish not in spite of but because of a gulf between two men. Like MacFaul’s, my argument also expands on Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer’s Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1994), who contends that the humanist topos of like-minded friendship is a pretext for teaching men the instrumentality of effective speech. Although I wouldn’t go as far as Hutson to suggest that literary representations of male friendship are less about friendship than they are about a “humanist reading programme” (3), her ideas about the “textualization of friendship” (78) shed useful light on the development and demise of the relationship between Wendoll and Frankford. I suggest that their friendship is precipitated through an act of sharing information and engaging in what Hutson characterizes as a “knowledge transaction” (78). Orlin, *Private Matters*, anticipates these arguments to some degree in her reading of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, which argues that the play critiques classical ideals of male friendship, presenting it as plagued by a “psychology of distrust and resentment” (165). While I agree that the play queries Ciceronian ideals of friendship, I see it less as demonstrating how the classical ideal of friendship fails to survive in a changing social and economic world than as detailing the logical repercussions of this model of friendship. Rather than a critique of classical-humanist idealistic friendship, the play is an exposé of its practical exigencies.

67. Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 167–8. We might interpret “favorable” less literally here—friends also bond when sharing flaws about themselves. On the face of it, this may not seem like favorable information, but it is favorable insofar as it can demonstrate lovable imperfections.


69. My thanks to Fran Dolan for helping me work out this point.

70. Orlin, *Private Matters*, makes a similar claim, observing that the “ruthless subtext of the card game” (166) is evidence of the ways male friendship is “re lentlessly contestatory” (165). I would add that this ruthlessness is not confined only to the game’s “subtext” but is functionally explicit in any card game.

71. Salen and Zimmerman, *Rules of Play*, 256. I discuss the limitations of this “magic circle” view of gaming in my Introduction. The hawking match evinces those limitations, for its participants do not abide by the rules of play.

72. Wendoll fervently argues that Charles’s hawk was outfitted improperly: its “Milan bells” are not weighted the same and are not tuned correctly (one ought to be slightly higher in pitch than the other) and this “spoils the mounting” of the bird (11.18–19).

73. My reading of the substance of this debate is indebted to Scobie’s glosses.

74. On the centrality of cheating in the history of videogames, see Consalvo, *Cheating*.

75. Julian Dibbell, “Mutilated Furries, Flying Phalluses: Put the Blame on

76. Boluk and LeMieux, *Metagaming*.
78. My thanks to Susan Kaiser for suggesting this interpretation.
80. Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 115. Cotgrave, *Wits Interpreter*, recognizes that some false play is done by mistake and seems to accept that since intentions are hard to judge, one is better of handling problems in a matter-of-fact way: “If the Dealer give the other more Cards then his due, whether it be through a mistake, or otherwise, with a purpose of foul play, it is in the choice of the elder hand whether he shall deal again or no: or whether it shall be played out” (362).
83. See Bach, “Homosocial Imaginary.”
84. Salen and Zimmerman note that, in games, “imperfect information invites treachery, trickery, and deception and can be used as a design element in games meant to inspire mistrust among players” (*Rules of Play*, 205). A good example is poker, where part of the pleasure and challenge of the game is figuring out whether one’s opponent is lying about how good his or her hand is.
87. The play was performed by Worcester’s Men in 1603, during the brief time when the company was staging plays at the Rose Theatre.
89. Thomas Kavanagh’s work on French gambling addresses a similar point.
He argues that gamblers enter into an imaginative world, not a state of perfect knowledge: “To gamble is to enter a realm where one wagers not on the cold certainties of what we know but on the blood-warm premonitions of that about which we can never be certain.” Kavanagh, Dice, Cards, Wheels, 23.


CHAPTER 3

1. For the sake of simplicity and clarity for modern readers, I refer to “tables” as “backgammon” throughout this chapter. Although modern backgammon derives originally from ancient Roman and Islamic “race games” and was an adaptation of various forms of the game played throughout Europe and England (as todad tablas in Spain, toutes tables in France, tavole reale in Italy, and as Irish in England), it came to England at the turn of the seventeenth century. See Murray, Board-Games Other than Chess, esp. chap. 6. We cannot know for sure what form of tables is being played in Arden, but if backgammon was just coming into vogue, we may surmise that the theater would have capitalized on the freshest game fashions.


3. A useful primary source for the early modern rules of backgammon and other table games is Cram et al., eds., Willughby’s Book of Games. See also Murray, Board-Games Other than Chess, esp. 119-29.


5. The sketch of the Swan Theatre appears in Aernout van Buchel (Arnoldus Buchelius), Adversaria (Utrecht, University Library, Ms. 842, 7 E 3; c. 1592–1621), fol. 132r, and is purportedly copied from a 1596 drawing by Johan de Witt, who claims to have attended a play at the Swan while in London.

6. In a letter dated 21 August 1624, John Chamberlain explains that he had to miss a play because he was not prepared to arrive more than an hour early to find a seat: “for we must have ben there before one a clocke at farthest to find any room.” Quoted in Andrew Gurr, Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 245, no. 141.

7. Quoted in ibid., 214, no. 6.

8. For discussion of these terms in the context of theater proxemics, see Keir Elam, The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), esp. 58.

9. Bristol, “Theater and Popular Culture,” maintains that the professional
theater “conferred at least a temporary social equality on all consumers of the same product.” In exchange for “alienation from direct participation in the creative process,” he argues, consumers received a “higher standard of performance” as well as a sense of being “socially undifferentiated” from other consumers (248). Everyone was paying for the same thing.

10. Such structures of sociospatial difference may have been more advertising than actuality. Dekker’s *Lanthorne and Candlelight* mocks gentlemen theatergoers who presume the galleries were socially exclusive: “Pay thy two-pence to a Player, in his gallerie maist thou sitte by a harlot.” Quoted in Andrew Gurr and Karoline Szatek, “Women and Crowds at the Theater,” *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 21 (2008): 157–69, at 157. The theater was merely a microcosm of emergent social trends in England, where status could be bought.

12. Ibid., 22.
17. P. D. A. Harvey, “Board Games and Early Cartography” (paper pre-
sented at the International Conference on the History of Cartography, Newberry Library, Chicago, 25 June 1993). My thanks to Robert W. Karrow at the Newberry Library for giving me a copy of this unpublished talk and to Harvey for granting me permission to quote from it.


19. This and other map games are discussed in R. V. Tooley, *Geographical Oddities; or, Curious, Ingenious, and Imaginary Maps and Miscellaneous Plates Published in Atlases* (London: Map Collectors’ Circle, 1963).


21. Ibid., 106.


24. On topos study as a method for media archaeology, see Huhtamo, “Dismantling the Fairy Engine.”


26. Ibid., 54.


28. Anon, *Arden of Faversham*, ed. White; scene and line numbers are given parenthetically in the text.

29. In this, the murderers are like the writers of early modern urban guidebooks and surveys, as they are described in Karen Newman, *Cultural Capitals: Early Modern London and Paris* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009). As Newman argues, these writers’ peripatetic walks are invested in the “kind of scopic cogito” found in aerial maps (28).

30. Kathleen M. Kirby, “Re: Mapping Subjectivity: Cartographic Vision and the Limits of Politics,” in *BodySpace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Nancy Duncan (New York: Routledge, 1996), 45–55, maintains that cartography separates the mapper from the environment so as to enable him (and, for Kirby, the mapper is male) to “occupy a secure and superior position in relation to it, without it affecting him in return”; for “[t]o actually be in the surroundings, incapable of separating one’s self from them in a larger objective representation, is to be lost,” an experience of significant discomfort to those who wish to dominate their surroundings (48; her emphasis). While I am wary of the gender binary at the heart of Kirby’s and other feminist geographers’ claims—occupying a position of spatial superiority is not necessarily or inherently masculine—I find their efforts to consider the gender issues at stake in sociospatial management valuable.

31. We might also consider Mosby in this grouping, although I have not included an extended discussion of him in this essay because his social position
is somewhat different from that of Greene, Black Will, and Shakebag. Mosby
does turn to murder to advance his social position, but he also, like Arden, pur-
sues more “civilized” routes: he romances Alice, who is his social superior, and
he actively pursues the patronage of Lord Clifford. Notably, Mosby’s murder
plots involve less physical engagement than do the other murderers’ plots. He
maintains an even greater distance from his target and doesn’t get his hands
dirty, as it were, until the final backgammon scene. If, as I argue below, murder
is like gameplay—necessitating physical interaction between players and the
“men” on the boards—then it is especially significant that Mosby can bring
about Arden’s death only by engaging in an actual board game with his target.
32. Neill takes to task feminist scholars of Arden for “reducing the tragedy to
a two-dimensional fable of patriarchal orthodoxy” (“‘This Gentle Gentleman,’”
75) when theyforeground Alice Arden’s transgressions (adultery and the at-
ttempted murder of her husband) to argue that the play is predominantly a cri-
tique of the institution of marriage. Although Neill is right to call our attention
to the crucial role of social status in this play—crucial for making sense of the
murderous acts of Greene, Black Will, and Shakebag, social climbers all—his
portrayal of social status as working independently from gender is prob-
lematic. For a related argument, which criticizes feminist approaches to the play on
similar grounds, see David Attwell, “Property, Status, and the Subject in a
Middle-Class Tragedy: Arden of Faversham,” English Literary Renaissance 21.3
33. Helgerson argues that “Arden’s appropriation of the abbey lands in Fa-
versham finds its counterpart in Mosby’s appropriation of Alice Arden’s body”
(Adulterous Alliances, 28).
34. Shepard, Meanings of Manhood, esp. 26.
35. Ibid., 248–9.
36. In using the term “masculinity” instead of Shepard’s “manhood,” I make
room for analysis of those women who, because of their higher status and
sometimes their more advanced age or particular social circumstances (e.g.,
widowhood), subscribed to codes of patriarchal masculinity in an attempt to
usurp patriarchal roles and privileges, acting even as heads of households. Al-
ice, who questions Arden’s right to “govern me that am to rule myself” (10.84),
may serve as one such example, though I do not have space to discuss her and
other such female characters here.
37. Upon Arden’s death, Greene will ostensibly reclaim his lands (which be-
long to Arden for the “term of Master Arden’s life”; 1.467), and Black Will and
Shakebag will reap great financial and, they believe, social rewards.
38. That the murderers might be models of masculinity because of their turn
to violence chafes against the ways some critics have approached them. For
instance, David Attwell argues that the murder plots and their failures are evi-
dence of the play’s call “for a central form of control by means of the institu-
tions of bourgeois civil society” (“Property, Status, and the Subject,” 348). But
as Frances E. Dolan points out, the play also invites its audiences to root for the
murderers; see Frances E. Dolan, “The Subordinate(’s) Plot: Petty Treason and
the Forms of Domestic Rebellion,” Shakespeare Quarterly 43.3 (1992): 317–40. (A
revised version appears in Frances E. Dolan, Dangerous Familiars: Representa-
tions of Domestic Crime in England, 1550–1700 [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994], 59–88.) Murder may be outside of lawful patriarchal society, but it is also a viable option for men who are structurally disempowered by a patriarchal system.

39. De Certeau, 106.
40. Murray, Board-Games Other than Chess, 120.
41. My reading of Arden complements that of Dolan in Dangerous Familiars, which argues that Arden is less of an agent in the play than in other accounts of the crime and yet remains central as the target of the murderers’ plot. There has been some disagreement among critics about whether Arden’s life is preserved by luck or by Providence. On the argument for Providence, see Comensoli, “Household Business.” Alexander Leggatt, “Arden of Faversham,” Shakespeare Survey: An Annual Survey of Shakespearian Study and Production 36 (1983): 121–33, argues that the play keeps its audience guessing on this point. It’s worth noting that the question of luck versus Providence is debated with great stakes in many treatises on gaming in the early modern period.

42. By which he means the governing official of a legitimate livery company. See Anon., Arden of Faversham, ed. White, 34 n. 105.

43. On the significance of social climbing in the play, see Whigham, Seizures of the Will, esp. chap. 2; Attwell, “Property, Status, and the Subject”; Neill, “This Gentle Gentleman”; and Helgerson, Adulterous Alliances, esp. chap. 1.

44. Michael does as he is instructed and tells the murderers that he will leave the door to Arden’s home unlocked that evening so they can find Arden in his bedchamber. It is notable that when asked for a place for the murder, Michael answers not with a map of the house but with what de Certeau calls a “tour” (Practice of Everyday Life, 118–22): “No sooner shall ye enter through the latch, / Over the threshold to the inner court, / But on your left hand shall you see the stairs / That leads directly to my master’s chamber” (3.173–6). Of course, this plan fails, and in retrospect Michael’s tour of Arden’s house works subversively in the ways de Certeau describes: because Michael has narrated through a story how Black Will can find Arden’s bedroom, Black Will has no bird’s-eye map of the house. When he finds the doors locked, his plans are foiled entirely; he cannot even begin to contemplate another way to get into the bedroom—he has no idea where it is except by way of Michael’s tour.

46. De Certeau, Practice of Everyday Life, 92.
47. Ibid., 93.
48. Ibid.
50. The illustration is also (as here) printed facing sideways on the page, which some have called an awkward positioning because it seems to demand that the reader turn the book in order to see the image from the “correct” perspective. But if the illustration functions as a representation of the phenomenology of gameplay, then its positioning on the page is actually ingenious: it puts readers on the side of the game board facing Mosby so that they inhabit the playing perspective of Arden.
51. In theater, as in board games, interaction could be intense even if it was not obviously physical. Cognitive science research on board games has found that players produce mental maps of a game board, imagining different playing scenarios even when they are not physically manipulating pieces. See Pertti Saariluoma, *Chess Players’ Thinking: A Cognitive Psychological Approach* (London: Routledge, 1995). In fact, this dynamic helps explain why board games can be engaging spectator sports, as they were in the early modern period and remain in some cultural contexts today. Such research on board games supports findings by scholars of embodied cognition and theater who argue for spectatorship as an active, indeed physically interactive, engagement, even when spectators do not make explicit physical contact with actors or the stage. See, for example, Susan Leigh Foster, “Movement’s Contagion: The Kinesthetic Impact of Performance,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Performance Studies*, ed. Tracy C. Davis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 46–59; Bruce McNamachie, *Engaging Audiences: A Cognitive Approach to Spectating in the Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Mary Thomas Crane, “What Was Performance?,” *Criticism* 43.2 (2001): 169–87; and Amy Cook, “Wrinkles, Wormholes, and *Hamlet*: The Wooster Group’s *Hamlet* as a Challenge to Periodicity,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 53.4 (2009): 104–19.


53. The main difference between Irish and backgammon is that the latter game allows players who cast doubles on the dice to play out the doubles, resulting in a faster game. For example, a player who casts double aces would move a total of four points (spaces) instead of two, as in Irish.


55. Notably, Arden describes himself as eluding place when he offers Anne promises of his constancy: “That time nor place nor persons alter me” (10.30).


57. On patriarchal authority as existing in a state of perpetual contest, see Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars*, esp. 57, which observes that only when the Arden household is empty can the conflict end.


59. The husband’s failure to play vicariously compromises the theater audience’s ability to follow the game as well. Overlooking the game board, the husbands have the capacity to be objective informants about what is happening on the board and to report that to spectators who want to play along; but they fail to do so.

60. Jeremy Taylor, William Perkins, and William Ames maintain that the real
danger of gaming is men’s loss of control over their passions when they lose. Thus even these conservative moralists sanction tables provided the player does not wager more than he can comfortably be prepared to lose in the course of recreation. For a short summary of these arguments, see Wood, “Seventeenth Century English Casuists.”

61. Evett, ed., Henry Porter’s Two Angry Women, 1.124n.

62. As Evett points out (Henry Porter’s Two Angry Women, 80-81), the quarrel is problematic because the women are not the appropriate mediators of questions of adultery. Mr. Goursey ought to handle the situation, defending his wife if the accusations are false, and, we might add, punishing her if they are true. In much the way Arden (at least initially) blames its eponymous character for failing to handle his wife’s infidelity effectively, Two Angry Women (at least initially) blames Mr. Goursey for failing to speak up for his wife’s fidelity.


64. On the possibility that theater audiences wagered on the action in a play, see Hedrick, “Real Entertainment.”

65. See Lopez, Theatrical Convention, for a discussion of the theatricality of darkness scenes. He argues that scenes where characters are supposed to be invisible to each other (but are visible to the audience) “deliberately strain the imaginative resources of the audience” who must be continually reminded that the stage is supposed to be dark. Thus the plays resort to “sudden, unexpectedly silly . . . use of the physical space of the stage[,] [e]mphasizing, even flaunting, the visible in scenes whose actions and consequences are predicated on invisibility” (106). A key example in Arden is Shakebag’s slapstick stage business of falling into a ditch; in Two Angry Women, Coomes, too, stumbles into a ditch.

66. When Francis will not reprimand the Boy, his servant, for impertinence to Coomes, Coomes remarks, “Why then, ’tis a fine world, when boys keep boys and know not how to use them” (8.336–7). He not only calls Francis that most derogatory of insults for men, “boy,” but in questioning Francis’s capacity to handle his servants appropriately, he challenges Francis’s own aspirations toward patriarchal masculinity. What is more, when Francis objects to being called a “boy” and threatens to strike Coomes, the outraged Coomes compares himself to the family’s real patriarch: “Strike me? Alas, he were better strike his father” (8.340).


68. When Francis loses his temper with his servants, a frequent occurrence in the play, Phillip advises his friend to control his emotions: “O fie, Frank, fie! / Nay, nay, your reason hath no justice now” (2.68–69) and, when Francis fights with Coomes, “Stay, Frank. This pitch of frenzy will defile thee. / Meddle not with it; thy unreprovéd valor / Should be high-minded” (8.346–48). Phillip is also the voice of reason and authority in his interventions into the feud between his parents. Phillip doesn’t simply align with his father, insisting to his mother
that his father does indeed love her, but he passes judgment on the marriage:
“He loves ye but too well, I swear, / Unless ye knew much better how to use
him” (3.249–50).

69. Just before Phillip arrives, Francis declares that he is “too young to
marry” (6.15) and that “[t]he shape of marriage / Which I do see in others seems
so severe / I dare not put my youngling liberty / Under the awe of that instruc-
tion” (6.24–27).

70. Mr. Goursey tries to convince his son to pursue the marriage by deliver-
ing a patriarch’s advice, quoting his own father’s speech to him on the impor-
tance of matrimony, but Francis simply turns in response to Phillip: “Phillip,
what should I say?” (6.54).

71. For an interesting discussion of this in relation to King Lear’s Dover cliff
episode, see Turner, English Renaissance Stage, 166–9. Turner argues that
Gloucester’s blindness may prevent him from perceiving the “place” of Dover
cliff but enables him to perceive “space” in a way the seeing Edgar, and most
modern readers of the play, cannot (169). See also Henry S. Turner, “King Lear
Women’s more extended dramatization of blindness—and particularly its rep-
resentation of blindness as a temporary state—makes possible a similar com-
mentary on theatergoing as a spatial practice that can, but does not always or
conclusively, become regimented and regulated by strategies of placement.

72. On blind and blindfolded players of videogames, see Boluk and LeMieux,
Metagaming, chap. 3.

73. The only way for a woman to win at the game of wooing is, the play in-
timates, by cheating. At one point when Mistress Goursey tries to convince
Francis to give up Mall, she imagines herself in a game with Mall: “let me win
thee from her, / And I will gild my blessing, gentle son, / With store of angels. I
would not have thee / Check thy good fortune by this cozening choice” (8.278–
81). The assumption here is that Francis needs to be won back by his mother, for
he has already played a game with Mall, who has cheated to win him. In one
sense Mistress Goursey is right about Mall’s foul play: Mall consigns herself to
marriage not to satisfy Phillip, her father, or Francis, but to satisfy herself. She
explains that this is the only way for a virtuous maid to experience the plea-
sures of sex.

com/word/goose (accessed 31 December 2017).

Available at https://archive.org/stream/TheMinorPoemsOfJohnLydgate2/The_
Minor_Poems_of_John_Lydgate_2#page/n174/mode/1up/search/goose (ac-


77. Lydgate, I. 28; Taylor, Taylor’s Goose, sigs. D4r, D1r–D1v.

78. Parlett, Oxford History of Board Games, 98, observes that versions of this
game can be traced to the late sixteenth century: There is a German board en-
graved on stone dated 1589, with geese replaced by the figure of Fortuna, and there is a surviving French example from 1601 (Lyon). The first English version we know of is John Wolfe’s “The newe and most pleasant Game of the Goose,” registered at Stationers’ Hall in 1597. A seventeenth-century description of the game can be found in Holme, *Academy of Armory*, 68. See also Parlett, 95.

79. The extent of the role of fiction or narrative in videogames is still a subject of debate in game studies today, with “ludologists” arguing that even in games with a strong fictional component, players ultimately look beyond the fiction, finding pleasure in the algorithms that structure the game. The varying perspectives on this debate can be found in Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan, eds., *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004). From a ludologist perspective a player’s experience of Game of the Goose is the same whether the spaces are marked with geese, cars, or numbers.

80. Other French versions include *Jeu de France* (Paris, 1674), where each space is a small map of a region of France; and *Le Jeu des princes de l’Europe* (1670), where each space is a small map of a European country.


85. One of the few game studies scholars who has explored the relation of theater to ludic interaction is Gonzalo Frasca, but he insists that the analogy works only if we abandon classical theater and turn to modern theater experiments, particularly to Brazilian playwright Augusto Boal and his Brechtian “Theater of the Oppressed.” Gonzalo Frasca, “Videogames of the Oppressed: Critical Thinking, Education, Tolerance and Other Trivial Issues,” in *First Person*, ed. Wardrip-Fruin and Harrigan, 85–94.

86. Laurel, *Computers as Theatre*, esp. 15.

87. On how this embodied interactivity has been theorized in the history of modern dance performance, see Foster, “Movement’s Contagion.”

88. Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare*, esp. 147, 133.


90. Bernard Beckerman, *Dynamics of Drama: Theory and Methods of Analysis* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), esp. 9-10 and 130, maintains that some degree of physical distance from the stage is essential for viewing pleasure and understanding, presumably making it impossible for theater patrons close to the stage or on it to follow the play.

91. Quoted in Gurr, *Playgoing*, 28 and 249, no. 164.


93. This appears to have been a practice. In another legal case, Sir Richard
Cholmley had purchased a stool on the Blackfriars stage for a performance in 1603, but when he stood up between the scenes “to refresh himself,” another gallant took his seat, which led to a duel. Quoted in Gurr, Playgoing, 199.

94. Quoted in Gurr, Playgoing, 44.

CHAPTER 4

1. Other early modern plays that use chess in interesting ways, beyond the plays discussed below, are George Chapman’s Bussy D’Ambois, Sir Giles Goosecap, and Byron’s Tragedy; and John Fletcher and Philip Massinger’s The Spanish Curate.

2. For instance, Elyot, Boke Named the Governour, bk. 1, sect. 26, claims that chess sharpens the mind of young princes, male and female alike. Indeed, chess was part of Roger Ascham’s curriculum for the young Elizabeth I, who continued to enjoy the game throughout her life.


6. The enactment of chess onstage can be compared to the Civil War reenactments describe in Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London: Routledge, 2011). Schneider argues that these reenactments initiate “an intense, embodied inquiry into temporal repetition, temporal recurrence” (2) that can “loosen the habit of linear time” (19; her emphasis). She goes on to argue for the body as a living archive, capable of storing and transmitting information across time, thereby participating in and producing history while imitating it. I’d argue that the (re)production of history is like the staging of chess, not merely mimetic but hypertheatrical. If, as the credo of performance studies puts it, all behavior is citational, or, as Richard Schechner describes it (e.g., in *Performance Theory*, 324), “twice-behaved”—then, as Schneider writes, “the explicit twiceness of reenactment trips the otherwise daily condition of repetition into reflexive hyper-drive” (14; her emphasis), making “restored behavior . . . available for recognition” (10).

7. Although chess had traditionally been a game for the elite, it was increasingly available to a range of players in the early modern period—in part because new rules that made for faster play turned it into a wagering game, and in part because the printing press supported the publication of texts that taught chess rules and strategies. An English example of the latter is G. B., *Ludus Scacchiae: Chesse-Play. A Game, Both Pleasant, Wittie, and Politicke* (London, 1597). On the development of “new chess” in the period, see Murray, *History of Chess*, esp. chap. 11.

8. Schneider’s work, although it does not engage the logic of gamification explicitly, underscores the ways historiography, whether official/scholarly or unofficial/popular, is always already gamified. Historiography is a practice of reiteration—the re-citing of facts/discoveries that have sedimented over time to create the view of the past that we take as history. I suggest that in using embodied knowledge of gameplay to research the “explicit twiceness” (see note 6) of early modern stagings of games, the scholar engages in a kind of explicit thriceness, the aim of which is to reveal the way all theater history is played, and might be played differently.


14. This extensive research is well summarized and also taken up in Saariluoma, *Chess Players’ Thinking*. The polytemporal structure of memory has been
discussed widely in cognitive science, whose findings have been applied to early modern drama and performance. See, for example, Evelyn B. Tribble and John Sutton, “Minds In and Out of Time: Memory, Embodied Skill, Anachronism, and Performance,” *Textual Practice* 26.4 (2012): 587–607.


18. By contrast, in a game of cards, the evidence of cheating remains after the false card has been played; nicked cards must be prepared in advance of the match and can be deciphered well after it concludes.

19. See the entry for “lightning chess” in David Hooper and Kenneth Whyld, *The Oxford Companion to Chess*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 226. The entry “timing of moves” explains that in the nineteenth century, there was enough concern about overly long pauses between moves in regular chess matches that the clock was also used to constrain players, who had to perform a certain number of moves within a specified amount of time (422–3).


21. Such technology was used to decipher whether in a famous 1994 match between Garry Kasparov and Judit Polgár, Kasparov had violated the touch-move rule and then gone on to win; slow playback revealed that Kasparov had touched a piece for a quarter of a second before letting go, but in part because Polgár did not raise questions about Kasparov’s cheating during the game, the game’s outcome was left to stand.

22. For a history of cheating in videogames, see Consalvo, *Cheating*.

23. Dibbell, “Mutilated Furries, Flying Phalluses.” On how gamers have responded to griefer attacks, see Milburn, “Atoms and Avatars.”


26. By contrast, Eric C. Brown, “‘Like Men at Chess’: Time and Control in *The Tempest*,” *Shakespeare Yearbook* 10 (1999): 481–9, argues that the chess game ushers in a shift from the “temporal blending” seen throughout the play toward a more conventional temporality, such that “the future may proceed unimpeded” (486).

27. Prospero’s subjection of others has been discussed at length by postcolo-


29. Orgel cites this as evidence that Prospero does not renounce power at the end of the play, as many claim he does. Shakespeare, *Tempest*, ed. Orgel, esp. 54–5.


31. Suzanne Gossett, “‘I’ll Look to Like’: Arranged Marriages in Shakespeare’s Plays,” in *Sexuality and Politics in Renaissance Drama*, ed. Carole Levin and Karen Robertson (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 57–74, notes that there was a growing consensus in the period that arranged marriages were inferior to companionate marriages, creating a problem in the case of noble marriages, where important political issues were often at stake. She compellingly argues that Shakespeare resolves this problem by making it seem that female characters entering dynastic marriages, such as Miranda, actually desire them. But if we accept the argument about marriage in Dolan, *Marriage and Violence*, then *The Tempest’s* dynastic union could be seen to lay bare the problematic structures of all marriages, whether desired/companionate or not.

32. The precise location for the staging of this scene is conjectural but difficult to dispute in light of theater historians’ research on stage architecture, which concludes that between the two doors on most stages was some sort of central opening that was used for “within” or “discovery” scenes, such as this one. Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa, *Staging in Shakespeare’s Theatres* (Ox-
ford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 156. See also the entry for “discover” in Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thompson, A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580–1642 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 70. Bruce R. Smith convincingly maintains that although there is no explicit mention of a curtain, this scene has so much in common with other scenes of “discovery” that it invariably takes place in the stage’s central discovery space, which tended to be covered with a cloth hanging of some sort. Bruce R. Smith, The Key of Green: Passion and Perception in Renaissance Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 240.


34. This view is widely accepted. See, for example, Deborah Willis, “Shakespeare’s The Tempest and the Discourse of Colonialism,” Studies in English Literature 29.2 (1989): 277–89; Kastan, “Duke of Milan”; and Hall, Things of Darkness, who argues that while the play criticizes Alonso’s arranged marriage between Claribel and an African outsider, it celebrates Prospero’s match: Prospero “prospers” because he does not “open the sex/gender system to non-European outsiders” (149). An exception is Sanchez, “Seduction and Service.”

35. In the form of chess played by Shakespeare’s audiences—the same form played today—pawns that reach the other side of the board can be promoted, usually to queen. Shakespeare was not the first to twist this game strategy into a narrative about marriage. Marco Girolamo Vida’s early sixteenth-century Italian narrative poem, an English free rendering of which appears in G. B., Ludus scacchiae, describes the pawns as “waiting maides.” One of these pawns “hopes by valor to obtaine / the marriage of the King” (sig. D3r), and when she reaches the other end of the board, the King “takes her to his loving wife, / which was her whole desire” (sig. D3v).

36. Dolan’s Marriage and Violence shows that conflict and competition are the logical consequence of early modern ideologies of marriage, which explains why marriages in drama tend to end in loss for one partner.

37. Melissa Sanchez’s analysis of The Tempest in “Seduction and Service” similarly underscores its questioning of dynastic marriage, but locates that critique in the problematic of affection in hierarchical political marriages.

38. James I, Basilikon Dōron, 125.

39. Kastan interestingly points out that the play’s use of dynastic marriage to solve political conflicts “is vulnerable, if only to irony” (“Duke of Milan,” 240) because it accomplishes what Alonso attempted in the first place: “the dissolution of Milanese sovereignty into Neapolitan dynastic rule” (241). But if dynastic marriage is as fraught as I’ve suggested, then the play raises doubts about Alonso’s political strategy. Can anyone be sure that Miranda’s identity as a ruler will be completely subsumed by her husband’s?

40. Feminist scholars theorizing the “future anterior” would point us toward such a view of historical irony. See for example, Diane Elam, Feminism and Deconstruction: Ms. en abyme (New York: Routledge, 1994).

41. Virtually all criticism on the play has been concerned with unpacking the play’s political allegory (and determining how oppositional its politics are), even to the point of working out which chess piece characters stood for which

42. See Sack, *After Live*, esp. chap. 4, for a trenchant analysis of how spectators experience potentiality in theatrical performance. See also Rebecca Bushnell, *Tragic Time in Drama, Film, and Videogames: The Future in the Instant* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) on how new media and experimental theater can produce this sense of “looping” time even through the genre of tragedy, whose narratives traditionally produce a highly linear sense of time.

43. Paul Yacchnin, “*A Game at Chess* and Chess Allegory,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 22.2 (1982): 317–30, offers the most extreme positions. He maintains that the piece-characters’ failure to follow chess rules precisely demonstrates that Middleton had little interest in or even knowledge of the game as such, appealing to it only for its rich analogic potential. He and other critics that address the chess setting thus focus only on the game’s symbolic meaning. For instance, critics discuss chess as a noble game or a game that lends itself to political meaning, especially in a monarchic context, because of the royal and aristocratic names for the pieces. For instance, Richard A. Davies and Alan R. Young, “‘Strange Cunning’ in Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess,*” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 45.3 (1976): 236–45, calls attention to chess as a noble game that instills virtue—which, Davies and Young argue, is a source of irony in Middleton’s play. See also T. H. Howard-Hill, *Middleton’s “Vulgar Pasquin”: Essays on “A Game at Chess”* (Newark: University of Delaware Press), 71. Whatever
their differences concerning the play’s meaning, critics overwhelmingly concur with Howard-Hill’s conclusion that “the spectator’s understanding should be prompted by the play rather than by his or her knowledge of chess” and that “spectators were not invited to play chess mentally as they watched. Chess is used not so much as a device to control the play’s action as a sustained metaphor through which the allegory was elaborated.” See Middleton, *Game at Chess*, ed. Howard-Hill, 36. An exception is Swapan Chakravorty, *Society and Politics in the Plays of Thomas Middleton* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1996), esp. chap. 8.

44. My interpretation of *A Game at Chess* thus links three arenas of investigation that other readers have tended to disarticulate: chess, theatrical performance, and political history. For instance, Howard-Hill, *Middleton’s “Vulgar Pasquin”* and his introduction to his Revels edition of *A Game at Chess* invigorate interest in the play’s theatricality by insisting that the play is neither a historical political allegory nor a play that takes its chess setting seriously. The “conventions of chess and the addition of topical color,” he writes, “were secondary concerns” within Middleton’s scheme to write a morality play (*Middleton’s “Vulgar Pasquin,”* 35). Gary Taylor, one of the very few critics to explore the performative implications of Middleton’s chess setting, nevertheless arrives at much the same conclusion as Howard-Hill, in this case disarticulating political history from both theatrical performance and chess. See Gary Taylor, “Introduction to *A Game at Chesse: An Early Form,*” in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 1773–1779, at 1775. Taylor argues that the chess setting is more pronounced in an earlier published edition of the play, which was meant for readers; subject to censorship, this version had to veil its political historical meaning, and it used chess as “layer” or “alienation device” to do so. He goes on to argue that the play’s political meaning becomes more clear in performance because characters are associated there with actors, costumes, and other visual cues that enable audiences to look *past* their identity as chess pieces and see more directly their political relevance. For Taylor chess is a layer that can be opaque or transparent, but it is always one step removed from the play’s actual political work.

45. An exception is Chakravorty, *Society and Politics*, who similarly proposes that there are important overlaps among politics, chess, and theater, and maintains that pretense is essential to successful performance in all three activities (see esp. 191). But I would question whether pretense is the most fundamental of their commonalities. If Middleton sets up politics, games, and theater as analogous activities in order to emphasize pretense, then why does he use chess as opposed to a game like cards, which, as a game of imperfect information, is so much better suited to plots about deception? What does pretense mean in a game like chess, a game of perfect information in which cheating is so difficult? Although I follow Chakravorty in suggesting that it is the similarities between chess and theater that enable Middleton to offer his political critique, my focus on the specificity of chess as a game—the phenomenology of chess play, and the particular competencies chess develops and requires of its players and spectators—locates and defines the politics of *A Game at Chess* differently. To dissemble in a game of chess is not simply to cheat, but to cheat *time*.

47. Jenny Adams argues that whereas medieval authors used chess to “model an ideal civic order based on contractual obligation and exchange” (Power Play, 2), as the period went on, and there was a rise in trades and professions combined with a greater emphasis on individual autonomy, authors ceased using chess as an allegory for political organization. Interestingly, Adams treats A Game at Chess as an exception to this rule, claiming that it harks back to medieval precedents in its allegorical presentation of chess. As I see it, though, the play very much confirms Adams’s overall argument about what happens to chess in the early modern period.


49. Once could say that the Black Jesting Pawn effectively disrupts what Elizabeth Freeman has called the “chrononormativity” of labor systems that use “time to organize individual human bodies toward maximum productivity.” See Elizabeth Freeman, Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 3.


51. Ibid., 3.


53. James Bromley, Intimacy and Sexuality in the Age of Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 92–107, demonstrates that masochism in The Nice Valour operates as an alternative form of sexuality that undermines the social and gender hierarchies of the court and, indeed, of the play as a whole, which attempts unsuccessfully to displace masochistic male relations in favor of conventional heterosexual marriage. But, as Bromley convincingly shows, the end does not crown all, and the socially destabilizing pleasures of masochism, which partly stem from its theatricality, leave their mark on the theater audience.

54. Richard Dutton, Licensing, Censorship, and Authorship in Early Modern England: Buggeswords (Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK and New York: Palgrave, 2000) provides an array of potential reasons the scene may have been cut from the play’s official published version, among them that, as a clown scene, it was explicitly for performance and unnecessary to print beyond that context. Taylor argues that the published version of the play, in which the scene does not appear, was primarily for readers and not for performance. He also maintains that this passage, along with the other three that were cut, were removed so as “to eliminate unnecessary elaborations that might detract from the clarity of the play’s very complicated action.” See Gary Taylor, “Introduction to [Apparatus for] A Game at Chess: A Later Form” in Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, eds.,
Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture: A Companion to the Collected Works (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 912–91, at 914. We cannot know for sure whether this scene was performed, though we do know that Middleton originally imagined its inclusion. And if the scene was, in fact, deleted from some performances, then, in the context of my argument, such a deletion curtailed the play’s political impact and its audience’s political agency.

55. She is saved again only because she turns out to be collateral in the Black Queen’s Pawn’s true plot to take revenge on the corrupt Black Bishop’s Pawn. The Black Queen’s Pawn tricks the Black Bishop’s Pawn into having sex with her by substituting herself for the White Queen’s Pawn in his bed.


57. As de Grazia describes it, Derrida’s time is “punctuated by Benjaminian ‘blasts’ through the temporal continuum. Broken as it is, time does not lead into the future; rather it opens up spaces of access to the future, what Derrida terms ‘the space of Deconstruction’” (265). This “perforated temporality is complemented by a new construal of delay” (265), which does not halt but catalyzes true revolution.

58. For a sophisticated reading of this scene, see Bicks, “Staging the Jesuitess,” which argues that the Black Queen’s Pawn, like her real-life counterpart—the historical English Jesuitess Mary Ward—teaches the White Queen’s Pawn how to harness the power of theatricality.

59. For instance, Espen Aarseth, “Genre Trouble: Narrativism and the Art of Simulation,” in First Person, ed. Wardrip-Fruin and Harrigan, 45–55, defines games as comprised of rules, gameplay, and a material/semiotic system, and he argues that the latter is the most “coincidental” (48).

60. Amandine Mussou, “Playing with Memory: The Chessboard as a Mnemonic Tool in Medieval Didactic Literature,” in Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: A Fundamental Thought Paradigm of the Premodern World, ed. Daniel E. O’Sullivan (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 187–97. Mussou points out that in some cases, such as Les Eschez amoureuse, the text’s reader is required “to cooperate with the author and to replay the game so as to reach the meaning of the poem” (196).

61. This difference explains why Mussou’s argument about Les Eschez amoureux, though invested in phenomenologies of gameplay, reaches a very different conclusion than I do about how chess functions and what lessons it teaches. Mussou argues that the poem’s chess setting “forces a linear approach” (196) to reading, imposing a grid that forestalls individual, silent, and thus more discontinuous forms of reading. I have shown that Middleton’s use of chess achieves precisely the opposite effect with respect to theater spectatorship.


63. In the case of chess, Mark N. Taylor’s recent archival work on the game’s medieval history (“How Did the Queen Go Mad?”) has shown that the queen’s expanded movements and other changes that defined the “new chess” evolved slowly over the late Middle Ages, not in one fell swoop.

64. For an overview and critique of how scholars have read the relations between drama and history, see Dolan, True Relations, which makes a related argument about drama as a patchwork of fragments that audiences—in the
early modern period and in critical discourse today—stitch together. The assumption that each performance is an “event” that occurs in a specific and thus ephemeral moment is so widespread that it is taken for granted even in scholarship that recognizes the polytemporality of theater. See, for instance, Matthew D. Wagner, *Shakespeare, Theatre, and Time* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Brian Walsh, “‘Unkind Division’: The Double Absence of Performing History in 1 Henry VI,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 55.2 (2004): 119–47; and Tribble and Sutton, “Minds In and Out of Time,” 601.


68. Shakespeare explores more obscurely the link between chess and doomed marriage in many of his plays. He puns often on mating as a move in chess and a marital coupling. The noun *mate* could mean marital coupling as early as the sixteenth century, but notably, a third definition of *mate*, which chess historians claim to be the etymology of the chess term “check mate” or “*mate*,” is the adjective “mat,” meaning helpless—the king (in Persian, a term close to *check*) is made helpless (*mated*) by another piece on the board. The noun and adjective forms of *mate* may have different etymologies, but Shakespeare’s pun on “mate” brings them into a fascinating convergence that supports Dolan’s argument in *Marriage and Violence*: to be mated or married to someone may mean to be rendered helpless. Whether or not every audience member heard echoes of chess when Shakespeare invokes mating in his plays, the resonance is there and is certainly prominent in a play like *The Tempest*.


70. They exist, to borrow terminology from performance studies theorist Diana Taylor, in “repertoires,” not just in archives. Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire. See also* Chapter 1, note 134.

71. Some postmodern forms of theater, such as promenade (where audiences are free to move about the performance space), would allow audiences effectively to “zoom in” on the action. Portable binoculars, not available when these plays were first performed, would allow for this to some extent as well.

72. The only essay I have found that considers how their experience with chess is reflected in their ideas is Freddie Rokem, “Dramaturgies of Exile: Brecht and Benjamin ‘Playing’ Chess and Go,” *Theatre Research International* 37.1 (2012): 5–19, which focuses on the spatial, but not temporal, aspects of chess play.
73. They would have been in close proximity for a total of about eleven months between 1933 and 1940, when Benjamin intermittently visited Brecht in Denmark, sometimes for extended stretches of time; see Erdmut Wizisla, *Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht: The Story of a Friendship*, trans. Christine Shuttleworth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 55.

74. Quoted in ibid., 59.


77. Ibid.

78. Schneider, *Performing Remains*; Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*

79. Sutton, “Batting, Habit and Memory,” analyzing batters in the game of cricket, explains that whereas personal memory comprises recollections of “unique, irreversible moments,” habit memory “can only derive from long, repeated training, from routines and practices, from many related experiences rather than one”—a process that, like the intertheatricality I discuss above, may be “consciously inaccessible and verbally inarticulable” (765–6). This does not mean that the so-called enskilled body must be completely disarticulated from the mind. In fact, Sutton’s main argument is that that game players can improve their skill level by allowing conscious, even if not verbally articulated, thoughts or personal memories to shape their bodily habits.

80. Ibid., 765. McConachie, *Engaging Audiences*, makes a similar point when he calls for “cognitive audience histories” (190). That call is partly answered by scholarship that uses findings from modern cognitive science to understand performance, such as Amy Cook, *Shakespearean Neuroplay: Reinvigorating the Study of Dramatic Texts and Performance Through Cognitive Science* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). That said, neither Cook nor McConachie is able to show that cognitive science offers a more useful set of critical tools than phenomenology. To the contrary, their analyses of spectatorship are a “near fit” (McConachie, 46) with phenomenological accounts such as those of Stanton Garner, Bert O. States, and Bruce R. Smith.

81. I am drawing here on Evelyn Tribble’s application to theater of the concept of “enskillment”—a term introduced by anthropologist Tim Ingold to describe how individuals learn skills through their embodied engagement in a particular environment. See Evelyn B. Tribble, *Cognition in the Globe: Attention and Memory in Shakespeare’s Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), esp. chap. 3. See also Tribble and Sutton, “Minds In and Out of Time”; Crane, “What Was Performance?” These scholars of embodied cognition have focused primarily on the enskillment of actors/performers, but the concept, I am suggesting, is useful for understanding theater spectators as well.


EPILOGUE

1. For sample titles, see Introduction, note 7.

2. The term “mimetic interface game” is introduced in Juul, *Casual Revolution*, esp. chap. 5, who offers a useful definition than includes these variables.
3. Ibid., 103.
4. Microsoft recorded the show and broadcast it later on select cable stations, including MTV and Nickelodeon. The show can now be seen on YouTube as “Kinect—E3 2010—Cirque Du Soleil Event” in three parts, the first of which is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vS2_3cBjQIU (accessed 20 August 2016).
5. A useful overview of these techniques can be found in Machon, Immer-sive Theatres.
6. Milburn, Mondo Nano, esp. chap. 0011 [sic].
8. Ibid., 164.
10. The videos of gameplay were clearly prerecorded, as many people at and after the event noted. But clearly the aim was to show how the human body would ideally work as a controller.
12. For instance, see 0:57 of Part III on YouTube.
14. Ibid., 125.
15. Ibid., 151.
16. Ibid., 137.
17. Play the Knave runs on a platform called Mekanimator, which was created by UC Davis graduate students Evan Buswell and Nicholas Toothman, with the help of computer scientist Michael Neff. I am the project director, and Colin Milburn is the project manager. Created in Unity, a game engine developed by Unity Technologies, Mekanimator seamlessly integrates the Microsoft Kinect camera with a universal scene-staging system. Although Play the Knave is Mekanimator’s first application, the platform has other uses and, when completed, will be available as open-source software. Play the Knave was accepted for distribution by Steam Greenlight (see http://steam-community.com/sharedfiles/filedetails/?id=874426069&searchtext=Play+the+Knave [accessed 23 December 2017]) and will be released separately as a fully functional software application. Our work has been funded by various academic institutions and nonprofit agencies (see Acknowledgments), not by Microsoft.
18. For more images of gameplay, visit http://playtheknave.org. In the current version, players choose between two script levels, full and abridged. The abridged script still uses Shakespeare’s original language but eliminates some of the more complicated imagery and unfamiliar diction so as to suit users newer to Shakespeare. Like karaoke, the words appear in segments of one to three lines at most. Players have some control over the pacing of the lines, choosing from three different speeds: fast, medium, or slow. The current version includes four theater stages and several dozen avatars representing differ-
ent historical eras (ancient, Elizabethan, modern) as well as fantasy/science fiction settings.


20. PhD student Sawyer Kemp spearheaded the research at Stratford, doing a month of fieldwork there to investigate how users and audiences responded to the game. Initial findings from Stratford and other installations are elucidated in Bloom et al., “‘Whole Theatre of Others.’” Since 2015, I have curated over two dozen installations. Among the longer-running were the Gallaudet University “First Folio! Tour” exhibit on Shakespeare in deaf culture, 6–30 October 2016; and the exhibit “Shakespeare in Deaf History,” at the Dyer Arts Center, National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester, NY, 27 January–4 March 2017. Other major installations include those at the Utah Shakespeare Festival, Cedar City, UT, 2–3 October 2015; and “Shakespeare 400 Chicago,” Evanston, IL, 28 April 2016. *Play the Knave* was also mounted at several academic conferences, including the Shakespeare Association of America meetings in Vancouver, BC, Canada, 1–4 April 2015 and Atlanta, GA, 6–9 April 2017; and the American Shakespeare Center’s Eighth Blackfriars Theatre Conference, Staunton, VT, 30–1 October 2015. Currently under way is a program I co-developed with UCD undergraduate Amanda Shores to bring *Play the Knave* into K–12 schools and study its pedagogical impact.

21. I am grateful to Sawyer Kemp for first observing these spectator activities at early installations of *Play the Knave*. Kemp’s thoughtful comments on these installations helped me think about how to integrate *Play the Knave* into this book.

22. Games such as *Proteus*, *The Stanley Parable*, and *The Plan* encourage players to appreciate interesting images and sounds or think about philosophical concepts much more so than to win or to succeed at a particular task better than others.

23. The “glitch” is in the eye of the beholder, explains Michael Bettencourt, *Glitch Art in Theory and Practice: Critical Failures and Post-Digital Aesthetics* (New York: Routledge, 2017). Although our tendency is to blame our software or hardware for failing to comply with user will, in fact glitches are not signs of computer malfunction. The computer is continuing to function according to its protocols, but “with a set of instructions that are aberrant” (106). The glitch emerges because the user experiences a “disrupt[ion of] those semiotic protocols that produce meaning” (105).

24. Multiple cameras and more sophisticated, costly equipment are used in motion capture theater experiments discussed in Matt Delbridge, *Motion Capture in Performance: An Introduction* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). See also the skin deformation system for motion capture developed by Sang Il Park and Jessica K. Hodgins, demonstrated and described at http://graphics.cs.cmu.edu/projects/muscle/ (accessed 12 January 2018). In our system, skeletal quality is further constrained by the recognizer’s training data.
set and the depth image, which can suffer from poor sensor placement and the performer’s bodily orientation. I am grateful to Nicholas Toothman and Michael Neff for helping me understand these technical details.


