Edited by Tom Bishop, Gina Bloom, and Erika T. Lin

Games and Theatre in Shakespeare's England

Amsterdam
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Cultures of Play, 1300–1700

Cultures of Play, 1300–1700 provides a forum for investigating the full scope of medieval and early modern play, from toys and games to dramatic performances, from etiquette manuals and literary texts to bulls and tractates, from jousting to duels, and from education to early scientific investigation. Inspired by the foundational work of Johan Huizinga as well as later contributions by Roger Caillois, Eugen Fink, and Bernard Suits, this series publishes monographs and essay collections that address the ludic aspects of premodern life. The accent of this series falls on cultural practices that have thus far eluded traditional disciplinary models. Our goal is to make legible modes of thought and action that until recently seemed untraceable, thereby shaping the growing scholarly discourses on playfulness both past and present.

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List of Abbreviations

epil.	epilogue
induct.	induction
prol.	prologue
prompt.	promptbook
NPCs	non-player-controlled characters
s.d.	stage direction
TLN	through line number

CLR	Corporation of London Repertory, London Metropolitan Archive, London
CSPD	*Calendar of State Papers Domestic of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth and James I*, 12 vols. (London: Longman, 1856–1872)
EEBO	Early English Books Online
FSL	Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC
GL	Guildhall Library, London
LMA	London Metropolitan Archive, London
L&P	*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of King Henry VIII*, ed. J. S. Brewer, James Gairdner, and R. H. Brodie, 21 vols. (London: HMSO, 1862–1932)
REED	*Records of Early English Drama* series
TNA	The National Archives, London
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Introduction

Tom Bishop, Gina Bloom, and Erika T. Lin

Abstract

This introduction expounds the historical and theoretical overlaps between games and theatre by analyzing how playing crucially links these phenomena. The early modern English stage is an ideal locus for exploring that intersection, given its cultural significance as ludic entertainment and its ongoing impact on gaming today. We contextualize these issues by examining scholarship on play, from Huizinga and Caillois to more recent work; by centering aspects of drama beyond mimesis and situating these within theatre and performance studies; and by articulating how theatre challenges games as rule-bound systems. We conclude with an overview of the volume's three sections, respectively on the history of early modern games, the incorporation of games into stageplays, and Shakespearean drama's legacy in contemporary videogames.

Keywords: play; theatre; games; performance; mimesis; videogame

In the final scene of Shakespeare's *Love's Labor's Lost*, two simultaneous but unequal games are played, one by the Navarrese lords and one by the ladies of France they are wooing. The King of Navarre and his three lords, who have sworn to seclude themselves from society, disguise themselves as Muscovites, aiming to visit the ladies unrecognized so as not to be scorned for breaking their oath. The ladies of France, tipped off, put on masks and trade love tokens so that each of the men unwittingly swears devotion to the wrong woman. The lords are players in the masquing tradition in which men wearing fantastical costumes would court their beloveds in disguise.[1]

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1   On amorous masking, see Meg Twycross and Sarah Carpenter, *Masks and Masking in Medieval and Early Tudor England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

The ladies, too, become players when they "change [...] favors,"[2] a phrase referring simultaneously to exchanging physical badges or markers and to altering their faces by wearing vizards. The men's game of deception is outdone by the women, whose counter-game of misdirection one-ups theirs. At the end of the interlude, after all is revealed, the lords, suitably humiliated, bring on the clownish pageant of the Nine Worthies, for "'tis some policy/ To have one show worse than the King's and his company" (5.2.512–513).

This episode captures some of the myriad fascinations and challenges that lie at the intersection of games and theatre. In Shakespeare's stageplay, the masque of Russians and the ladies' counteraction are imagined as a kind of competitive recreation. As the Princess puts it:

> There's no such sport as sport by sport o'erthrown,
> To make theirs ours and ours none but our own;
> So shall we stay, mocking intended game,
> And they, well mock'd, depart away with shame. (5.2.153–156)

Like an athletic event, the game here takes the form of sparring, a battle of wits between the sexes. The objective is to see whose mocking is better: the men's mock-Russian disguises or the women's mocking of their favors. As in *Henry V*, when the Dauphin insultingly presents the King with a gift of tennis balls, Shakespeare here deploys the term *mock* to mean both "jest" and "jeer," both mirthful game and genuine scorn.[3] The side that wins the game achieves not only pleasant pastime but also superior status. This is a jest whose moral is in earnest: the ladies devastatingly demonstrate that, just as the lords quickly broke their oaths to fast and study, so they will also quickly be forsworn in love.

Yet competitive mocking is not the only game mechanic at work in this scene, for the contest is effected through acts of impersonation that the men and women present before each other and, simultaneously, before the playhouse audience. The complex layering of games and theatre is figured on our book's cover, which depicts this scene from *Love's Labor's Lost* being played

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within a contemporary videogame, *Play the Knave.*[4] This mixed reality game invites users to perform a virtual scene from Shakespeare, using their own voices and bodies to animate their selected avatars, such that the dramatic episode is performed simultaneously on screen and in real life. In the game session on our cover, the game player has chosen an alien avatar to stand in for one of the masquerading male lovers—a fitting choice for representing the othering of the foreign implicit in the men's Muscovite disguises. As the game player dances in real life in order to make his avatar dance on screen, his embodied act underscores the ways that gaming both produces and is produced through theatrical mimesis, within the dramatic fiction and in the physical playing space itself. *Love's Labor's Lost* revels in precisely this overlap when it uses theatre's own device of impersonation to dramatize the fictional games of impersonation the lords and ladies play. Like the game player on our cover, Shakespeare's characters mobilize within their local game the same representational strategies that lie at the heart of the medium of theatre.

As entertainment for audiences both onstage and off, for both the ladies in the drama and the spectators in the theatre, the game depicted within the narrative of *Love's Labor's Lost* merges with the game that *is* the stageplay itself—and doubly, since the men do not know that they are being "gamed" just as the characters do not know that they are fictions. Those dualities are reinforced in the word *disguising*, which describes the lords' outlandish personas in two early modern senses: (failed) concealment of identity and a genre of courtly entertainment.[5] This sequence in *Love's Labor's Lost* is thus not just a play-within-a-play but also a game-within-a-game, and the two are interlinked. Convincingly enacting Muscovite visitors will not stop the Navarrese lords from losing the game of the disguising, and the "earnests," or tokens, of the men's "true" love are precisely the means by which the ladies turn the jest to their advantage. At the same time, the entire episode, or jest, is offered earnestly as real-life theatrical entertainment. The actors who play both "winning" ladies and "losing" lords collectively succeed at their higher-level game of performing for the playhouse audience. Jest within one frame can become earnest in another, and vice versa.

The essays in this volume explore the social and cultural dynamics of this sort of slippage between games and theatre in early modern England,

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and the analytical leverage offered by approaching theatre as a game. What kind of game was theatre in that era, and what can that localized example teach us about the broader theoretical contours of both games and theatre? This collection treats the discourse and practice of games—from dicing to bowling to contemporary videogames—as integral to the theatre of Shakespeare and his contemporaries and to their subsequent legacy. Our goal is not only to produce new analyses of the history and design of the drama but also to explore wider questions about play in all its forms within, around, and outside of the theatre. The volume's contributors examine both the ludic foundations of early modern theatre and the theatrical underpinnings of games in Shakespeare's time and in our own. Our aim is to stake a claim for "play" as the crucial broader concept connecting games and theatre, which are often treated as separate cultural forms. Playing, we contend, is precisely the active process as well as the formal structure through which games and theatre are linked, and examining that intersection allows us to see more clearly the cultural significance and performative efficacy of both phenomena.

The early modern English stage is an ideal locus for a project about the links between games and theatre. Although the academic field of game studies has been focused on the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries[6]—when videogames became commercially successful and widespread—scholars in a range of disciplines have also been attending recently to games and game theory in relation to earlier periods.[7] This research has shown not only that games were integral elements of social, artistic, and political life in the medieval and early modern periods, but also that this longer history is vital to understanding the phenomenon of gaming today. Despite this burgeoning work, however, few studies have

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6   One notable exception in game studies is scholarship on the long history of military games. See, for instance, Philipp von Hilgers, *War Games: A History of War on Paper*, trans. Ross Benjamin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012); and Nina B. Huntemann and Matthew Thomas Payne, eds., *Joystick Soldiers: The Politics of Play in Military Video Games* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

7   Recent work on medieval and early modern games includes Gina Bloom, *Gaming the Stage: Playable Media and the Rise of English Commercial Theater* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018); Robin O'Bryan, ed., *Games and Game Playing in European Art and Literature, 16th–17th Centuries* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019); Allison Mary Levy, ed., *Playthings in Early Modernity: Party Games, Word Games, Mind Games* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2017); Serina Patterson, ed., *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Michael Scham, *Lector Ludens: The Representation of Games and Play in Cervantes* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014); and Peter Ramey, "The Audience-Interactive Games of the Middle English Religious Drama," *Comparative Drama* 47, no. 1 (2013): 55–83.

taken seriously the relevance of games to theatre. Although scholars have
explored the representation of games in early modern dramatic literature,[8]
they have had less to say about the relationship between games and theatre as
a medium and institution. This is especially surprising given their profound
connections. In medieval England, games and theatre were described using
the same term, *ludus*.[9] Intersections between games and theatre persisted
and even deepened in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially
in large metropolitan areas like London, where a new "leisure market" was
growing rapidly, offering stageplays as a commercial good alongside, and
even in the same spaces as, many other ludic entertainments.[10]

8   On the representation of games in early modern dramatic literature, see, for example, Linda
Woodbridge, "'He Beats Thee 'Gainst the Odds': Gambling, Risk Management, and *Antony and
Cleopatra*," in *Antony and Cleopatra: New Critical Essays*, ed. Sara Munson Deats (New York:
Routledge, 2004), 193–211; Cynthia Marshall, "Wrestling as Play and Game in *As You Like It*,"
Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900 33, no. 2 (1993): 265–287; Jennifer A. Low, *Manhood and
the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003);
Edward Berry, *Shakespeare and the Hunt: A Cultural and Social Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 2001); and Gregory M. Colón Semenza, *Sport, Politics, and Literature in the
English Renaissance* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003).
9   Key studies include 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: Stanford University
Press, 1966); and Lawrence M. Clopper, *Drama, Play, and Game: English Festive Culture in the
Medieval and Early Modern Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
10   On early modern theatre and tabletop games, see Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*. On the theatre
and London's leisure market more generally, see Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License,
Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Douglas
Bruster, *Drama and Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1992); and Donald Hedrick, "Real Entertainment: Sportification, Coercion, and Carceral Theater,"
in *Thunder at a Playhouse: Essaying Shakespeare and the Early Modern Stage*, ed. Peter Kanelos and
Matt Kozusko (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2010), 50–66. On the relationship
between theatre and the emerging market economy, see also Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds
Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1986). On prizefighting in playhouses as a ludic entertainment and its impact
on drama, see Erika T. Lin, "Popular Festivity and the Early Modern Stage: The Case of *George
a Greene*," *Theatre Journal* 61 (2009): 271–297, at 284–291. For animal baiting on London stages,
see Andreas Höfele, *Stage, Stake, and Scaffold: Humans and Animals in Shakespeare's Theatre*
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts
in Early Modern English Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Erika T. Lin, *Shakespeare
and the Materiality of Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 161–163; Andrew Gurr,
"Bears and Players: Philip Henslowe's Double Acts," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 22, no. 4 (2004): 31–41;
Jason Scott-Warren, "When Theaters Were Bear-Gardens; or, What's at Stake in the Comedy
of Humors," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (2003): 63–82; John R. Ford, "Changeable Taffeta:
Re-dressing the Bears in *Twelfth Night*," in *Inside Shakespeare: Essays on the Blackfriars Stage*,
ed. Paul Menzer (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press: 2006), 174–191; Rebecca Ann

If the relationship between theatre and games has been undertheorized in scholarship on both cultural forms, this may be in part because foundational theorists of play and recent game studies scholars often conceive of theatre and drama too narrowly. Historian Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*, published in Dutch in 1938, established the importance of play as a cultural phenomenon and developed foundational concepts that have persisted for decades, including the idea that play should be distinct from ordinary life in terms of its time, place, and purpose.[11] Notably, Huizinga explicitly excludes the theatre of Shakespeare's age as an example of the "play-element in civilization," maintaining that the seventeenth-century "fashion to liken the world to a stage on which every man plays his part" was merely a "variation on the ancient theme of the vanity of all things" and in no way evidence that early moderns recognized how "play and culture are actually interwoven."[12] Since the publication of Roger Caillois's *Man, Play, and Games*, which was influenced significantly by Huizinga's seminal work, the relationship between games and theatre has often been misconstrued. Caillois posited four types of games: *agōn* (competitive games), *alea* (chance-based games), *mimicry* (games involving mimesis), and *ilinx* (essentially, thrill games that alter one's perceptions). These four categories lie along a continuum of play between what Caillois called *paidia* (free, unconstrained, improvised play) and *ludus* (rule-bound, organized play). In Caillois's terms, theatre would be defined as *mimicry*, a role-playing game that falls much closer to *paidia* than to *ludus* on the play spectrum.

Much of the later scholarship on ludic elements in early modern drama follows these traditions. Some of these studies treat games in theatre as a form of generalized "play," overlooking intersections between the

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Bach, "Bearbaiting, Dominion, and Colonialism," in *Race, Ethnicity, and Power in the Renaissance*, ed. Joyce Green MacDonald (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), 19–35; and Oscar Brownstein, "The Popularity of Baiting in England before 1600: A Study in Social and Theatrical History," *Educational Theatre Journal* 21 (1969): 237–250.

11   Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1949). Other influential work on play includes Roger Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games*, trans. Meyer Barash (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961; reprint, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Bernie DeKoven, *The Well-Played Game: A Playful Path to Wholeness* (Lincoln, NE: Writer's Club Press, 1978); and Bernard Suits, *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia*, 2nd ed. (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2005). Miguel Sicart revises some of these foundational theories of play in *Play Matters* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014).

12   Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 5. Suits also, though for different reasons, does not regard the performance of a stageplay as coming within his definition of a game (Suits, *Grasshopper*, 90, 104); see Tom Bishop, "Are Plays Games?" *Cuadernos de Literatura Inglesa y Norteamericana* 17 (2014): 1–16.

representation of games in dramatic narratives and the medium of theatre through which these narratives were performed.[13] When scholars do attend to the particularities of dramatic form, they tend to see games as reflecting on the nature of theatrical pretense and often overlook what Tom Bishop has called the "working texture" of play in the theatre, where ludic elements like competition and improvisation are just as central as pretense.[14] As we have begun to demonstrate through our brief reading of *Love's Labor's Lost*, the gaminess of theatre lies less (or less solely) in its use of mimesis as a representational strategy than in its deployment of mimesis as a pretext, means, or opportunity to play games with and for an audience. As Gina Bloom has argued, the early modern theatre was itself an interactive game, a "playable medium"; and dramas were "forms *of* play; [...] ways of gaming."[15] Theatre audiences are not simply consumers of a mimetic fiction contained in the drama, just as actors are not simply makers of the fiction. Rather, actors and audiences are *players*. Though we might ask whether they are playing the same *sort* of game in each case, or in what ways different sorts of games might interact with each other, stageplays come into being specifically when performers and spectators simultaneously play for and with each other.

In exploring early modern theatre as a game, we draw on definitions of theatre that emphasize its improvisational as well as mimetic dimensions. Artists and practitioners—from Jacques Copeau to Augusto Boal to Jacques Lecoq—have long been interested in theatre's ludic qualities, employing games in their devising processes and their creative products.[16] Games are central to modern actor training and are integral to "immersive" and "participatory" theatre as well as experimental performance forms. Yet when conceiving of theatre as a game, scripted stageplays, particularly the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, have often been discounted, if not imagined as the very opposite of game. Richard Schechner's influential essay

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13   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, no. 4 (1977): 528–552; Marianne L. Novy, "Patriarchy and Play in *The Taming of the Shrew*," *English Literary Renaissance* 9, no. 2 (1979): 264–280; Anna K. Nardo, *The Ludic Self in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), esp. chap. 2; and Alba Floreale, *Game and Gaming Metaphor: Proteus and the Gamester Masks in Seventeenth-Century Conduct Books and the Comedy of Manners* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2004).

14   Tom Bishop, "Shakespeare's Theater Games," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 40, no. 1 (2010): 65–88, at 72.

15   Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 6.

16   John Rudlin, *Jacques Copeau* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Augusto Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, 2nd ed., trans. Adrian Jackson (London: Routledge, 1992); Jacques Lecoq et al., *The Moving Body (Le Corps Poétique): Teaching Creative Theatre* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

"Drama, Script, Theatre, and Performance" claimed that "cultures which emphasize the dyad drama–script de-emphasize theatre–performance; and vice-versa."[17] Perhaps because of Shakespeare's status as a literary author, early modern drama often stands in as a straw man for a more limited conception of scripted theatre, obscuring its performative dimension beyond the stage and, with that, its connection to games. To understand the gamelike nature of early modern drama, one has to recognize the centrality of *play* to the theatre of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

Although this collection centers on early modern England, it aims not only to illuminate that period's drama through attention to the concept of play but also, in doing so, to inform the study of contemporary games. Following from Caillois, games often have been defined as structured activities enacted according to rules in order to achieve an objective that, within the parameters of the gameworld, constitutes a desirable outcome but outside those parameters is arbitrary or irrelevant.[18] To play chess, for example, one has to know how each piece on the board is allowed to move, and players are presumed to agree upon these rules for movement. When they participate in a game, players enter the field of play, or "magic circle," where activity is structured and contained by artificial rules established a priori. To put this into theatrical terms, the rules of games are usually imagined as a kind of script for play. But approaching games through theatre, and particularly early modern theatre, puts pressure on this conventional conception of game rules.[19] Schechner writes of the dramatic script that it "pre-exist[s] any given enactment" and "persist[s] from enactment to enactment," but scholarship on early modern theatre has shown that scripts, while they can inform the performance of a drama, hardly determine or authorize

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17   Richard Schechner, "Drama, Script, Theatre, and Performance," *TDR: The Drama Review* 17, no. 3 (1973): 5–36, at 9. The essay was reprinted in Schechner, *Performance Theory*, rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), where the quotation appears on p. 70.

18   In addition to foundational play scholars cited above, see more recent game studies scholarship, including Ian Bogost, *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007); Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010); Thomas M. Malaby, "Beyond Play: A New Approach to Games," *Games and Culture* 2, no. 2 (2007): 95–113; and Thomas M. Malaby, "Anthropology and Play: The Contours of Playful Experience," *New Literary History* 40, no. 1 (2009): 205–218.

19   Some recent game studies scholars have also challenged this view. Sicart, for example, underscores that rules are constantly renegotiated during play as contexts change. See also Stephanie Boluk and Patrick LeMieux, *Metagaming: Playing, Competing, Spectating, Cheating, Trading, Making, and Breaking Videogames* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Mia Consalvo, "There is No Magic Circle," *Games and Culture* 4, no. 4 (2009): 408–417; and Mia Consalvo, *Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

it.[20] In part, this is because improvisation is foundational to early modern theatre. Take, for instance, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century clowns, actors who often devised speech and stage business on the fly, diverging from the lines laid down in the script in order better to entertain theatre spectators. The clown, on this model, doesn't so much enact the script as play with it in order to further the game of theatre with the audience.[21] Examining early modern theatre reminds us that even the most seemingly rigid of game rules may in practice be flexible systems, enacted and reinforced—and sometimes changed and subverted—in and through the very act of play. Just as the dramatic script is but one (malleable) element of theatrical performance, game rules that are iterated through play may also be transformed by improvisation in and around play. In theatre and performance studies, such questions of iterability have been examined especially in relation to ceremonial, ritual, and quotidian performance, and have informed theories of performativity with broad critical reach.[22] By examining the intersection of games and theatre in early modern England, as well as their subsequent impact on related cultural forms, this book brings historical depth to such conversations, offering an alternative perspective on matters such as subject formation, political organization, and the production of social norms, and sharpening or revising theoretical models that grow out of analyses of later eras.

Our volume brings together these varied scholarly approaches with the original insights of our contributors, whose expertise lies in dramatic literature and theatre history, in order to explicate the centrality of "play" to both games and theatre. Neither games nor theatre can exist without being

20   Schechner, "Drama, Script, Theatre, and Performance," 6. W. B. Worthen calls attention to the material practices involved in writing and publishing dramatic literature to argue that "[d]ramatic performance is not determined by the text of the play: it strikes a much more interactive, *performative* relation between writing and the spaces, places, and behaviors that give it meaning, *force*, as theatrical action." Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 12. See also W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare Performance Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

21   See Richard Preiss, *Clowning and Authorship in Early Modern Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

22   Influential work includes Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), and *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); and Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

realized through play. Placing play at the heart of our analysis modifies the traditional view of theatre as principally mimesis, emphasizing instead the exploratory and experimental elements it shares with games. Thinking of theatre this way additionally underscores that stageplays are not only artistic works but also recreative entertainments and, like games, are culturally central and socially efficacious beyond their function as representation. Such historically informed analysis of play is especially important now, as videogame use has reached higher than ever levels and as we are witnessing the gamification of a range of human activities in domains from education and research to health and communication. Indeed, our collection's questions about the digital adaptation of earlier play structures feel especially urgent and pressing at the current moment. As we write this introduction amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, live theatre has been suspended and in effect put under threat, and social media's public personas (and imaginary avatars) are playing a prominent role in political upheaval and racial reckoning. Through a combination of theoretical, historical, and practical research, the essays gathered here seek to illuminate both the history of play as an aspect of early modern theatre and the nature of play as revealed *by* that theatre, in order to open up new ways of understanding how play works and why it matters today.

<p align="center">***</p>

To investigate early modern play as both a framework and a subject matter, we must first historicize how playing was understood in that era. If, as we maintain above, play was a category within and through which what we now call drama was constructed, then play must have had its own historical agents, institutions, and technologies. The four essays in the volume's first section all explore various ways in which early modern dramatic performance was framed within and in relation to the contemporary languages and practices of game playing. Games as experiences that shaped agents such as playwrights and actors, games as activities institutionalized in early modern England, and games as specific technologies for behaving and making things happen—all these were incorporated into theatrical playing or put pressure on it, and in various and changing ways over time.

In the first essay in this section, Stephen Purcell provides an overview linking our volume's two foci by comparing the game languages of early modern stageplays with recent, historically informed attempts to reactivate that language as a practical technology at the London Globe Theatre, which opened on the South Bank of the Thames in 1997. Purcell shows first how

the resonances of "game" were typically deployed in dramas of this period, both for the general activity of performing a stageplay and also for specific kinds of situations and actions—especially scenes of subterfuge or deception where the audience is privy to a character's true designs against another character. This raises the question of the management of differential levels of understanding among player, character, and audience, which Purcell explores through an account of a "bisociated" acting technique. He then goes on to discuss concrete examples and emerging discourses of play and game on the contemporary Globe stage, especially those influenced by the work of Jacques Lecoq and other recent exponents of a ludic and "physical" performance style distinct from the main line of Stanislavskian acting. Using the Globe's extensive production records, Purcell shows how the reconstruction of an early modern technology in a twentieth-century theatre building itself has released onto the stage a variety of ludic and sportive possibilities for performance that raise both new questions and new problems for any account of early modern playing.

Purcell's essay invites the question of how early modern stageplays were placed in the context of other games. David Kathman's essay on the relation of dramatic playing to the playing of tennis addresses this question by examining games as a set of regulated activities in early Tudor London. Unpacking the implications of the observation that theatre was often perceived in this period as belonging to the same category of activity as what we would now call "sport," Kathman shows that this overlap had practical consequences for how drama was treated physically and administratively by commerce and government. For instance, since records of performing spaces in these years are scant, Kathman inquires into the regulation of the locations where tennis, a cognate pastime, was played. This approach literalizes in a fully historicized way what is in fact a fairly common metaphor of and for early modern drama: "Well bandied both," says the Princess in Shakespeare's *Love's Labor's Lost*, "a set of wit well played" (5.2.29). The influential legacy of the tennis metaphor is evident in Tom Stoppard's 1990 film of his own *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, which shows the Danish patsies playing their rounds of "questions" as an actual tennis match, a strategy also resumed in the London Globe's 1999 staging of *The Comedy of Errors*, as Stephen Purcell records.

Katherine Steele Brokaw focuses on a different game analogue to theatrical playing, exploring the complex way in which dice-playing onstage became an intersection point where cultural controversies and pressures in early modern England came into tension with one another. Dicing across this period was a form of gameplay involving varying degrees or awareness of chance, risk, skill,

cunning, and value both moral and social. It was widely inveighed against by moralists early and late, yet also gradually normalized as part of the social texture of gentry and gallant life, as Heather Hirschfeld's essay in this volume also argues. By teasing out of some of these strands, Brokaw shows the fascinating ways that dramatic styles and dramaturgical possibilities changed as different kinds of polemic and anxiety were brought to bear on a series of sixteenth-century stageplays. Examining the early moral interlude of *Youth*, the Edwardian and Marian dramas of *Nice Wanton* and *Impatient Poverty*, and the mid-Elizabethan comedy *Misogonus*, Brokaw brings together morality, classical, Italianate, and popular strands of dramaturgy in an intriguing hybrid. In doing so, she shows how dicing provides a focus of exploration not only for conflicting cultural discourses around gambling but also for features of dramaturgical style—and so for the valences that run between theatrical and non-theatrical play. The resulting argument has further implications for Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*—where risk, hazard, wager, and various versions of profit, gain, and loss provide a central vocabulary for examining human interaction—and *Antony and Cleopatra*, with its queasy exploration of the changing currents of fortune and value.

The encroachments of contemporary commerce on stage-playing also form the subject of Heather Hirschfeld's discussion of Richard Brome's 1640 drama, *The Court Beggar*. Picking up part of Brokaw's argument, Hirschfeld reveals how the languages of late Caroline capitalism—particularly of speculation and projection—were altering theatre in ways that Brome was aware of and possibly anxious about. From early Tudor times, as Kathman shows, commerce and regulation were integral parts of the environment of theatrical playing. Hirschfeld demonstrates that the ever-expanding strategies of mercantile and entrepreneurial capitalism in the succeeding century threatened the capture of the ludic enterprise of theatre by various parties extrinsic to it. Of course, such capture had long been part of the texture of doing business with stage-playing; the career of theatre entrepreneur Philip Henslowe demonstrates that well enough. But an emerging culture of investment, promotion, and innovation in Caroline England, satirized variously by Brome in his drama, saw theatrical institutions as possible leverage points for commercial scheming in a new way, as one of Brome's characters comically imagines with his proposal to construct and invite investment in a floating playhouse on the Thames. Hirschfeld shows how Brome both ridicules the daffier side of Caroline "projection" projects and also recognizes the impact of the changing culture on ideas and practices of playing.

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If the essays of the first section explore how games provide a conceptual and regulatory context for early modern stageplays, those in the second section examine how different kinds of games—including games incorporated into stageplays themselves—modify, respond to, or put pressure on the sort of game playing that the theatre stages. What kind of game is theatre, and what happens when this game is juxtaposed with other sorts of games? In Caillois's taxonomy, stageplays are games of *mimicry*, and they have been characterized as such as far back as Aristotle. In early modern England, both defenders and opponents of drama used the concept, if not the term, "mimesis" to describe theatre. Opposition to stageplays *as plays* (rather than as, say, public health or crowd-control issues) tended to focus on the matter or object of imitation, rather than on the *mimicry* game itself. Similarly, distinctions between "good" and "bad" games—taxonomized in the period as "lawful" or "unlawful"—tended to turn on a game's presumed external utility. Setting aside concerns about games interfering with religious services, there were questions about the nature and value of games themselves. "Idleness" was a key yardstick in debates over "playing" that took place throughout Elizabeth's reign and in Sabbatarian controversies over Sunday recreations that recurred around King James's *Book of Sports*, published first in 1618 and again under Charles I in 1633.[23] Games of chance were viewed as idle play, testing and challenging divine providence, and thus immoral. Games of bodily prowess, by contrast, might be salutary, increasing players' strength and martial readiness.[24] But while some activities fell fairly easily into one group or the other—gambling was idle, tournaments were beneficial—other kinds of playing were less easy to categorize.[25] Theatre was one of these latter.

23   On lawful and unlawful games and the *Book of Sports*, see Leah S. Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 1–23; and Semenza, *Sport, Politics, and Literature*.

24   The latter category overlaps with dance and sports. For recent work, see, for instance, Emily Winerock, "Competitive Capers: Gender, Gentility, and Dancing in Early Modern England," in *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Competition*, ed. Sherril Dodds (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 65–85; Holly Faith Nelson and Jim Daems, eds., *Games and War in Early Modern English Literature: From Shakespeare to Swift* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019); Mike Huggins, "Early Modern Sport," in *The Oxford Handbook of Sports History*, ed. Robert Edelman and Wayne Wilson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 113–127; James Kelly, *Sport in Ireland, 1600–1840* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2014); and John McClelland and Brian Merrilees, eds., *Sport and Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2010).

25   Like their early modern counterparts, later discussants of play have also applied productivity as a yardstick, but within a capitalist more than religious frame. For these scholars, play is "leisure," what happens when one is engaged in action that is not economically useful as "work." See especially E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism,"

Where drama was defended, it should be noted, just as where it was attacked, it was not considered as a game per se, but rather in relation to the *ends* of that game—a useful skill imparted (rhetoric, elocution, and so forth) or a moral lesson of some kind. In the latter case, the mimesis in question was—and Aristotle shared this view—firmly attached to a teleologically directed narrative action and could be judged in that action. Utility lay in the shape of the narrative, laudable or disgraceful as the case might be, not in the fact of mimesis itself. But the *performance* of that mimesis, the game at the heart of theatre as play, remained outside this binary, for it was only when mimesis was presented or framed *as a game*, accepted or refused, that theatrical play could take place. This paradigm is depicted in *Love's Labor's Lost* when, in the pageant of the Nine Worthies, Costard proclaims "I Pompey am—," only to have Berowne reply "You lie, you are not he" (5.2.547), rejecting the proposed game. As Gregory Bateson memorably said, "Play is not the name of an act or action; it is the name of a frame for action."[26] What is at stake in the game of theatrical mimesis, however, is questioning the frame itself, asking what the rules are that make this action the kind of action that it is. Or, as Brian Sutton-Smith put it, "playfighting as an analogy to real fighting seems more like displaying the meaning of fighting than rehearsing for real combat."[27] When the point of the game is to keep foregrounding and inquiring into the nature of the frame that makes the action itself a game, it isn't clear where to draw the line between productive and gratuitous, between useful and idle.

The three essays in the volume's second section all address this tension raised by theatrical mimesis as a game of games. Building on a strong

Past & Present 38, no. 1 (1967): 56–97; Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c. 1780–c. 1880* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980); Chris Rojek, *Capitalism and Leisure Theory* (London: Tavistock, 1985); Robert A. Stebbins, *Between Work and Leisure: The Common Ground of Two Separate Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 2004); and Chris Rojek, *The Labour of Leisure: The Culture of Free Time* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2010). For related approaches in studies of the long early modern period, see Peter Burke, "The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe," *Past & Present* 146 (1995): 136–150, as well as the response to it by Joan-Lluis Mafany, "Debate: The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe," *Past & Present* 156 (1997): 174–219; Nancy L. Struna, *People of Prowess: Sport, Leisure, and Labor in Early Anglo-America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996); Alessandro Arcangeli, *Recreation in the Renaissance: Attitudes towards Leisure and Pastimes in European Culture, c. 1425–1675* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Peter Borsay, *A History of Leisure: The British Experience Since 1500* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Tom Rutter, *Work and Play on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); and Hugh Cunningham, *Time, Work and Leisure: Life Changes in England Since 1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).

26   Gregory Bateson, *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity* (New York: Dutton, 1979), 139.

27   Sutton-Smith, *Ambiguity of Play*, 23.

historicist foundation, the authors examine games verbally reported in theatrical dialogue, literally enacted on the stage, and figuratively invoked by dramatic narrative and production history. Patricia Badir's essay opens this section with an analysis of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* as a drama that sets mimetic gameplay in opposition to teleologies of progress. She describes two games. On the Greek side, Achilles and Patroclus play a game of imitation in a lazy bed—a "bad" private game of camp and sexual dissipation. On the Trojan side, Hector issues a challenge to fight for his lady's beauty and honor—a "good" public game of martial strength. Shakespeare pointedly juxtaposes these two games, with the game of imitation undermining the authority of the combat game. By not staging Patroclus and Achilles' game but rather having Ulysses give a verbal reporting and canny re-enactment of it, Shakespeare, Badir reveals, privileges the imagination, foregrounding what is evoked by Ulysses' words over Hector's physical contest. Rather than seeing war as "an obligatory and rational means for moving forward," as Badir puts it, Shakespeare's drama reverses and undermines that position through the verbal report of a game of theatrical mimesis that reframes war as vanity and posturing. Picking up on queer theory's critique of (re)productivity, teleology, and linear history, Badir argues that Patroclus and Achilles' "leisurely, pleasure-driven and irrational" game of imitation is decidedly "unproductive play—play that opposes itself not just to work but also to history."

Badir's focus on the anti-teleological, "non-aesthetic and non-cathartic" pleasures of theatrical playing agrees with Paul Menzer, whose chapter explores the implications of early modern bowling as a game always in danger of veering out of control. Menzer shows how, when the anonymous drama *Look About You* incorporates bowling into its prison escape scene, it "builds into its dramaturgy a fundamentally uncontainable game." Bowling, he avers, challenges conventional views by implying that drama might run on but go nowhere, thus raising questions about how games in stageplays threaten to reframe the limits of theatrical play. Just as balls may roll offstage at any time, dramatic narrative has the potential to fly out of the playwright's control. Bowling thus offers a figure for the unpredictable, non-productive nature of theatre. At the same time, however, because a stageplay is scripted in advance, "the outcome is predetermined, howsoever liable to error and surprise acting might be." Indeed, Menzer points out that actors "obliged by the script to bowl" are "not bowling. They are just actors rolling balls across the stage."

Tension between the contingent and the determined also animates Marissa Greenberg's chapter. Focusing on the jailor's scene in *The Merchant of Venice* as part of the theatrical legacy of dicing for Christ's garments in medieval Passion plays, Greenberg examines the subsequent production

history of this episode to reveal how the game provides a powerful model for theorizing adaptation. The scene in Shakespeare, she argues, evokes a tension between freedom and fixity, possibility and restrictive authority, analogous to dicing. Like that game, which involved throwing the dice (giving them up to chance), letting them settle (resolution into fixity), and then repetition of that pattern again and again, the jailor episode enacts the repeated release and consolidation of authority, judicial and spatial. Using both textual analysis and archival research, she proposes that this same dynamic can be seen in the subsequent stage history of *Merchant* adaptations. The alternation of release and stabilization in dicing, she argues, resembles the interplay between change and fidelity that characterizes the very act of adaptation—and thus suggests how such iterations over time call into question what counts as imitation at all.

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Greenberg's theoretical questions about games and adaptations open out in the final section of the book into a complementary examination of a new archive for the study of early modern drama: videogames. Over the past decade or so, videogames that adapt and/or appropriate Shakespearean drama have proliferated, taking their place among the fastest growing and most commercially successful play forms of the modern age. The centrality of Shakespeare to the niche of literary-themed videogames is not surprising in light of his predominance among adaptations in a range of media,[28] but examining them in the context of other essays in this volume casts in a new light the historical and theoretical connections between gaming and

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28   Prior scholarship on videogames and Shakespeare includes Peter S. Donaldson, "Game Space/Tragic Space: Julie Taymor's *Titus*," in *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, ed. Barbara Hodgdon and W. B. Worthen (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 457–477; Katherine Rowe, "Crowd-Sourcing Shakespeare: Screen Work and Screen Play in Second Life," *Shakespeare Studies* 38 (2010): 58–67; Laurie Osborne, "iShakespeare: Digital Art/Games, Intermediality, and the Future of Shakespearean Film," *Shakespeare Studies* 38 (2010): 48–57; Gina Bloom, "Videogame Shakespeare: Enskilling Audiences through Theater-Making Games," in "Forum: Skill," ed. Evelyn B. Tribble, special issue, *Shakespeare Studies* 43 (2015): 114–127; Jennifer Roberts-Smith, Shawn DeSouza-Coelho, and Toby Malone, "*Staging Shakespeare* in Social Games: Towards a Theory of Theatrical Game Design," in "Shakespeare and Social Media," ed. Maurizio Calbi and Stephen O'Neill, special issue, *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare Appropriation* 10, no. 1 (2016): n.p.; Matthew Harrison and Michael Lutz, "South of Elsinore: Actions that a Man Might Play," in *The Shakespeare User: Critical and Creative Appropriations in a Networked Culture*, ed. Valerie M. Fazel and Louise Geddes (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 23–40; Gina Bloom, Sawyer Kemp, Nicholas Toothman, and Evan Buswell, "Amateur Acting and Immersive Spectatorship in the Digital Shakespeare Game *Play the Knave*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (2017): 408–430.

theatre that this project addresses. The essays in this section use the frame of videogames to analyze early modern drama and theorize theatrical performance more broadly. At the same time, they show how a deeper understanding of historical stageplays, particularly in performance, can enhance the study and making of games in our current moment.

The authors here pick up on the debate engaged in previous sections concerning rules, structures, and systems, on the one hand, versus free or open play, on the other, but these questions are refracted differently because videogames seem to be more closed systems than are the games discussed in earlier chapters. Games, as interactive media, must offer their players choices, but in videogames the choices available to players appear to be entirely pre-scripted by the designers. Unlike in a board game, for instance, where players might bend or rework rules during gameplay—even, conceivably, in a tightly rule-bound game like chess—videogames cannot be rewritten during the action without a skilled programmer who can enter into and modify a game's code. For this reason, some scholars have gone so far as to suggest that videogames are not really games at all, but rather algorithmic systems that a user moves through.[29] This characterization of videogames begs the question of what sorts of overlaps there can be between videogames and early modern theatre, which, though scripted in some ways (i.e. there may be a dramatic text), can be enacted differently during each live performance. Indeed, as discussed above, if we follow W. B. Worthen and other theatre scholars, the playscript is neither a stable entity nor an authorizing force for performance.[30] The essays in this section probe these overlaps and dissonances and ask whether and how the early modern theatre can be viewed as a point of origin or a foundational structure for videogames. In so doing, they not only offer new insights into the drama, but also demonstrate how extending the paradigm of theatrical performance to videogames reveals modalities of free or open play in or around these seemingly closed systems.

Leading off this section is Ellen MacKay's essay, which reads Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in relation to recent scholarly debates about the ethics and effectiveness of gamification.[31] For some, gamified environments are fulfilling—a chance to practice through low-stakes play high-stakes real-life

29   See Boluk and LeMieux, *Metagaming*.

30   Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance*; Worthen, *Shakespeare Performance Studies*.

31   For a good overview of gamification from a range of disciplinary approaches, see Steffen P. Walz and Sebastian Deterding, eds., *The Gameful World: Approaches, Issues, Applications* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014).

skills—whereas for others, games indoctrinate players into any number of nefarious systems and ideologies. MacKay reads *The Tempest* as a simulated training environment that shares much in common with one of the drama's intertexts or inspirations: the 1609 shipwreck of the *Sea Venture* in Bermuda. Some historical accounts present that incident as priming the stranded mariners who would go on to resuscitate the struggling Jamestown colony. In much the same way, the island in Shakespeare's drama prepares ship-wrecked characters for a harsher world to come. The difference, of course, is that in *The Tempest* social optimization is carefully managed by Prospero. MacKay argues that Prospero's "challenge environment" incorporates the kind of game mechanics so often seen in today's videogames. Ferdinand's mundane and repetitive task of carrying logs from one place to another, for instance, uncannily resembles "grinding" in videogames—repetitive, mindless tasks that must be done before a player is able to level up—which some critics have interpreted as a method of conscripting players into capitalist systems. If, as Patrick Jagoda argues, contemporary videogames are idioms of late capitalism, then, MacKay maintains, we can find the seeds of this phenomenon in the early seventeenth century.[32] But even as *The Tempest* reveals how gamification acclimates subjects to exploitative economic systems, it also enables subjects to reflect on and question those systems. Whether the drama accomplishes the latter goal depends on how its "happy ending" is received.

Rebecca Bushnell's essay also grapples with the agency of players within the ostensibly closed systems of videogames, locating this tension in dramatic genre. In tragedy, the dramatic narrative drives inexorably toward its fatal conclusion, but the theatre audience is made to feel moment by moment that this outcome could be averted if the characters were to make different choices. Bushnell uses videogames to unpack this conflict, demonstrating how a story-based videogame like *The Wolf Among Us* can expose "tragic necessity." Like MacKay, Bushnell's aim is not only to trace a longer history of game concepts and mechanics assumed to have emerged only recently, but also to use videogames to shed light on early modern drama. In particular, she argues that what is for many people the paradigmatic Shakespearean tragedy, *Hamlet*, presents an open world in which any outcome feels possible, a game structure that "collides with narrative purpose." This contradictory dynamic is especially evident in the drama's many videogame adaptations, which tend toward one or the other poles of tragic theatre: some compel players to "comply with what the game demands" while others emphasize

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32   Patrick Jagoda, "Gamification and Other Forms of Play," *boundary 2* 40, no. 2 (2013): 113–144.

their agency. Bushnell argues that, in these videogames, players must feel the avatar's choices are free and consequential, even if the audience/player is aware that there must be some narrative closure. Thus, in *Hamlet* and in the videogames that adapt it, Bushnell finds a more open and unfixed world than many have seen.

If Bushnell locates unfixity and possibility in game designers' creative use of tragic form, Geoffrey Way's essay situates that openness in game reception. Recognizing that game systems are finite, Way maintains that the narratives that emerge from videogames can still be quite diverse and unpredictable, because audiences bring to the act of play such varied experiences with Shakespeare and with games. Such experiences matter profoundly because videogames are defined by interactivity: the narrative is not only "embedded" by the game's designers, but arises specifically through the user's engagement. These "emergent" narratives may be informed by players' knowledge about and expectations for the videogame's genre as well as their familiarity with Shakespeare and his works. Even embedded narratives in these videogames may be more varied than they at first appear by comprising not only the playwright's dramas but also narratives that signal particular gaming genres. For instance, Alawar Entertainment's *Hamlet, or the Last Game without MMORPG Features, Shaders and Product Placement* appropriates and adapts elements from quest and puzzle games; these are as much its "source texts" as is *Hamlet*. Alawar combines the embedded narratives of the quest game with elements from Shakespeare's drama to allow players to "create new emergent narratives"—complicating our definitions of concepts like adaptation and appropriation. Way emphasizes that such videogames need to be understood not only in relation to Shakespeare but also in relation to games, for the player's experience with both of these areas will determine what narratives emerge from the videogame when it is played.

Whereas Way and Bushnell show how videogames might illuminate Shakespeare, Jennifer Roberts-Smith and Shawn DeSouza-Coelho worry that in these games something significant about Shakespearean drama is lost in translation. Their essay's focus is a particular subset of games designed by scholars and/or for pedagogical purposes, games that therefore ought to be better able than commercial videogames to teach about Shakespeare. Despite their tremendous pedagogical promise, however, these games are limited by their "text-centric" perspectives on theatre. Roberts-Smith and DeSouza-Coelho argue that because videogames are closed systems, they are not an ideal medium through which to understand or teach the "collaborative ontogenesis" that is theatrical performance. Scholar-designed Shakespeare

games, they submit, have yet to acknowledge the role of audiences in the theatre, the differences between the work of spectators and of actors in a live performance, and the rich collaborations between these entities that give rise to the experience of a stageplay. To develop more robust pedagogical engagements with both games and theatre, they urge scholars to ensure that students have as strong of an understanding of videogames as they do of Shakespeare. Students not only need to play Shakespeare games produced by others, but to learn to make these games themselves. Roberts-Smith and DeSouza-Coelho thus arrive at a point that very much echoes Way's when they urge that we "need to learn *game* in order to gamify *Shakespeare*."

All the essays in this section use the paradigm of theatre, and particularly the critical role of audiences as players or makers, to break down the fourth wall that seems to divide videogames from those who engage with them. Videogames may be scripted, but, like stageplays, they are not inert objects. They are works that live in and through the act of playing. And in this playing, there is the possibility for the unexpected. Indeed, contemporary videogame players enjoy nothing more than discovering new ways to engage with these games and to outwit digital systems that seem closed to their shaping input. Gamers devise innovative methods for interacting with scripted videogames, such as "speedrunning" and blindfolded play; they circulate walkthroughs and "cheats" to help other players navigate around game constraints; they develop and share "mods" that manipulate the underlying code.[33] These sorts of practices are so common today that videogame designers, instead of spurning them as unethical "hacking," now anticipate such forms of engagement and even court gamer communities by actively building in space for modding. In short, videogame culture today has come to resemble the improvisatory and participatory culture of theatregoing in early modern England.[34]

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33   Boluk and LeMieux, *Metagaming*; Colin Milburn, *Respawn: Gamers, Hackers, and Technogenic Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).

34   On lively audience behavior in early modern theatres, see, for instance, Preiss, *Clowning and Authorship*; Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Erika T. Lin , "Social Functions: Audience Participation, Efficacious Entertainment," in *A Cultural History of Theatre in the Early Modern Age*, ed. Robert Henke (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 35–50; and Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill, eds., *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558–1642* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), especially Paul Menzer, "Crowd Control," 19–36, and Nova Myhill, "Taking the Stage: Spectators as Spectacle in the Caroline Private Theaters," 37–54.

Taken together, the essays in this volume demonstrate how games and theatre, far from being distinct cultural phenomena, are in fact intimately entwined. Natasha Korda's Epilogue theorizes further the stakes of this interconnection by teasing out conceptual strands that cut across the volume's essays while also opening up their analyses to new questions. How does research on games and theatre call for a corresponding gamification of our archives and methodologies? If the power of play is embedded in a history of patriarchy and colonialism, how might early modern theatre studies probe and resist oppressive gaming cultures of the past and the present? Korda foregrounds such political questions by shrinking the scale of play, drawing our attention to the example of the doll house as a more broadly accessible, yet often overlooked, kind of theatrical stage. With its miniature versions of real-world objects, the doll house constitutes an alternative site for play that does not simply represent everyday life but offers "polychronic and polychoric models for imagining life otherwise and effecting social transformation."

Korda's Epilogue helps underscore the broader stakes of this volume's investments in the links between games and theatre. A deeper knowledge of how games were and continue to be played certainly sheds new light on particular early modern dramas, the institutions and people who created and received them, and the performance conventions that defined them. But even more importantly, analyzing games and theatre together reveals that stageplays are merely one among many forms of play. Although designating theatre as art, rather than game, seemingly elevates it, doing so actually prises it out of a larger cultural matrix that gives it social significance. The essays that follow aim to restore these rich interconnections by revealing the myriad and multifaceted ways that theatre was embedded in wider forms of play, both in the early modern period and in that era's legacy today.

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