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Examinations of games in Shakespeare studies tend either to provide historical readings of early games featured in drama or examine Shakespeare in contemporary game adaptations and appropriations. *Games and Theatre in Shakespeare's England* blends these two approaches, and Tom Bishop, Gina Bloom, Erika T. Lin, and their contributors have done so in ways that establish links between the chapters so that this diverse and comprehensive collection regularly has the cohesion and structure of a monograph. The chapters draw upon a vast critical body spanning from early texts on games to foundational theorists of play like Johann Huizinga to contemporary videogame studies. This latest entry in the Cultures of Play, 1300–1700 series with Amsterdam University Press is essential reading for anyone studying, teaching, or interested in games then and now.

The first assemblage of chapters provides readers with the contexts for thinking about how games informed the language and circumstances of the early theatre. Stephen Purcell's chapter functions well as the first in the volume to establish a continuity between the medieval and early modern notions of play and game. By exploring a lingering connection between stage players and gamers, Purcell draws upon a range of early theatre, ranging from Tudor drama to Thomas Middleton's canon in the seventeenth century to adumbrate the ways in which the audience likely played a game with performers. Purcell concludes that 'dramatic conflict, especially trickery or strategic contest, has been understood in gamelike terms' (60). Purcell's final point on trickery draws upon Robert Weimann's work, and although it could also consider the medieval Vice's role in generating these dynamics (63–4), his chapter offers new angles on figures of deception and the games they play with their audiences. David Kathman instead focuses specifically on bowling alleys, furthering the work on the subject that Callan Davies previously published in *Early Theatre*. Although Kathman's contribution does not focus heavily on theatre's connections with bowling, it nevertheless gives important contexts for the way this game was played and how it informed the language of the era and understandings of play. Katherine Steele Brokaw has written a compelling and fascinating account of dice in comparison with other games that

require skill rather than relying upon chance. She explores Tudor moral plays and the influences of Calvinism on these changing attitudes, whereby 'risk seems to be the best way to hedge one's bets when it comes to salvation' (109). Heather Hirschfeld finishes the first section of the book by paying closer attention to Richard Brome's *The Court Beggar*, specifically the play's mention of a floating theatre. By examining the militaristic significance of the hunt as a game in conjunction with the topical matter of projects and theatrical projection, Hirschfeld provides new insights on Brome's stylistic portrait of Caroline politics through his gaming of the stage. The editors have woven together a great group of chapters in this first third that span medieval influences through to the beginnings of the English civil war, with contributions that wonderfully delineate the ways that gaming and play informed performance and playwrighting.

The next segment of the collection continues to focus on individual plays and how they offer theoretical understandings and reconsiderations of gaming in the theatre. Patricia Badir explores camp, mimicry, and queer conflations of good and bad play in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* to conclude that 'the drama's general refusal to get the literary teleology right' is the result of 'toying cheekily with non-cathartic, non-ethical, rather intriguing counter-pleasures that challenge pretty much all received truths' (155). By showing how Shakespeare's characters play against norms, Badir's analysis of Shakespeare's play provides an early account of queer play as a form of resistance to standard or linear gameplay. Paul Menzer provides a theory of bowling, using the game's common term 'thus far' to explore the metaphor as it appears in early theatre. By examining the stage as alley, Menzer maps a figurative conception of offstage as equivalent to the boundaries of the lane, as both mark 'thus far' and thereby the portal to oblivion. Bowling metaphors thus give away the plot or set a character's parameters with respect to their progression within the narrative. Moreover, the 'thus far' metaphor broadly comments upon the endless play of the alley and the theatre, as both venues repeat the same game or play with each new performance. The city and its streets play into Marissa Greenberg's application of games to *The Merchant of Venice* with 'an alternative model of adaptation that accounts for regulation and license, centralization and decentralization' whereby games offer adaptation studies a means to rethink the dynamics at play in balancing structure and transgression (181). Looking to power plays in the city, specifically in relation to concepts such as 'hazard', Greenberg concludes that 'the street represents an open space in which games of adaptation may be played' (196). Overall, this portion of the volume is rich with new understandings of games in early modern drama that better inform the ways we comprehend the theatre then and now.

The questions of adaptation that Greenberg initiates transition well into the final section of the collection, which primarily attends to contemporary games and Shakespeare. Ellen MacKay, however, applies the modern concept of gamification to the colonial violence embedded in *The Tempest*. Looking to gamification's mechanical, capitalist, repetitive 'bullshit', as videogame theorist Ian Bogost calls it, MacKay brilliantly and compellingly argues that the power dynamics and games in the play elucidate its colonial mindset and racist thinking. This chapter thus draws attention to the typically neglected topic of race and politics in early modern game studies. This contribution to the conversation will hopefully result in further applications in the future. Shifting from contemporary ideas about games to contemporary videogames, Rebecca Bushnell explores tragic character formation and narrative in adaptations of *Hamlet*. Questions of choice and freedom within a tragic theatre that are somewhat limiting can be echoed or revised through modern game design, which can constrict or expand the range of choice. This idea informs Bushnell's readings of tragic theatre and videogames in her chapter. Geoffrey Way continues to explore theories of adaptation in his chapter by analyzing 'the underlying processes of creation and reception' (258). Way allows us to see how notions of fidelity and liberty with respect to game making and players' reception inform the ways we approach adaptations and appropriations of Shakespeare in videogames. The contributors and editors have done well in this section to prompt the authors to form connections between their work, and this nice progression brings us to Jennifer Roberts-Smith and Shawn DeSouza-Coelho's final chapter on adaptations, theatrical practice, and videogames. Considering Shakespearean games from a pedagogical lens, the authors theorize an ontological approach that prioritizes the embodied, theatrical nature of Shakespeare's canon while addressing the importance of evenly attending to and applying game studies to Shakespeare: 'To design a Shakespeare game is not just to model *Shakespeare*, but also to learn to manipulate the medium of *game* to express the model we intend as expertly as we do all the other media that are our currency in academia' (296). This final section of the book, then, prompts scholars to rethink and broaden the conversation so that we may explore new questions in game studies and early theatre while remaking Shakespeare and early theatre in the process.

Natasha Korda's 'Epilogue' concludes the volume nicely by tying together the contributions and offering new thoughts both by pointing to other contemporary game studies not mentioned already and using the example of early modern doll houses 'as polychronic and polychoric models for imagining life otherwise and effecting social transformation' (313). From beginning to end, the editors have

gifted their readers with a thought-provoking collection that advances the study of early games with a stellar constellation of chapters. As Bishop, Bloom, and Lin state, 'videogame culture today has come to resemble the improvisatory and participatory culture of theatregoing in early modern England' (30), and their collection of essays is an important step toward understanding the interconnection between these two worlds and forms of play.