# STAKES AND HAZARDS:

# GAMES AND GAMING IN EARLY MODERN DRAMA

**Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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**June 2019**

# DECLARATION

I confirm that this is my own work and that the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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# ABSTRACT

Twenty-four plays in the extant early modern dramatic canon feature gamesters at play, and over eighty reference games. This reflects the period's passion for the pastime. Many games were new, with a frisson deriving from prohibition attempts and their magical mix of astrology, sacred geometry, entertainment and hazard. The game motif has received little in-depth analysis until recently. Offering a fresh, critical approach I demonstrate how understanding games advances our appreciation of early modern dramaturgy. Games are not merely decorative for 'local colour'. They serve the innate playfulness of an age in which wit was a game, but with a serious dramatic purpose. Their currency provides dramatists with a *lingua franca* and a lens for a variety of contests. The introduction of a game (or embellishment thereof) is a conscious choice with a crucial purpose, the game proving to be the fulcrum of the dramatic action. I show the clear congruence between the form of a featured game and the action. An entire play can sometimes become an extension of the game which operates as a dynamic, nuanced synthesis of plot device and emblem, intersecting with thematic discourses.

Medieval writers used the hierarchy of chessmen in Moralities, and, dice, conveniently rhyming with vice, were a feature of some early Interludes as a form of parable. It is with the early modernists that the game metaphor develops sophistication and subtlety. Through close readings of plays dating from c. 1560 to 1624 and study of seventeenth-century game treatises, one only recently available, I show, in chapters on Dice, Cards, Tables (now Backgammon) and Chess, how each game has different signification through its defining characteristics. Features such as the 'faces' and 'hearts' of cards and game boards symbolic of the cosmos or human body, turn games into perfect allegories of life, both its pleasures and its stakes and hazards.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was made possible by the University of Reading Studentship Competition and the award of an Arts and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Studentship. I gratefully acknowledge this financial assistance and thank my referee, Professor Mark Thornton Burnett.

The University of Reading has outstanding Early Modernists in its English Literature Department and over the course of this lengthy project I have had valuable advice from many of them, as well as from other members of the department, from medievalists to modernists, in annual reviews. My supervisors have been Dr Mark Hutchings and Professor Michelle O'Callaghan. Mark, in particular, deserves more thanks than I can adequately express for his genuine interest in the concept of the thesis, for his unfailing encouragement, and for his invaluable advice at all points along the way, helping me to play my best cards. Our meetings have always been happy times. Thank you, Mark, for seeing me through to the end.

Librarians at Reading and the Bodleian have always been willing to help and the British Library has delivered numerous interlibrary loans via email. This leads me to acknowledge the debt owed to the many online resources and collections, particularly Early English Books Online (EEBO), as well as to the game historians on whose work I have relied. For particular illustrations thanks are due to Jude Talbot, librarian in charge of the playing cards collection at the Bibliothèque National de France, to the curators of the Derby Collection, Knowsley Hall and to archivists of the Manuscripts and Special Collections at the University of Nottingham.

Steadfast friends are needed during such a project, and I could not have wished for better. I thank my musician clients and long-time friends, Howard Shelley and Philippe Graffin, who immediately accepted the necessary division of my labour, and physicist friend Peter Kirby for his support and discussions on grammar. Finally, I could never have made it to the end of this journey without the love, encouragement and emotional support of my family, particularly Keith and my kind and hard-working daughters Nicky and Fiona of whom I am very proud.

# ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| edn | edition |
| f., ff. | folio, folios |
| *OED* | Oxford English Dictionary (online) |
| Q | Quarto |
| n. | note |
| sd | stage direction |
| st. | stanza |
| *SEL* | *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* |
| trans. | Translated |

## Capitalisation

Due to the unusual names of some of the games discussed, and to avoid confusion arising from the period's name for modern-day Backgammon, 'Tables', I have capitalised the names of all games.

## Spelling

The spelling of historical texts follows the relevant source text. Modern spellings are used where modern editions are used.

## Referencing

In all references to a book or article the author's name, the work's full title, and the publishing details are given at its first citation. Thereafter a shortened form is adopted (surname, short-title reference, page number), in accordance with the MHRA style guide. Full details are given in the alphabetical bibliography.

# INTRODUCTION

> But in the contest, e're the pass be won,
> Hazzards are many into which they run.
> Thus whilst we play on this Terrestrial Stage,
> Nothing but Hazzard doth attend each age.[1]

The frontispiece engraving of the *Compleat Gamester* (1674) pictures gamesters at billiards, dice, backgammon, cards and cock-fighting. Charles Cotton's explanatory stanzas, one of which is quoted above, parallel each game with the 'hazzards' of life. Hazard is a word rich in meaning in the early modern period. Shakespeare uses it to mean something staked when an enraged Hotspur, recognising the danger of disobedience, threatens to go after King Henry IV and refuse to send on his prisoners. 'I will after straight / And tell him so, for I will ease my heart / Albeit I make a hazard of my head' (*1 Henry IV*, 1.3.125-27).[2] At the root of the word 'hazard' is a dice game. It is a borrowing from the old French, *asard*, itself borrowed, via the Spanish gambling game *azar*, from the Arabic *al-zahr*, 'the dice', and in early modern England 'Hazard' was the name of a particularly bewitching game played with two dice.[3] It also meant danger, risk of loss or harm, and chance or accident. Indeed 'chance' is the name of the caster's throw in the game of Hazard.[4] In addition the holes of the billiard-table, to which the lines above nominally refer, were called 'hazards', as were the openings or galleries of a tennis court into which Shakespeare's Henry V so memorably says he will strike the French King's crown when presented with the insulting gift of a tun of tennis balls.[5] The verb, to hazard, could mean to stake or wager something, to expose something or oneself to danger, to venture, or to get something by chance. Through word-play, amalgams of the various meanings can of course be implied by a single use, and, as M.M. Mahood says, 'wordplay was a game the Elizabethans played seriously'.[6] Early modern dramatists frequently liken life, both its 'hazzards' and its pleasures, to various games. Gaming

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[1] Cotton, *The Compleat Gamester* (1674) in *Games and Gamesters of the Restoration*, ed. Cyril Hughes Hartmann (London: Routledge, 1930), xx-114 (xxi). Sections of *The Compleat Gamester* are lifted almost verbatim from John Cotgrave's *Wits interpreter, The English Parnassus* (London, printed for N. Brooke, 1655).
[2] Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part 1*, ed. David Scott Kastan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002).
[3] The *OED* gives 'A gambling game with two dice' as the first definition of 'hazard', *n.* and *adj*.
[4] See Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 82-3.
[5] Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, ed. T.W. Craik [1995] (London: Bloomsbury, 2009): 'We will in France, by God's grace, play a set / Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard' (1.2.263-4).
[6] M.M. Mahood, *Shakespeare's Wordplay* (London: Routledge, 1957), 9.

terminology offers up a *lingua franca* which ignites wider resonances. Imagery of the allure and danger of gaming and its stakes is never far away and we will see how, in order to show themselves gamesters, our protagonists need, in the words of one of Robert Daborne's pirates, 'bellies full of hazard'.[7]

Today we are so accustomed to gaming metaphors that they have become almost invisible or 'silent'. Speech formulas such as 'restacking the deck' or 'shuffling the pack', 'playing by the rules' or 'playing one's cards close to one's chest', 'trump cards', 'wild cards', 'aces up one's sleeve', 'geopolitical pawns', 'political dice', and 'reaching the endgame' are part of our everyday language. As George Lakoff and Mark Johnson state, 'we structure our experience consciously and unconsciously by means of metaphor', and these metaphors shape our understanding of life as a competition.[8] Such familiarity perhaps explains the limited academic analysis of the role of game metaphors in the drama of the early modern period, but this needs to be addressed because it was a time when the idiom was novel, exciting and, by any standards, profuse. The very etymology of stage plays, *Ludi Scaenici*, and the requirement for 'players' in both plays and games, invites closer examination. Moreover, the playhouse was frequently linked with gaming, particularly dicing, in declamatory tracts of the period, with both equally condemned. Ironically it is from the attempts at their prohibition that we first learn of games and, in consequence, at the most basic level, reference to a game is a clear signal of error, wrong-doing or over-reaching of some kind. This thesis examines the game references in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, particularly as illustrated in staged scenes of gaming, and finds them to be sophisticated syntheses of emblem and dramatic device. It argues that games, owing to their origins, inherent symbolism and physical phenomena (such as the 'faces' and 'hearts' of playing-cards) present allegories of life capable of being exploited by dramatists through their transposition on to characters and events. Gaming pieces metamorphose into people and vice-versa as characters slip seamlessly between life and game. The thesis will demonstrate the multivalence of games and show that the particular choice of game is deliberate and its position in and contribution to the plot progression highly significant.

The ludic and competitive milieu of the early modern period cannot be doubted. From courtly after-dinner conversation games, such as the game of 'forming in words a perfect Courtier' described in Baldesar Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528), to bowling and the

[7] Robert Daborne, *A Christian Turned Turk*, in *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*, ed. Daniel J. Vitkus (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 1.17-18.
[8] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 157.

attractions of cock-fighting and bear-baiting, games were everywhere.[9] Table games – dice, cards and the board game, Tables, now known as Backgammon – were played by all ranks and ages and in many cases games became regarded as social accomplishments, or 'citty artes'.[10] Tavern gaming became a regular feature of London life and though England was one of the last of the European nations to be seduced by card-playing, card games became an 'almost essential part of Christmas revelry' and a favourite pastime of master and servant alike.[11] Even Chess, though notable, as H.J.R. Murray states, for 'the completeness of its conquest of the leisured classes', and often labelled a 'royal' game, was, from the Middle Ages, also played by lower social classes.[12] They could purchase cheaper sets made from bone, horse-teeth, or wood, rather than ivory or rock crystal.[13] Even if not played, its premise was widely understood, due, in the main, to medieval 'chess moralities', instructive works which sought to use the chess board and chessmen to allegorize social conditions and communities.[14] It is thought that one of the reasons for the popularity of table games was that they were a by-product of divination, astrology and sacred geometry.[15] Nigel Pennick considers that the many prohibition attempts were 'a tacit recognition that such games were more than mere diversions, having supernatural connotations'.[16] Few people today ponder the reason for the fifty-two card deck, the number of spots or 'pips', as they were termed, of a die (opposite sides always making seven), or the thirty men and twenty-four points of a backgammon board, twelve per 'table'. But none of this is haphazard, symbolising respectively the weeks in a year, the days in a week, the days in a month, the hours in a day and months in a year. Moreover, when Chess and Tables reached southern Europe it was by the names of their pieces – their 'men' – that they were known.[17] Chess, or *scacci*, meant 'chessmen'.[18] Tables, or *tabulae*, meant 'tablemen'. Terms such as the 'home' table (Latin

[9] Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Charles S. Singleton, ed. Daniel Javitch (London: W.W. Norton, 2002), 19, 32.
[10] George Chapman, *All Fooles*, 1.1.219 in *All Fooles and The Gentleman Usher*, ed. Thomas M. Parrott (London: D.C. Heath, 1907).
[11] See W. Gurney Benham, *Playing Cards and their History and Secrets* (Colchester: Ward, Lock, 1931), 10, 26.
[12] H.J.R. Murray, *A History of Chess* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913), 428.
[13] Serina Patterson, 'Introduction: Setting up the Board' in Serina Patterson, ed., *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 2.
[14] The most influential of these was the *Liber de moribus hominum et officiis nobilium ac popularium super ludo scachorum* [*The Book of the Morals of Men and the Duties of Nobles and Commoners, on the Game of Chess*] of Jacobus de Cessolis (second half of the 13th century). See Murray, *Chess*, 529-563.
[15] Nigel Pennick, *Games of the Gods: The Origin of Board Games in Magic and Divination* (London: Rider, 1988), 144.
[16] Ibid, 230.
[17] Murray, *A History of Board-Games other than Chess* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1978), 25.
[18] All names for Chess evolve from the Persian word for king: 'shah'. See Murray, *Chess*, 26.

*domus*) and 'face cards' reinforced the human parallel. Connecting this personification of the pieces with the symbolism it becomes clear how games were considered microcosms of our world, and why the analogy came to be exploited by poets and preachers alike. We can thus understand the Rabelaisian concept of a living Chess ballet, as described in *Les Faicts et dicts héroiques du bon Pantagruel* [*Heroic deeds and sayings of the great Pantagruel*].[19] This notion of 'living games' was ingrained in the early modern psyche.

The pervasiveness of this ludic culture is reflected in the drama. In 1947 Paul Brewster produced an alphabetical list of no fewer than sixty-three games and sports mentioned in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature, most of them in plays. Allusions range from 'the courtly Quintain to the more rustic More Sacks to the Mill, card games and marble games, hiding games and games of chase'.[20] Commenting on this ubiquity, he writes that 'Hardly one of the plays written during the period fails to allude to at least one game or diversion; most of them mention several'.[21] Brewster's survey underpins appendices to this thesis, but, supplementing his research, my count indicates that over eighty of the extant plays of the Elizabethan and Jacobean playhouse mention specific games, with twenty-four dramatizing the setting up or actual progress of a game of dice, cards, Tables or Chess, with characters on stage actively involved in the pursuit. It is on a selection from this subset that I focus, and henceforth I refer to them as 'inset games'. Sixty-five years ago the phenomenon seems to have attracted some interest. In 1953 and 1954 journal contributions appeared by Joseph McCullen and Delmar Solem respectively. McCullen's survey of seventeen of these plays written between 1550 and 1635 states that 'games of cards, chess, dice and backgammon […] are employed for both serious and comic effects' and 'became a noteworthy dramatic convention'.[22] He makes the salient observation that 'Characters are delineated as they move chessmen or shuffle cards and comment on them in a revelatory manner'.[23] Solem provides a brief explanation of the playing method of Tables and its peculiar terms, 'hitting a blot' and 'bearing', and that of the dice games Hazard and Mumchance, and card games Primero and Gleek; he then questions whether any dramatic or staging conventions can be identified and concludes that 'Chess is used conventionally with

[19] François Rabelais, 'Le cinquiesme et dernier livre des faicts et dicts héroiques du bon Pantagruel', chapitres 23-24, *François Rabelais: Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Mireille Huchon ([Paris]: Editions Gallimard, 1994).
[20] Paul G. Brewster, 'Games and Sports in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Literature*', Western Folklore*, 6/2 (1947), 143-156 (143).
[21] Ibid, 143.
[22] Joseph T. McCullen, Jr, 'The Use of Parlor and Tavern Games in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Drama', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 14 (1953), 7-14 (7).
[23] Ibid, 14.

love scenes', and 'Dicing accompanies gambling, and the participants conventionally represent the gentlemen of the town, the social norm'.[24]

Since these surveys there has been little in-depth appreciation of this 'dramatic convention', although scholars now appear to be drawn to its closer examination. Jean-Claude Mailhol has argued that dice are a particularly recurrent feature in domestic tragedy where the game motif decks itself with 'une dimension esthétique' absent in the early moralities.[25] Like Mailhol, Kevin Chovanec discusses *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608) in his work on the evocation of the occult in references to dice. Chovanec writes in a very recent collection of essays on game playing in art and literature which aims to show how games, 'played, written about, illustrated, and collected functioned as metaphors for a host of broader cultural issues'.[26] Published as my work neared completion, the essays also examine the wagers in Shakespeare's plays, and some outdoor games such as Prisoner's Base and tennis, but the chief focus is the representation of games in the visual arts, reflecting the art history background of its editor, Robin O'Bryan. A doctoral thesis by Daniel Timbrell argues that games contained analogies of conquest, echoing the values of a patriarchal society, and Lisa Martinez Lajous explores the cultural practice of profiting from chance, as reflected in both drama and historical events.[27] Gina Bloom is the most active scholar working in this field today. Her discussion of the game scenes in *Arden of Faversham* and *A Woman Killed with Kindness* was published in 2012 and 2013 and on Chess in *The Tempest* in 2016.[28] Late in the course of my own enquiry, in summer 2018, these became part of Bloom's own book, *Gaming the Stage: Playable Media and the Rise of English Commercial Theatre*, in which she argues that 'gamification enabled the early modern commercial stage to compete with

[24] Delmar E. Solem, 'Some Elizabethan Game Scenes', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 6/1 (1954), 15-21 (21).
[25] Jean-Claude Mailhol, 'L'Esthétique du jeu cruel dans la tragédie domestique élisabéthaine et jacobéenne', *Actes des congrès de la Société Française Shakespeare*, 23 (2005), 91-107 (107).
[26] Kevin Chovanec, '"Now if the devil have bones, / These dice are made of his": Dice Games on the English Stage in the Seventeenth Century' in Robin O'Bryan, ed., *Games and Game Playing in European Art and Literature, 16th-17th Centuries* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019) [accessed via Proquest Ebook Central 15 May 2019].
[27] Daniel Paul Timbrell, '"When I am in game, I am furious": Gaming and Sexual Conquest in Early Modern Drama' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Southern Queensland, 2010); Lisa Martinez Lajous, 'Playing for Profit: The Legitimacy of Gaming and the Early Modern Theater' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2007).
[28] Gina Bloom, 'Games', *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. Henry S. Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 189-211; '"My feet see better than my eyes": Spatial Mastery and the Game of Masculinity in *Arden of Faversham*'s Amphitheatre', *Theatre Survey*, 53/1 (2012), 5-28; 'Time to Cheat: Chess and *The Tempest*'s Performative History of Dynastic Marriage', *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment: Gender, Sexuality and Race*, ed. Valerie Traub (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 419-434.

more overtly interactive forms of entertainment, such as blood sports and festive games'.[29] As her title indicates, she considers theatre 'playable media', a term she explains, borrowed from games studies scholar Noah Wardrip-Fruin, who employs it, as she does, 'to highlight the crucial role of audience-users in defining what counts as a game'.[30] Her investigations come 'full circle' in her Epilogue on computer gaming, which she considers is 'deeply indebted to theatrical concepts'.[31] Bloom approaches the topic from the viewpoint of participatory spectatorship and looks at scenes of cards, Backgammon and Chess but does not consider dicing. She analyses half a dozen scenes of gameplay and suggests that these 'cameo appearances of games onstage […] foreground so elegantly how plays engage spectators by cuing their desire to play', vicariously.[32] Her argument is that the formal structure of a game develops particular competencies in a game's players and spectators, but when such games were staged in theatres, audiences, being at some distance, could not participate in ways to which they were accustomed. She feels that by preventing spectators from seeing the actual board, or cards, such scenes 'encourage audiences to *know by feeling*', experiencing the game 'in ways that differ considerably from the game's onstage players'.[33] As I do, she finds games occurring at climactic moments, and notes how, in the case of *Two Angry Women of Abington*, the whole play becomes a game. She reasons that 'theater – like friendship, courtship, and marriage – can be envisioned as a game of imperfect information played between its producers (dramatists, actors, etc.) and audiences'.[34]

In my view the visual aspect is of secondary importance and for our vicarious play all we need to know is supplied by the dialogue. To appreciate fully how games work, therefore, it is necessary to spend time connecting the language in the plot and the terminology of gaming. Close readings repay attention as seemingly innocuous references yield intriguing insights. In terms of the published editions of plays, with the exception of the Chess games in *The Tempest* (1611), *Women Beware Women* (1621) and particularly *A Game at Chess* (1624), on which there is extensive criticism, there is a distinct lacuna in respect of any meaningful discussion on games and their relevance. Considerably more attention is paid, for

[29] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*: *Playable Media and the Rise of English Commercial Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 146. Bloom is also co-editing, with Tom Bishop and Erika Lin, a forthcoming volume of essays, *Games and Early Modern Drama*. They have received all the contributions to be included and once their Introduction is complete they will be trying to secure a publishing contract (information obtained from personal correspondence with Gina Bloom [17- 19/5/2019]).
[30] Ibid, 6.
[31] Ibid, 21.
[32] Ibid, 6.
[33] Ibid, 7, 8.
[34] Ibid, 18.

instance, to animal, hunting or religious imagery. Editorial glosses seldom fail to comment that a game's name, or its terminology, is exploited for sexual innuendo, and sometimes brief information is offered about a particular game, citing the *OED* or David Parlett, but it is more usual for the glosses to mention merely that the game was very fashionable.[35] Even the most recent editor of *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603), Margaret Kidnie, whilst clearly adding to scholarship in other areas, pays little attention to the lengthy scene of card-play.[36] Her glosses in relation to the scene in which the Frankfords and their guests sit down after the evening meal and prepare to play at cards, although more extensive than some, contain errors and do not add substantially to previous editorial information or Keith Sturgess's comment, which she cites, that:

> The card game is a masterpiece of sustained metaphor as the fact and proof of Anne's infidelity are conveyed to Frankford through the unerring choice by each character of the meaningful pun. The pairing of Wendoll and Anne against Frankford is an image of the larger truth.[37]

The purpose of games in what Sturgess calls a 'theatrically brilliant scene' has been under-appreciated by all previous commentators, as I will show in this study.[38] Similarly, the significance of the identification of Primero, a character in Thomas Middleton's *Your Five Gallants* (1607), with one of the most popular card games of the era has been insufficiently recognised. Ralph Alan Cohen's gloss relates that the gallant is 'named after a popular card game' yet while he notes that 'the gallants and their whores move in pairs to centre stage' he does not connect this dramaturgy to the game.[39] Indeed the assumption appears to be that scenes of gaming are present only to add topical colour or ludic emphasis – purposes they serve well it is true; and no doubt audiences were greatly entertained by the dramatization of such excesses of the day as a gallant dicer running out of money and reduced to staking his rapier, hangers, beaver hat, doublet and britches, as occurs in this play.

Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens,* a seminal work on the play-element in culture, demonstrates that 'the great archetypal activities of human society are all permeated with play from the start', albeit with a sometimes 'hazy border between play and seriousness'.[40] City comedy, satirical drama which is arguably also at an intersection of play and

[35] David Parlett, *The Oxford Guide to Card Games* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
[36] Margaret Jane Kidnie, ed., *A Woman Killed with Kindness by Thomas Heywood* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).
[37] Ibid, 203, citing *Three Elizabethan Domestic Tragedies*, ed. Keith Sturgess (London: Penguin, 2012), 45.
[38] Sturgess, ed., *Three Elizabethan Domestic Tragedies*, 45.
[39] Ralph Alan Cohen, ed., *Your Five Gallants* in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 594-636 (595).
[40] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1950), 4.

seriousness, often includes scenes set in tavern gaming rooms and the genre features prominently in my work. Researching the games played in early modern England reveals the creative impetus they provide and advances the study of the period's dramaturgy. Amongst the substantial scholarship on city comedy, Alexander Leggatt's consideration of the properties that characters bring on to the stage gets closest to describing the role of games and gaming paraphernalia, stating that they 'do not just create an ambience […] but help to point the direction of the story'.[41] Thus John Cooke's *Greene's Tu Quoque* (1611) 'uses tennis rackets, tobacco pipes, cards, dice and candles to establish a life of debauchery in visual terms', and the setting up of the card-table in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* signals 'the comfortable routine of the house, whose order will be shattered by the discovery of Anne Frankford's adultery'.[42] Whilst both statements are perceptive, by delving deeper we can see how games illuminate the wider contests and themes, overlapping with other cultural discourses and how they directly influence the plot. In Middleton's *Michaelmas Term* (1604), for instance, a play with the serious contest of the law as its underlying theme, gaming acts as a subsidiary leitmotif to law. In a study of games and play in Miguel de Cervantes, Michael Scham explains that in the prologue to *Novelas ejemplares* (1613) Cervantes invites readers to partake in his stories as players in a game.[43] As his title, *Lector Ludens*, indicates, Scham considers that 'skilful reading […] takes on the quality of contest and spectacle'.[44] Early modern dramatists clearly expected active imagination from their audiences. In the Prologue to *King Henry V* (1599) the Chorus asks us to imagine 'a kingdom for a stage, princes to act' (Prol. 3), and to:

> Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts.
> Into a thousand parts divide one man
> And make imaginary puissance.
> Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
> Printing their proud hoofs i'th' receiving earth.
> For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings. (Prol. 23-8)

Louis Montrose suggests that it is this Prologue with its insistence on the audience's imagination that makes 'perhaps the most explicit Shakespearean appeal to the contractual relationship between playwright, players, and audience in the production of theatrical

[41] Alexander Leggatt, *Jacobean Public Theatre* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1992), 57. Though none directly refers to games, see also, *inter alia*: Brian Gibbons, *Jacobean City Comedy* (London: Methuen, 1978), Theodore Leinwand, *The City Staged* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986) and Anthony Covatta, *Thomas Middleton's City Comedies* (New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1973).
[42] Leggatt, *Jacobean Public Theatre*, 57.
[43] Michael Scham, *Lector Ludens: The Representation of Games and Play in Cervantes* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 3.
[44] Ibid, 87.

illusion'.[45] We need to be not just imaginative but *ludic* readers and play along. Such a mode of reading applies across genres, as will be seen from the tragedies I include.

It stands to reason that in order to understand as contemporary playgoers did, and to discover why games feature so prominently in the dramatic canon, we need to research the games played in early modern England. *Taylor's Motto: et habeo, et careo, et curo* (1621) [*I have, I want, I care*], a poem written by the waterman-poet, John Taylor, has been a magnet for game researchers. A section of this long autobiographical poem in which the author claims to pity 'A Prodigall' with swarms of friends 'Perswading him, that giue, & spend, & lend / Were vertues which on Gentry doe depend', fortuitously provides an unofficial register of the sheer volume of games at which a youth might fling his money (games emphasised in bold): [46]

> The Prodigals estate, like to a flux,
> The Mercer, Draper, and the Silkman sucks:
> The Taylor, Millainer, Dogs, Drab and **Dice**,
> **Trey-trip**, or **Passage,** or The most at thrice;
> At **Irish, Tick-tack, Doublets, Draughts** or **Chesse**,
> He flings his money free with carelessnesse:
> At **Nouum**, **Mumchanc**e, mischance, (chuse ye which)
> At **One and thirty**, or at **Poore and rich**,
> **Ruffe, slam, Trump, nody, whisk, hole, Sant, Newcut**.
> Vnto the keeping of foure Knaues he'le put
> His whole estate, at **Loadum**, or at **Gleeke**
> At **Tickle-me-quickly**, he's a merry Greeke,
> At **Primefisto, Post and payre, Primero,**
> **Maw**, **Whip-her-ginny**, he's a lib'rall *Hero*;
> At **My-sow-pigg'd**, and (Reader neuer doubt ye,
> He's skil'd in all games, except) Looke about ye.
> **Bowles**, **shoue-groate**, **tennis**, no game comes amis,
> His purse a nurse for any body is.[47]

Many of these games feature in the plays I consider but because some no longer exist, have evolved or changed name, their contemporary signification has slipped out of focus and understanding the specific methodology and symbolism of games is critical to recognising their role in these plays. Often a gaming reference derives from a source text and is exploited. More frequently the insertion of a game is a dramatist's original invention. His choice is never random; I have found there to be a marked congruence between the form of the game

[45] Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 82.
[46] John Taylor, *Taylor's Motto: et habeo, et careo, et curo* (London, printed for IT & HG, 1621), D3$^{r}$. This list is, however, very small in comparison with Rabelais's list of over two hundred games played by his hero during his youth in *La vie très horrificque du Grand Gargantua Père de Pantagruel*, chapitre 22, *François Rabelais: Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Huchon, 58-63.
[47] Taylor, *Taylor's Motto*, D4$^{r}$.

and the action of the play. Moreover each type of game – even each specific named card game – serves a metaphoric function, according to its type, terminology and methodology, all of which is skilfully harnessed. The game's placement in the play is also not arbitrary, whether in the opening scene, the denouement or at a moment of crisis. Nor is its purpose confined to the single scene of its dramatization, for what appears to be a self-contained, purely theatrical event is intricately woven into the fabric of the plot, often with the game epitomising the main theme. And, of course, where there is a game there is a contest and a stake. As Huizinga points out:

> Every game has its stake. It can be of material or symbolical value, but also ideal. The stake can be a gold cup or a jewel or a king's daughter or a shilling; [or] the life of the player.[48]

Through close textual analysis of a variety of genres of play I will show the veracity of this observation, and how the stakes are similarly varied and vividly illustrated as a plot or character tracks the template provided by a game. In order to, necessarily, limit the number of types of games discussed, I concentrate on the four main table games – Dice, Cards, Tables and Chess. Chess features in plays towards the end of my period, c. 1560 – 1624, and, with Middleton's anomalous *A Game at Chess* acting as a natural finishing-post, I have made Chess the subject of my final chapter and begin at the other end of the skill spectrum with chance-determined Dice. This is not a chronological survey, however, but rather a classification, or 'taxonomy' of the metaphoric implications of games, hence a chapter on each game type. The selected plays are those which feature a dramatized enactment of the particular game type as part of the plot and which best illustrate the integral role of games, and how dramatists deploy them in a synthesis of plot device and emblem, with the chapter generally ending with the most striking example.

Chapter 1 provides a cultural survey of the significance of games in early modern England, including the historical beginnings and symbolism of games, their central importance to humanity and the relationship between gaming and risk theory that developed over the course of the seventeenth century. I will show the pivotal role of the court in gaming and the wide popularity of games from parlour to pulpit, and will set out my primary sources on gaming, which are shown to be diverse. An overview of the theatrical landscape draws on some of the plays I later examine in detail, and also treats some of the plays listed in appendices to which I am not able to give premium space later. Appendix A lists the inset

[48] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 50.

games in chronological order and Appendix B, by dramatist, illustrates the volume of game metaphors employed.

Dice and dicing, the paradigmatic contract with chance, are the focus of Chapter 2. Dicing is synonymous with gaming (now more usually called gambling) and levels of bets were frequently high. There are a number of references to patrimonies lost at dice, summed up by Witgood's admission in Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1605): 'The cause of youth's undoing: game. / Chiefly dice, those true outlanders' (5.2.189-90).[49] As a late seventeenth century pamphlet vividly records, 'Gaming is an enchanting Witchery', the gamester is 'either lifted up to the top of mad joy with success; or plung'd to the bottom of despair by misfortune; alwaies in extreams, alwaies in a storm'. There are only 'a few casts at Dice, betwixt a Person of Fortune […] and a Beggar'.[50] Dicing performs particularly well as an emblem of the vices of prodigality, mendacity and greed. In addition, all the plays in which dice games occur follow a pattern of swift and unexpected reversal of fortune in the final twist of the plot, reflecting the sudden change from winner to loser likely to befall the dicing gamester in this zero-sum contest. My chosen texts include two city comedies, *Michaelmas Term* and Thomas Heywood's *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon* (1604), both of which feature an early dicing scene. In the competitive economy of *Michaelmas Term* with its legal backdrop, Quomodo's instructions to his servants or 'spirits', in his game-plan to trick Easy into financial ruin, are to 'flatter, dice and brothel to him' (1.2.125-26). Although the cunning draper believes he has won the citizen-versus-gentry game, in an unexpected reversal of expectations Easy regains the deeds to his land as the play ends. Heywood's play opens with Young Chartley persuading his fellow gamesters to a second game of dice and winning. The game requires players to throw 'dubblets', and it transpires that doubles is a feature of the plot in more ways than one, including two women called 'Luce'. The archetypal wild son, Chartley has a past which eventually catches up with his similarly rakish present and the play closes with a scene which appears to mimic a dice game in its dramaturgy and in which Chartley gets his comeuppance. I will also examine the game of Mumchance in Thomas Kyd's tragedy, *Soliman and Perseda* (1592). A distinguishing feature of Mumchance is that players cannot speak; they must remain 'mum'. Contrived mummery enables Erastus to win back the carcenet Perseda gave him, but disguise, silence and the resulting 'blindness' of the opposite party become a feature of the entire play.

[49] Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, ed. Valerie Wayne in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, 373-413.
[50] Cotton (published under the pseudonym 'Leathermore', *The Nicker Nicked: OR The Cheats of Gaming Discovered* (London, 1669), 3, 4 ($A2^r$, $A2^v$). *The Compleat Gamester* expands the text of this pamphlet.

Chapter 3 examines plays featuring card games: comedies *Your Five Gallants* and *Greene's Tu Quoque,* and the domestic tragedy, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. Here cards frequently represent people and the characteristics of the particular games are transposed on to events and relationships. Although today we pay little attention to the epithets 'coat cards' or 'face cards', as the court cards were known even then, the feature provides a ready human analogy. But in fact *all* cards have faces – we talk of placing cards 'face down' and in this position all cards are identical. Turning over or picking up to reveal a card's 'face' is revelatory and the key to most card games.[51] This human element is traceable in some distinctively lifelike (and suggestive) names, such as 'My Ladies Hole', 'Laugh and Lie Down', and 'Ruff and Honours'. Conversely games provide 'portraits' of people. The hearts suit offers an obvious and useful emblem of the human heart – in perhaps a more nuanced way than the heart/hart pun in hunting imagery – and card games tend to be used, therefore, in matters of the heart, or the game of love, and we will see the motif particularly prevalent in *A Woman Killed with Kindness.* The card game at which the gallants play in John Cooke's *Greene's Tu Quoque* is Gleek, which requires a fixed number of three players, particularly apt for this play of triangular relationships which ends in three marriages. An academic play four years later refers to three weddings on one day as a 'gleeke of Marriages', perhaps borrowing from Cooke and showing that the deployment of Gleek in Cooke's play was indeed deliberate.[52] A card game as such is not played in *Your Five Gallants* (though a dice game is), but instead a character is named after one of the most popular card games of the period and, as I will show, the characteristics and methodology of this poker prototype are mirrored in the plot.

In Chapter 4 we reach the board game known in the period as 'Tables', a classic example of a 'race' game. As detailed in Chapter 1, the game's symbolism is woven into the patterning of the board, the twelve 'points', as the triangles on each table are named, representing the number of months in the year and the number of tablemen matching that of days in a month. With a mix of chance, strategy and set-backs it can be seen to represent life's journey and the vagaries of fate. In a further layer of metaphoric implication, a quartered game board has a symbolism of its own and is understood to represent the human body. Terms used in Tables, particularly 'bearing', and the sexual imagery conjured by its points and pieces known as 'men', offered opportunities for bawdy that are rarely wasted,

[51] Parlett, *Oxford Guide,* 15.
[52] Thomas Tomkis, *Albumazar* (1615), ed. Hugh G. Dick (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1944), 4.10.2142.

with the board reimagined as the female body over which 'men' travel. This two-person game, with players travelling in opposite directions, is used as a metaphor of the 'game' between the sexes. By restoring at least some of this lost significance, and applying a ludic reading, I aim to bring the resulting insights to bear on the Tables game which opens Henry Porter's *Two Angry Women of Abington* (1598) and that which ends the life of Thomas Arden in the anonymous *Arden of Faversham* (1592). I read these scenes not as stand-alone vignettes but as games that can be seen to stretch across the whole play, with the characters' action following the pattern, if not the rules, of the game.

The final chapter is on Chess. A game of skill and one of the oldest board games, Chess has a long history in simile, metaphor and word-play. The occurrences in medieval literature that Murray describes show how the game was played by both men and women: play was even condoned in a woman's chamber and as a result of this intimacy Chess became emblematic of secret encounters and the chivalric game of love.[53] By extension, coupled with its origin as a game of war, it became an emblem of conquest, sometimes predatory and brutal, whether, bodily, spiritual or political. I examine how the flirtatious game of Chess between Ferdinand and Miranda in *The Tempest* is subtly woven into the play's wider political dimension. The same play on metaphor occurs in John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *The Spanish Curate* (1622), where the placement of the sub-plot's Chess game and Leandro's 'triall' (attempted seduction) of Amaranta is deliberately juxtaposed with the main 'game' or contest of the play which comes to a head in a scene in a court of law, thereby connecting the two agonistic contests. In Middleton's first use of the Chess metaphor in *Women Beware Women*, Livia's emblematic commentary during her Chess game with Leantio's Mother, and how it mirrors the Duke's simultaneous upper stage rape of Bianca, is well documented. I suggest too that the motif of 'blind mate' (2.2.391) resonates outwards, reflecting more general moral blindness, with the final marriage masque as the bizarre endgame and checkmate. The chapter closes with *A Game at Chess.* The unprecedented nine-day run of this play, to which extraordinary numbers of spectators were drawn, and its audacious impersonation of living kings and public figures, provoked 'more immediate commentary than any other play, masque or pageant of its age'.[54] The game of international politics this game of Chess represents centres around what contemporary parlance called 'The Spanish Match', the proposed dynastic marriage between Prince Charles and the Infanta

[53] Murray, *Chess,* 436.
[54] Gary Taylor, ed., *A Game At Chess (An Early Form*) in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, 1773-1824 (1773).

Maria, sister of Spain's Felipe IV.[55] Events, personages, religions and morals are allegorised in these politics of black and white, with the chess board representing two symmetrical kingdoms. No other play better (and so obviously) illustrates the importance of the game/life metaphor, but as this thesis argues the extent and significance of games in early modern drama is much greater than is currently appreciated.

As Ludwig Wittgenstein states, one learns the game by watching how others play it.[56] So I invite you into a world of geometric boards, playing cards with 'faces' and dice made of cubes of bone with black 'eyes' to explore with me these living games.

[55] See Glyn Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta: The Cultural Politics of the Spanish Match* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003); Alexander Samson, ed., *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles's Journey to Madrid, 1623* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

[56] 'Man lernt das Spiel, indem man zusieht, wie andere es spielen': Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, 54, cited in Rieke Trimcev, *Politik als Spiel: Zur Geschichte einer Kontingenzmetapher im politischen Denken des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2018), 105.

# One | GAMES IN EARLY MODERN CULTURE

The human passion for games began thousands of years ago and the oldest gaming instruments are dice.[1] Once dice had been invented the next step, as Oswald Jacoby and John Crawford explain, 'was to use them to move game pieces around a game layout'.[2] Drawings on the walls of ancient Egyptian temples and tomb chambers and on vases show us people playing them, and it is thanks to the ancient custom in some countries of burying a man with his possessions 'for use in his life after death' that we have 'dateable evidence for the early existence of board-games'.[3] As H.J.R. Murray states, all known board-games fall into well-defined groups that still typically represent in microcosm 'the early activities and occupations of man – the battle, the siege or hunt, the race, alignment, arrangement, and counting'.[4] We are not without plentiful histories of board games and playing cards, for games have long been of interest to anthropologists, ethnologists, philologists and folklorists. As early as 1801 Joseph Strutt declared that 'in order to form a just estimation of the character of any particular people, it is absolutely necessary to investigate the sports and pastimes most generally prevalent among them'.[5] But with some important archaeological discoveries only being made in the twentieth century, it is easy to see why the study of games has been reignited and why there has been more recent interest from sociologists and game theorists. The core thesis of Johan Huizinga's seminal work, *Homo Ludens*, is that playing games is a basic human activity.[6] Through etymology and historical research, Huizinga finds the 'play-factor' to be a common denominator in aspects of life we might not immediately associate with games, such as religion, the law-court and war, and he argues that 'civilisation arises and unfolds in and as play'.[7] He describes a game as something taking place within a confined, temporary world, whether it is 'the arena, the card-table, the magic circle, the temple, the stage, the screen, the tennis court, the court of justice, etc.', and where special rules apply.[8]

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[1] Gerda Reith, *The Age of Chance* (London: Routledge, 1999), 45.
[2] Oswald Jacoby and John R. Crawford, *The Backgammon Book* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan 1970), 7.
[3] Murray, *Board-Games*, 2. The most ancient example of a gaming board and accompanying pieces was discovered during excavation of a cemetery of the pre-dynastic period (4000-3500 BC) at El-Mushasna, Upper Egypt, 12.
[4] Murray, *Board-Games*, 4.
[5] Joseph Strutt, *Glig-Gamea Angel Deod, or The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1801), i.
[6] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950; originally published in German in 1944).
[7] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens,* 206 and Foreword respectively.
[8] Ibid, 10.

Elliott Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith consider that games are central to 'man's continuing attempt to understand himself and the world in which he lives'.[9]

It was not until the thirteenth century that European writers began to describe their regional games, requiring historians to rely largely on nomenclature to trace the likely origin of games and the path of their arrival in the west. Often the first evidence of games comes from medieval prohibitions or restrictions on laying bets.[10] Detailing the centuries of legislation even in England alone is beyond the scope of this thesis but it can be stated that every Tudor monarch and James Stuart officially opposed games of chance and sought to prohibit them, especially among society's lower ranks. In the sixteenth century the proliferation, apparently 'daily', of 'many and sundry new and crafty Games and Plays' was considered to be causing 'the Decay of Archery', the backbone of England's military strength.[11] This was an important factor in prohibition attempts and reinforced the moral and religious objections to games, and particularly gaming. In 1541 a bill was passed 'For the maintaining Artillery and Debarring unlawful Games', known as 'The Unlawful Games Act'.[12] It forbade anyone of any rank from keeping a 'common' gaming house for 'Gain, Lucre or Living' and gave a detailed list of the lower ranks, including artificer, craftsman, apprentice, servant or journeyman, as well as mariners, fishermen and watermen, who were forbidden to 'play at the Tables, Tennis, Dice, Cards, Bowls, Clash, coyting, Logating, or any other unlawful Game out of Christmas'.[13] Financial penalties for either infraction were steep. To keep abreast of the 'daily' introduction of new games, prohibition covered 'any other new unlawful Game hereafter to be invented, found, had or made'.[14] As we will note later, despite prosecutions nothing could temper the universal appeal of games of chance and the lure of opportunity for profit.

## Games and Money

Notwithstanding the negative arguments of rulers and religious leaders, and the fulminations of polemicists outraged by the vices that gaming engendered, such as swearing, stealing and

[9] Elliott M. Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Study of Games* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 1971), 26.
[10] See Murray, *Board-Games*, 2; Parlett, *Oxford Guide*, 36-37; Reith, *Age of Chance*, 53.
[11] *The Statutes at Large, from the First Year of King Edward the Fourth to the End of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, Volume the Second, Anno tricesimo tertio Henrici VIII, Cap. IX. I, 307 (London, printed for Mark Basket, 1770).
[12] Ibid, 307.
[13] Ibid, 309 (Cap. IX. XI, XVI), 309.
[14] Ibid, XI, 309.

brawling, before illustrating how my research brings new insights to early modern drama I would like to highlight the positive impact of games, not merely as entertainment and cultural interaction, but as instruments for important discoveries that continue to affect our lives.

The story starts with dice and their role in decision-making. Developing perhaps from prehistoric tally or counting stones, early dice were bones, specifically the huckle-bone or *astragalus* of animals.[15] Pleasant to handle, *astragali* were tetrahedral – the bones had only four sides on which they could rest, the other two being rounded. See figure below:

**Figure 1: Three *astragali* or bone gaming pieces from c. 1550-1458 BC, Thebes, Upper Egypt, excavated 1915-16. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 16.10.505a-c.**

Nigel Pennick states that the ancient uses of these dice were various: to allot shares from an inheritance, to elect officials, and for divination.[16] The roll of the dice 'was not seen as a random, chance event, but as controlled by and accessing the will of the gods', and this belief transcended religious barriers, existing in both Pagan and Christian traditions.[17] As Pennick explains, 'the original use of dice in divination is embedded in the word *die* and its plural, which come from the Low Latin *dadus* meaning "*given*", that is "given by the gods"'.[18]

[15] The huckle-bone or *astragalus* is a bone in the heel of hooved animals, above the *talus*. It is often mistakenly called the knuckle-bone. See F.N. David, *Games, Gods and Gambling* (London: Charles Griffin, 1962), 2.
[16] Pennick, *Games of the Gods*, 31.
[17] Ibid, 32. In Greek mythology Athene was first credited with the invention of divinatory dice and Poseidon, Zeus and Hades divided the world between them in a dice game. Robert Graves, ed. *The Greek Myths* (London: Penguin, 1955), 43; Reith, *Age of Chance*, 14.
[18] Pennick, *Games of the Gods*, 32. See also *OED* die, *n,*$^{i}$ Etymology: 'Latin *datum*, subst. use of *datus*, *datum* "given", past participle of *dare* to give. It is inferred that, in late popular Latin, *datum* was taken in the sense "that which is given or decreed (sc. by lot or fortune)", and was so applied to the dice by which this was determined'.

Important decisions were made, therefore, on the cast of a die, and dice played a part in the allocation of land. Indeed, 'The word "allotment" and a "lot" of land retain the old meaning of a piece of land whose ownership or leasehold has been selected by drawing lots'.[19] The later use of *astragali* for moving pieces along a track or board is also rooted in divination. A track, marked out with fifty-eight holes with the Egyptian Shen sign at its apex, can be seen on one of the earliest board-games, named 'Hounds and Jackals' by excavators.[20] Two of the holes are marked with the Nefer hieroglyph, the symbol for 'good', and four others are linked by curved lines. It is thought that the game operated much as today's Snakes and Ladders, a primitive form of backgammon.[21] See figure below.

**Figure 2: Game of Hounds and Jackals, c. 1814-1805 B.C. (Ebony and ivory). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 26.7.1287a-k.**

Superstition and mysticism still surround dice in the seventeenth century as we will see in the next chapter. Researchers cannot be sure when 'gaming', as distinct from 'game-playing', developed. F.N. David believes that the introduction of bets, and thus the opportunity for gain, stemmed 'from the wager and the wager from the drawing of lots', and thus both games and gaming have roots in religion and divination.[22]

[19] Pennick, *Games of the Gods*, 343.
[20] Excavated by Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon in 1910 from a tomb in Thebes, Upper Egypt.
[21] Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 26.7.1287a-k.
[22] David, *Games, Gods and Gambling*, 7.

It was in dice games that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century mathematicians and scientists found a natural laboratory and a means to defy the gods with the discovery of probability. As Gerda Reith states:

> Just as in earlier times games of chance had functioned as a stage upon which the favours of the gods were enacted, in the seventeenth century gambling games once again acted as a stage upon which this time scientific, rather than sacred, dramas were carried out.[23]

Girolamo Cardano, a mathematican and physician, whose early work on algebra, *Ars Magna*, appeared in 1545, just at the time that 'Copernicus was publishing his discoveries of the planetary system and Vesalius was producing his treatise on anatomy', was also a compulsive gambler.[24] According to his autobiography he played dice, cards and Chess, using his gaming experience to work on the calculation of dice throws, and writing what Peter Bernstein considers was the first serious analysis of games of chance.[25] His *Liber de Ludo Aleae* [*Book on Games of Chance*], focusing on games of dice, tables and cards, was written c. 1565 (although it did not appear in print until 1663).[26] It is thought that neither Cardano nor Galileo, the latter born the same year as Shakespeare and who also wrote on the cast of several dice and the likelihood of certain combinations, realized what they had within their grasp.[27] The breakthrough was eventually made in 1654 when the French mathematician Blaise Pascal was tasked by the Chevalier de Méré with solving the puzzle of how to divide the stakes of an unfinished game of chance between two players when one of them is ahead. Pascal turned to the lawyer Pierre de Fermat, another brilliant mathematician, for assistance. As Bernstein states:

> The outcome of their collaboration was intellectual dynamite. What might appear to have been a seventeenth-century version of the game of Trivial Pursuit led to the discovery of the theory of probability, the mathematical heart of the concept of risk.[28]

The Pascal-Fermat discovery, taking place as it did in a period of rapidly increasing mercantile capitalism, heralded the transformation of 'a gamblers' toy into a powerful instrument for organizing, interpreting, and applying information' and quantifying risk.[29]

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[23] Reith, *Age of Chance*, 29.
[24] Peter L. Bernstein, *Against the Gods: The Remarkable Story of Risk* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1966), 47.
[25] Ibid, 45-6. Cardano's autobiography was *De Vita Propria* (c. 1574).
[26] Cardano, *Liber de Ludo Aleae* in Øystein Ore, *Cardano The Gambling Scholar* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 180-241.
[27] Galileo Galilei, 'Sopra le Scoperte dei Dadi' [1613-23?], *Opere* (Firenze: Barbera, **8,** 1898), 591-4. Trans. E.H. Thorne in David, *Games, Gods and Gambling*, Appendix 2, 192-5.
[28] Bernstein, *Against the Gods*, 3.
[29] Ibid, 4.

Trading in marine insurance, the earliest form of insurance and then in its infancy, expanded rapidly as the chances of a ship coming home against the chances of loss at sea could be evaluated.[30] In England mortality rates were studied by Edmund Halley to evaluate life-expectancy, and his work 'formed the basis on which the life-insurance industry built up the data base it uses today'.[31]

As Reith states, this advance 'represented the victory of *Scientia* – scientific understanding – over *Fortuna* – luck, fate or some other form of providential belief'.[32] The period of my thesis, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, stood at the cusp of this new information and yet was rooted in the ancient beliefs of Fortune and divine providence to which many people still clung; it was a transformational moment in time. The radical changes taking place, religious and socio-economic, linked to the period's mercantilism, were providing the impetus for the imminent intellectual developments to come, with mathematics made easier by the spread throughout Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of the Hindu-Arabic method of numbering (which displaced cumbersome Roman numerals).[33] And games provided the fulcrum; without their addictive nature and their surge in the sixteenth century, the time may not have been ripe for this curiosity and questioning of chance through games; it was a symbiotic relationship, as Reith says: not only did increased affluence 'allow greater participation in games […] but more important were new notions of making money and the parallel between the dynamic of commercial development and that of games of chance'.[34] This is all reflected in the drama which had developed since the religious Mystery plays of the Middle Ages and Morality plays and interludes of medieval and Tudor theatrical entertainment, although the influences of these forms lingered. As Linda Woodbridge says:

> Money is an issue in many standard plot motifs: arrest and imprisonment for debt, beggary, attempts to marry a wealthy widow, manipulation of wardship for financial gain, the luring in of shop customers by a pretty shop-keeper's wife […] extravagant consumerism that ruins young heirs, gambling as a vice that transfers aristocratic lands into the grasping hands of usurers.[35]

Later we will see examples of this in gaming scenes enacted on stage.

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[30] The earliest English policy of marine insurance is recorded as 1613. Ashton, *History of Gambling*, 276.
[31] Bernstein, *Against the Gods,* 74-88 (88). Halley's work, *Transactions* (1693) was preceded by John Graunt's *Natural and Political Observations made upon the Bills of Mortality* (1662).
[32] Reith, *Age of Chance,* 24.
[33] David, *Games, Gods and Gambling,* 61. The signs plus (+) and minus (-) first appeared in England in 1540, the sign for equality (=) in 1557.
[34] Reith, *Age of Chance,* 59.
[35] Linda Woodbridge, ed., 'Introduction', *Money and the Age of Shakespeare* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 9.

## Games and their Symbolism

Whilst no longer used for divination as such, games were understood for their symbolism. They were microcosms of life and its agonistic elements, and represented, as now, a 'contest for the prize of victory'.[36] We have limited but still solid proof of this symbolism in a medieval document, the Alfonso Manuscript.[37] This remarkable encyclopaedic study, completed in 1283 under the instructions of Alfonso X, King of Castile and Léon, contains a detailed discourse on Chess, Dice, Tables and Morris games, one hundred and forty-four in all, lavishly illustrated in colour and gold leaf. Sonja Musser Golladay observes that Alfonso, known as the 'Wise' King, understood games as 'a series of human and earthly microcosms symbolic of celestial and divine macrocosms', and hoped that 'by studying the patterns in these games' he would discover 'how best to play the game of life using his "seso" or skill, and his lucky number seven'.[38] Although there are several hundred years between this document and the early modern works I examine, we know, particularly from the work of writers such as Spenser, Donne and Shakespeare, that in the early modern period there was significant interest in numerology, the ancient system of philosophising through numbers. This was due in part to the renaissance of interest in classical notions, of which the Pythagorean idea of a universe determinable in mathematical terms was just one, its concepts applied in architecture, heraldry and emblems of the period. Spenser's epic, *The Faerie Queene* (1590), was originally intended to be in twelve books (four groups of three) representing the entire zodiac of life.[39] Within this framework he uses a combination of theological, astronomical and, particularly, Pythagorean number symbolism.[40] The basic concept of numerology was familiar to the wider populace from Biblical number symbolism

[36] Murray, *Board-Games*, 235.
[37] The manuscript has no title, but 'Juegos diuersos de Axedrex, dados y tablas con sus explications, ordenados por mandado del rey don Alonso et sabio' has been added on the fly-leaf. See Murray, *A History of Chess* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913), 568. It is mostly referred to as the Alfonso MS. The other great collections, in Latin, of problems of Chess and Tables, are the thirteenth century French *Bonus Socius* (the Good Companion) and the Italian c. 1300 *Civis Bononiae*. See Murray, *Board-Games*, 2-3.
[38] Sonja Musser Golladay, 'Los Libros de Acedrex Dados e Tablas: Historical, Artistic and Metaphysical Dimensions of Alfonso X's Book of Games' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Arizona, 2007), 1044, 26.
[39] See inter alia Alastair Fowler, *Spenser and the Numbers of Time* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964).
[40] Stemming from the discovery that the intervals in the musical scale were simple fractions of each other, Pythagoras theorised that 'all things have their whole nature modelled upon numbers, and that numbers are the ultimate things in the whole physical universe […] and the whole universe to be a proportion or number', Aristotle *Metaphysics* I v, cited in Isabel Rivers, *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry* (Routledge: London, 1992), 184.

and allusions in sermons. So too was the concept of microcosmic symbolism and the underlying harmony between man and the cosmos.[41]

A unique and only recently available resource which confirms both the importance of games in the early modern period and the contemporary understanding of their inherent symbolism is a seventeenth-century study of games of skill and chance, *Francis Willughby's Book of Games*.[42] Its writer, Francis Willughby, died in 1672 aged just thirty-six and the original folio volume, left unfinished, survived in the family's library through generations. It was microfilmed during the Second World War before books and manuscripts of the estate were transferred to the University of Nottingham where the Keeper of Manuscripts, Dorothy Johnston, came across it.[43] The work is all the more relevant when one understands that Willughby was a natural scientist and one of the early members of the Royal Society, admitted in December 1661. His work on birds and fishes, *Ornithologia* (1676), was published posthumously by his friend and collaborator, John Ray.[44] Willughby's scholarly interests clearly strayed beyond the natural world and it is thought that a 1662 field trip to the south-west of England to collect botanical specimens consolidated his interest in games.[45] As his modern editors state, in compiling his research 'Willughby was not writing to educate the gamester fraternity, but in this as in other enterprises worked as a scientist', and 'The *Book of Games* shows the application of the same principles of systematic observation, description and classification as developed in his work on natural history'.[46] His writing carefully explains the symbolism of games. Under the heading 'Tables' the entry reads:

> The 30 dais in a month or the 30 degrees in a signe determined the number of the table men to bee 30 & the number of the signes or monthes determined the points to bee 12. 30 x 12, the points of one table, or 15 x 24 the points of a pare of tables, = 360, the degrees of a circle or the daies of a yeare that consists of 12 months each having 30 dayes'.[47]

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[41] Ibid, 179.
[42] Francis Willughby (1635-1672), Mi LM 14, Nottingham University Library, published in *Francis Willughby's Book of Games: A Seventeenth-Century Treatise on Sports, Games and Pastimes*, eds. David Cram, Jeffrey L. Forgeng and Dorothy Johnston (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). All references to Francis Willughby's treatise are from this edition, using the edition's page numbering (rather than the folio pagination also indicated by the editors). The exceptions are two illustrations from the treatise, kindly supplied by Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham.
[43] The volume, overall dimensions 350 x 220 mm, comprises 192 folios in a thin limp vellum binding with covers loosely attached to the sewn text block with vellum ties. It is written almost entirely in Willughby's own hand, though with some contributions by a Philip Skippon and some in a juvenile hand. Original pagination errors remain together with modern pencil corrections to the numbering sequence. See Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games,* 34-5.
[44] Biographical summary from Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 1-26.
[45] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games,* 12, 38-9.
[46] Ibid, ix-x.
[47] Ibid, 113.

This shows that Tables, a 'race game', was known to be a representation of the year. He adds, hinting at belief in the game's magical, prognostic qualities: 'The motion of the table men round thorough the points repraesents the motion of the sun thorough the signes of zodiack'.[48] Willughby also makes explicit the symbolism of cards:

> The 52 cards in a deck are aequall to the number of weekes in a yeare. The 4 suites represent the 4 seasons of the yeare. The 13 cards in everie suite, the 13 lunar months or 13 weekes in every season. And if the Knave, Queen and King bee reckoned eleven, twelve, thirteen, the summe of all the peepes = 364, the number of daies in 52 weekes.[49]

As a result, he explains, the number of months in a year or days in a month are often reflected in the number of cards dealt or optimal scores.[50]

Willughby did not finish the treatise, presumably owing to his early death, and he clearly intended to write a section on Chess since on page seventeen his manuscript reads, 'The Chest play is described p:', although no such section, or notes for such, have been found.[51] The manuscript also references a particular page of a 'Booke of Dice' and it is not known whether this is a lost work of his own or refers to the work of another, such as Cardano's *Liber*.[52] Willughby does, however, leave us an idea of his taxonomic schemes. A small notebook was found attached to the folio volume, immediately following his index, in which he makes some general remarks about games under the heading, 'Plaies', stating:

> Plaies may bee divided either into
>
> - those that exercise the bodie, as Tennis, Stowball &c., or
> - those that exercise the wit as Chests, Tables, Cards &c.
>
> - Those that having nothing of chance, as Chest &c.
> - those that altogather depend upon fortune,
>   as Inne & In, Crosse & Pile, One & Thirtie,
>   or those that have art & skill both, as most games at Cardes & Tables.
>
> The word Game is most properly used for Cards, Tables / Chests &c., & not for games of exercise.[53]

[48] Ibid, 113.
[49] Ibid, 130.
[50] 'the number of the solar months & daies in each month are brought in in the reckonings of severall games. 12 in Trumpe, Gleeke &c.; 31 in One & Thirtie, Loadum, Cribbidge', Ibid, 131.
[51] Ibid, 111.
[52] Ibid, 113, 157.
[53] Ibid, 93. The notebook, 140 x 87 mm with 15 folios sewn together and some loose sheets, was attached to page 3. See Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 35-6.

The editors explain that the family's library catalogue lists a volume entitled 'Book of Plaies', but for their edition, published in 2003, they use *Book of Games* because the usage of 'play' as a count-noun in this sense is obsolete today, and to avoid confusion with stage plays.[54] Nevertheless Willughby's definition shows the fluidity of the terms in the seventeenth century. The notebook also records that games could further be categorised as 'auntiant' or 'modern'. A list of continents and further notes suggests that he intended to research 'the countries where plaies have bene invented & the persons that invented them' and the 'time when they first begun to bee generally used', as well as the 'etymologie of the names of plaies'.[55]

A feature throughout his work is the insertion of a question, probably a note to himself for further research, such as one in the notebook at this point:

> Q: Wither there bee not something of chance in all games whatsoever, as in Chest it selfe, Boules &c.[56]

From the work that follows it is clear that Willughby's main interests in games lay in their mathematical aspects. He provides detailed measurements of the size of the 'best' Tables boards and playing cards then 'in fashion', noting the angles and 'parallelogrammons'.[57] The theory of probability was discovered, in France, when Willughby was nineteen, a year or two before he graduated from Trinity College Cambridge, and he shows that he was aware of the new thinking in this area, using the word in his work on cards:

> Q: How often one may expect a murnivall in Gleeke, or the probability of any other chance in other games.[58]

It would appear, however, that his principal interest lay in the mathematical links between games and astronomical lore and, as Cram et al. state, he constantly speculates on the intersections between the two, stating, for instance:

> The numbers 7, 5, 15, 16, 12, 31, 30 are most used in games because they are most used in astronomicall accounts, in numbering the parts of time &c.[59]

In this he aligns more closely with medieval King Alfonso X's predilection for metaphysical sevens and zodiacal twelves than with more modern thinking, albeit being at the forefront of a new trend in games literature.[60]

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[54] Cram et al., eds. *Willughby's Book of Games*, 34, 53.
[55] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 93-4.
[56] Ibid, 93.
[57] Ibid, 128.
[58] Ibid, 129.
[59] Ibid, 98.
[60] Willughby himself references the work of Aulus Gellius (130-180 AD) on the *septenario*, Ibid, 98.

Willughby writes on four forms of Tables, revealing that 'Back Gammon' was a variant of the genre in his time, and on sixteen card games and variants, even inventing one of his own, 'A New Cribbidge or Nodde'.[61] As well as suggesting cunning strategies for Tables, he notes 'waies of cheating' with dice, evoking the rogue literature and cony-catching pamphlets.[62] He also confirms the ubiquity of gambling, stating that: 'Chest, Tables, Cards, &c. they play for mony, but at most of the following, as Shittlecock, Prison barres &c., onely for exercise and victory'.[63] He then turns his attention to those more physical games which also include 'Barly Breakes', 'Scotch Hopper', a number of ball games as well as 'Boules' and 'Skittle Pins'. There are also sections on Children's games, 'Christmas Gambolls', riddles and rhyming games. [64] He ends with several other board-games, such as 'Nine Mens Maurice' (now Morris) and short notes on Cock Fighting, 'Bare Bating' and Wrestling/Duelling.[65]

Many of Willughby's descriptions are meticulously detailed and he takes pains to explain the particular terms used in the games, such as the curiously named 'murnivall', above, used in cards:

> Two of the same valor of differing suites are called a Pare, […] Three are called a Pare Royall, or Perryall, or in some games a Gleeke. Foure are called a Double Perryall, & in some games a Murnivall.[66]

In a further interesting clarification he explains the correct gamester vernacular at cards, as with: 'The ace, duce & trea are never called one, two, three, nor anie above them kater, cinque, sise &c., but foure, five &c.'[67] He provides a whole table for the vernacular and rhymes used for the various casts at dice, such as the alternative names for two aces, called 'Maumsay, Amsace, Ambling Annice, Mice, from their littlenesse'.[68]

Particularly useful gleanings are to be found in Willughby's sections on cards (and somewhat contradicting the polemicists, he considers cards 'verie ingenious & of excellent use to exercise the wits, to instruct & not to debauch the youth') which are of great assistance

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[61] Ibid, 144. The *OED, n* records the first appearance of the word backgammon in James Howell's *A new volume of letters partly (philosophicall, politicall, historicall)* printed in 1647 in London by T.W. for Humphrey Moseley, 216: 'Though you have learnt to play at Baggamon, you must not forget Irish, which is a more serious and solid game'. The reference is interesting as it uses the names of the variants of tables metaphorically. The writer is saying that although his correspondent has learnt Italian and French (which he equates with 'baggamon') he should not forget Latin (Irish). The etymological derivation of backgammon is thought to come from 'back' and Middle English *gamen*, meaning game.
[62] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 113-14.
[63] Ibid, 163.
[64] Ibid, 162-210.
[65] Ibid, 211-26.
[66] Ibid, 133.
[67] Ibid, 129.
[68] Ibid, 121.

in my work on the games featured in early modern dramatic texts.[69] Willughby's records of the penalties for misdealing, or 'Loosing of Dealing', and for not following suit, are both vital for an informed reading of *A Woman Killed with Kindness.* His explanation of the derivation of the game 'Laugh and Lie Down' helps emphasize Quomodo's comeuppance in *Michaelmas Term,* and the fixed requirement for three players at Gleeke shows the reason for this game's specific appearance in *Greene's Tu Quoque,* a play with triangular relationships which ends with three marriages. Some of Willughby's information is interesting simply from a socio-historical viewpoint, such as his explanation that the expression 'Giving to the Boxe' at cards, 'is allowing the Butler or him that finds the cards winnings', which brings gaming firmly out of the tavern and into the domestic sphere. Moreover his notebook states that cards were the game 'used most' by women.[70] And in almost household-management style he notes, with an illustration (see fig. below), that 'Cards cut in long triangles & dipt in melted brimstone make the best matches'.[71]

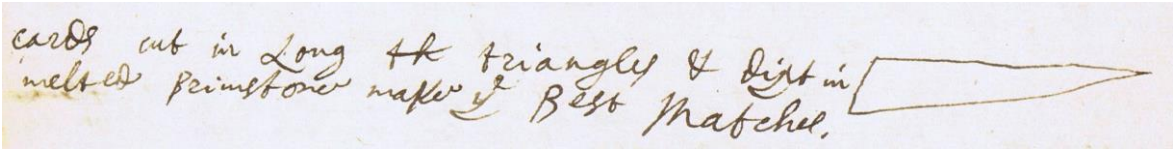


**Figure 3: Francis Willughby's drawing of a playing card cut in a triangle to form a match. Mi LM 14 (f. 52) By kind permission of Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham.**

Reading of a contemporary scientist's clear fascination with games and their richly metaphoric reflection of life, with the pieces or 'men' representing humankind, it is easy to see how this magical mix of astrology, sacred geometry, entertainment and hazard excited ordinary people. Willughby is invaluable because other sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century writing on games was largely focused on outdoor sports, particularly those of a martial or equestrian nature. Moreover, they were, like James I's *Basilikon Doron* (1599 and 1603) and treatises on education and gentlemanly accomplishment, largely in the prescriptive tradition. The other main and still invaluable reference works on games are Cotton's *Compleat Gamester,* a work popular well into the eighteenth century with sections on 'Games at cards', 'Games Within the Tables', and 'Games Without the Tables', Arthur Saul's *The famous game of Chesse-play* (1614), understood to have been used by Middleton in his

[69] Ibid, 131.
[70] Ibid, 94.
[71] Ibid, 131.

allegorical work, and Cardano's afore-mentioned *Liber de Ludo Aleae*. The middle of the seventeenth century witnessed a proliferation in games manuals, including several from Italy and France, subsequently translated into English, and John Cotgrave's *Wits Interpreter, the English Parnassus* (in its second edition of 1662) that paved the way for Edmond Hoyle's famous eighteenth-century studies of games.[72] The lacuna between the medieval *Alfonso MS* and Willughby and the mid-century games manuals is filled with very different, but also enlightening, types of writings on games: local geographies such as John Stow's *Survey of London* (1598), which covers the pastimes of Londoners; the bilingual dialogue form, such as John Florio's *Second Frutes* (1591), which provides descriptions of both Tennis and the card game Primero, and, the most interesting and abundant, the 'rogue literature' tradition.[73] These popular tracts describe, in Gāmini Salgādo's words, a 'society within a society, or rather outside it, an anti-society with its own rules and rulers'.[74] Gilbert Walker's *A Manifest Detection of Dice-Play* (c. 1552) was the first of this genre and using the dialogue device, speaker 'M' purports to warn his fellow interlocutor 'R' of:

> the sleights and falsehoods that are commonly practised at dice and cards, opening and overturning the things, not so that I would learn you to put the same in use, but [to] open their wicked snares.[75]

Despite his claim to the contrary, he does, as he surely intends, effectively inform 'R', and thus the reader, how to perform various cheats, even if they take practice to perfect. To make his companion aware of the sharpers' 'counterfeit countenance' and understand 'the bottom of their art', Walker's 'M' must 'acquaint [him] with some of their terms'.[76] He explains that the shifts by which an innocent man (the 'cony' or 'cousin') is ensnared are given the honest suffix 'law', with 'play at false dice' termed 'Cheating Law', and the 'drunken cozenage by cards' termed 'Barnard's Law'.[77] The latter requires a four-man team. The 'taker-up' insinuates himself into a potential dupe's acquaintance pretending familiarity, the 'verser' poses as the former's wealthy gentleman friend and his role is to encourage the new 'cousin'

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[72] Cram et al., eds., *Willughby's Book of Games*, 43-51 provide a comprehensive survey of the early writings on games. Cotton's *Compleat Gamester* reprints much from Cotgrave.
[73] See also John Minsheu's *Pleasant and Delightful Dialogues in Spanish and English* in Richard Perciuale, *A Spanish Grammar* (printed at London by Edm. Bollifant, 1599).
[74] Gāmini Salgādo, ed. *Cony-Catchers and Bawdy-Baskets: An Anthology of Elizabethan Low Life*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 23.
[75] Gilbert Walker, *A Manifest Detection of Dice-Play* (c. 1552), reproduced in A.V. Judges, ed., *The Elizabethan Underworld: A Collection of Tudor and Early Stuart Tracts and Ballads,* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 26-50 (33); and in Salgādo, ed.,*Cony-Catchers and Bawdy-Baskets,* 29-58 (37).
[76] Walker, *Manifest Detection*, in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 36.
[77] Ibid, 35. Robert Greene's *A Notable Discovery of Coosenage* (1592) provides a table listing the eight laws of villainy: High law, Sacking law, Cheating law, Crossbiting law, Cony-catching law, Versing law, Figging law and Barnard's law, Greene in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 135.

to make fun of the third member, the 'barnard'. The latter stumbles into the company dissembling drunkenness or ignorance of a game but is really the principal player and eventual winner. If, his money lost, the 'cousin' begins to 'smoke', a fourth man, the 'rubber', initiates a commotion during which the barnard steals away with the gain, waiting in a pre-arranged place to share it out.[78]

The main focus of Walker's tract, headed by a list of fourteen types of false dice (called 'cheats'), is Cheating law. The sum of opposite numbers of a true die is always seven and there are three pairs of faces: 'cater-trey' (4-3), 'sice-ace' (6-1) and 'cinque-deuce' (5-2). As the succinct commentary of A.V. Judges notes, however:

> A bias can be imparted to the die in various ways: (a) by giving it more than its due length along one dimension (*langret* or *barred* die); (b) by making it shorter along one dimension (*flat*); (c) by hollowing or weighting (*gourd* and *fullam*); (d) by attaching a bristle. *High men* and *low men* have one face, or more, falsely numbered.[79]

From the descriptions in Walker of the dicing sharp's technique and the uses of specific dice, information is imparted about particular games. For instance at Novum (or Novum quinque) there is a clear advantage for those who could avoid throwing nine or five with two dice. Describing the 'langret', 'a well-favoured die, that seemeth good and square; yet is the forehead longer on the cater and trey than any other way', 'M' reports a cheater informing his novice that, 'The principal use of them is at novem quinque. So long as a pair of barred cater-treys be walking on the board, so long can ye cast neither 5 nor 9'.[80] Without a three or a four turning up totals of five or nine were impossible. Suspicion was allayed by the cheater's skill at 'foisting' in a 'contrarie' die from time to time, in this case a '*flat* cater-trey', in place of the barred dice, thus deceiving the victim into believing that all was well.[81] The cheater also gives his novice the following advice (I have italicised the games for clarity):

> Provide also a bale or two of fullams, for they have great use at the *hazard*; and, though they be square outward, yet being within at the corner with lead or other ponderous matter stopped, minister as great an advantage as any of the rest. Ye must also be furnished with high men and low men for a *mumchance* and for *passage*. Yea, and a long die for *even and odd* is good to strike a small stroke withal, for a crown or two, or the price of a dinner.[82]

[78] Walker, *Manifest Detection*, in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 47-8.
[79] Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 493.
[80] Walker, *Manifest Detection* in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 39.
[81] Ibid, 39.
[82] Ibid, 41.

At Passage 'the caster throws [three dice] continually until he hath thrown doublets under ten, and then he is out and loseth, or doublets above ten, and then he passeth and wins'.[83] With two 'high men' on the board (usually 5 is substituted for 2 in a high man according to Judges), the cheater could be certain of reaching doubles above ten.[84]

Thomas Harman (*A Caveat for Common Cursitors,* 1567) asserts that his tales are based on first-hand conversations with vagrants but Linda Woodbridge argues strongly that the 'trickster tales' told by Walker, Harman and Robert Greene, whose *Notable Discovery of Cozenage* (which recycles some of Walker's text) and further pamphlets on the art of 'cony-catching' that followed in 1591-2, are not social histories but a 'subspecies' of the equally beloved Tudor jest book and a form of literary escapism from a world of strictness.[85] Truth or fable, Willughby's editors consider that the tradition made a major contribution to English games literature, its appeal clearly linked to the popularity of games. The influence of both vogues can be seen in the drama with games staged and dramatists such as Middleton and Jonson 'lifting' (to use a canting term for 'stealing') material from the rogue tales for their own rogues and plots. For example, in *Your Five Gallants* the clever ruse for stealing a bell-salt is taken directly from one of Greene's pamphlets, and the expression 'Win it and wear it' used by the goodman in Walker's dialogue is used by Moll in Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* (see 5.68).[86] Dekker is able to borrow from his own underworld pamphlets for scenes and canting passages in this latter play, which also shows borrowing from Greene.[87]

## Games and the Court

Games were universally popular and practised across all ranks of society. As Murray states, 'Innkeepers provided boards and men […] and doubtless attracted customers thereby'.[88] Whilst Tables and Chess were played in the medieval period, with Chess particularly well-recorded in its literature, most card historians note the absence of any mention of card-

[83] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester,* 81.
[84] Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 525. Cotton also states that 'High runners are most requisite for this game, such as will rarely run any other chance than four, five, or six, by which means if the caster throws doublets he scarcely can throw out', *Compleat Gamester,* 81-2.
[85] Linda Woodbridge, 'Jest Books, the Literature of Roguery, and the Vagrant Poor in Renaissance England', *English Literary Renaissance* 33/2 (2003), 201-210 (206).
[86] Walker, *Manifest Detection*, in Judges, ed. *Elizabethan Underworld,* 32.
[87] For the sources of *The Roaring Girl* see, for example, Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker *The Roaring Girl*, ed. Paul A. Mulholland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 14-15.
[88] Murray, *Board-Games*, 119.

playing in the work of Chaucer or other English writers of the fourteenth century. Chaucer mentions dice, as well as 'ches and tables', but never cards.[89] In England the first certain reference to cards is in a letter that Margaret Paston writes to her husband John on 24 December 1459.[90] Since he is to be absent on Christmas Day she considers herself 'halfe a wedowe' and writes that she sent their eldest son to ask Lady Morley what suitable 'sports' were played in that lady's house the Christmas after her husband died. Reporting her ladyship's reply she writes:

> Non dysgysynggys nere harpyng nere lvtyng nere syngyn, nere non lowde dysportys, but pleyng at the tabyllys and schesse and cardys, sweche dysportys sche gave here folkys leve to play, and non odyr.[91]

It is thought that English soldiers fighting in France in the early fifteenth century were responsible for the introduction of cards, bringing packs of cards back with them. France was the chief card manufacturing nation and it is the French suits of Coeurs, Carreaux, Trèfles and Piques (Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs and Spades) that we use in Britain today.[92]

Whilst for a long time card games were regarded as a pastime to be indulged in only during the twelve days of Christmas, when they were officially sanctioned, Nicholas Tosney provides quantitative evidence of the mania for card-play. Assuming that the number of cards imported provides an approximate indication of the numbers of people playing, his examination draws on statistical sources to show remarkable quantities.[93] Between October 1567 and October 1568 '576 gross of cards, totalling some 82,944 packs, were brought into London ports from Rouen (the great majority on English ships)'.[94] A 'note what the customs of playing cards haue geven yearlie to his Majesties coffers' 'shows that 51,408 packs passed through customs in 1604'.[95] This does not account for domestic production by London card-makers, who were principally haberdashers and merchant tailors. Indeed local card-makers

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[89] Geoffrey Chaucer, 'The Franklin's Tale', *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Jill Mann (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 407-438: 'They leden hire by rivers and by welles / And eek in othere places delitables; / They dauncen, and they pleyen at ches and tables', lines 898-900.

[90] For the history of cards see: W. Gurney Benham, *Playing Cards and their History and Secrets* (Colchester: Ward, Lock, 1931); Catherine Perry Hargrave, *A History of Playing Cards* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966); David Parlett *The Oxford Guide to Card Games* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). The earliest documentary references to European playing cards date from the 1370s but these are generally attempts at prohibition of card-playing although a poem by Guillaume de Guilleville of 1350, mentions 'Jeux de tables et de cartes' (Perry Hargrave, *History of Playing Cards*, 39).

[91] *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Norman Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), no. 513, 257-8.

[92] The Latin-suited cards used in Italy and Spain are Batons, Cups, Swords, Coins; the German suited cards are Leaves, Acorns, Hearts, Bells.

[93] Nicholas B. Tosney, 'Gaming in England, c. 1540-1760' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2008), 23. EthOS ID: uk.bl.ethos.555870.

[94] Tosney, 'Gaming in England', 29-30.

[95] Ibid, 32. He cites The National Archives (TNA): PRO SP 14/13/52 (1605).

petitioned James I about the 'innumerable masses of foreign cards' being imported, and in response the king appointed Sir Richard Coningsby, gentleman usher of the Parliament, as inspector of imported playing cards.[96] Under Charles I the protectionist Mystery and Makers of Playing Cards of the City of London was formed and in 1628 a domestic production quota was fixed at 336,960 packs per year – the king himself ordering forty-five gross of the highest quality cards in 1637.[97] As Tosney points out, this equates to one pack for almost every inhabitant of London.[98] By the end of the seventeenth century over a million packs were being produced annually (or one pack per household per year).[99] As these figures indicate, vast numbers of people succumbed to the lure of card-play. Gaming became well entrenched as a social pastime with what David Miers calls 'pan-class appeal'.[100] Vivid descriptions of the atmosphere inside tavern gaming rooms and gaming houses are found in polemical tracts, in *The Compleat Gamester*, and in the period's drama.

As with many things in this period, at the fount of the popularity of games was the court. From the time of Henry VIII there was an officer of the royal household, originally of the Lord Steward's department, called the Groom Porter.[101] John Ashton records that Henry Fitzalan, the Lord Chamberlain to Henry VIII from 1526 to 1530, compiled a book listing the duties of royal officers, with those of the Groom Porter as follows:

> to see the King's lodgings furnished with tables, chairs, stools, firing, rushes for strewing the floors, to provide cards, dice, &c., and to decide disputes arising at dice, cards, bowling, &c.[102]

As well as arranging games for the royal family and courtiers he was permitted to keep some gaming tables 'as a perquisite of his office'.[103] As a result, the Groom Porter's lodging soon became known as a place where play was 'excessive' and 'intemperate'.[104] Elizabeth I expanded the role, granting her Groom Porter, Thomas Cornwallis, the right to issue licences to gaming houses in London. As Frank Aydelotte explains, in spite of proclamations and laws against gaming, all manner of games of chance were increasing and 'the government saw fit

[96] Ibid, 36 cites Thorpe and Goodall, *Early London Cardmakers*, 14.
[97] Ibid, 41-2. This quota remained in place for forty-five years to 1683 when it was increased to 185 gross of packs per *week*, an increase by a factor of four.
[98] Ibid, 42.
[99] Ibid, 54.
[100] David Miers, *Regulating Commercial Gambling, Past, Present and Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 21.
[101] There was only one Groom Porter at any time; the role was abolished in 1792 in the reign of George III, Tosney, 'Gaming in England', 22.
[102] John Ashton, *A History of Gambling in England* (London: Duckworth, 1898), 47.
[103] Miers, *Commercial Gambling*,24.
[104] Ashton, *History of Gambling*, 47.

to license what it could not restrain'.[105] Like the first public lottery of 1569, 'erected by her Majestie's order […] towards the reparation of the havens and strength of the Realme', this licensing yielded good revenue to the crown.[106] By the early seventeenth century the Groom Porter had the power 'to allow play att dice and Cards & other games in forty taverns or ordinaries', decide disputes and suppress unauthorized gaming.[107] Not only were gaming houses and bowling alleys licensed, but bales of dice were approved and sealed, and playing-cards sold, all under monopolies granted by royal patents.[108] As Aydelotte points out, like the playhouses, games had royal protection, much to the frustration of city government.[109] Indeed it was a symbiotic relationship as complex and equivocal as that which Louis Montrose finds between the crown and the playhouse. Both activities were controlled yet enjoyed, their licensing fees providing profit to the crown.[110] The great vogue for games meant that early modern writers could structure fictions around gaming metaphors and connect with the majority of the population, the terminology of games providing a *lingua franca*. Whilst today we might be accustomed to hearing of a person referred to as a political pawn, it would be unusual to hear someone referred to as a playing card, or groups of people as packs of cards, as occurs, for example, in a preacher's ingenious use of the Christmas tradition of card-playing to address his Cambridge congregation on the Sunday before Christmas in 1529. Hugh Latimer's *Sermons on the Card* uses this secular entertainment to illustrate a spiritual message:

> And whereas you are wont to celebrate Christmas in playing at cards, I intend, by God's grace, to deal unto you Christ's cards, wherein you shall perceive Christ's rule. The game that we will play at shall be called the triumph, which, if it be well played at, he that dealeth shall win; the players shall likewise win; and the standers and lookers upon shall do the same […] they shall be all winners, and no losers.[111]

Here 'Christ's cards' and game playing are not only associated with but analogous to the Christian way of life and example, with the people represented as players. Latimer is also

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[105] Frank Aydelotte, *Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 104-5.
[106] Ashton, *History of Gambling*, 223.
[107] TNA: PRO SP 14/90/38 cited in Tosney, 'Gaming in England', 133.
[108] A bale was nine dice. Aydelotte, *Elizabethan Rogues*, 107.
[109] Ibid, 104.
[110] 'The Privy Council attempted to restrict the number and location of playhouses, and all plays for public playing were made subject to censorship, licensing, and the payment of fees to the Master of the Revels', Louis Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 99. Richard Dutton comments that 'The Position of the Master of the Revels, jealously protecting court privileges as much as he sought to suppress "dangerous matter" made him as much a friend of the actors as their overlord', *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 248.
[111] Hugh Latimer, *Sermons on the Card and Other Discourses* (London: Cassell, 1883), 16. Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley and Thomas Cranmer were burnt at the stake for their religious beliefs in Oxford in 1555 and 1556.

inspired to suggest that his congregation are cards themselves, urging them to 'fetch home unto [God] all the other cards, whatsoever suit they be of'.[112] We will see examples of this fluidity between player and playing piece often in the following chapters. A later (c. 1643) political tract in support of Charles I, *The bloody Game at Cards*, describes a veritable cardboard commonwealth. By this time card-playing was almost reaching the epidemic proportions suggested by Tosney's figures for card production. It is worth reproducing the satire's title page:

> The bloody Game at Cards, as it was played betwixt the KING OF HEARTS. And the rest of his Suite, against the residue of the packe of cards. WHEREIN Is discovered where faire play; was plaid and where was fowle. Shuffled at London, Cut at Westminster, Dealt at Yorke, and Plaid in the open field. by the Citty-clubs, the country Spade-men, Rich-Diamond men and Loyall Hearted men.[113]

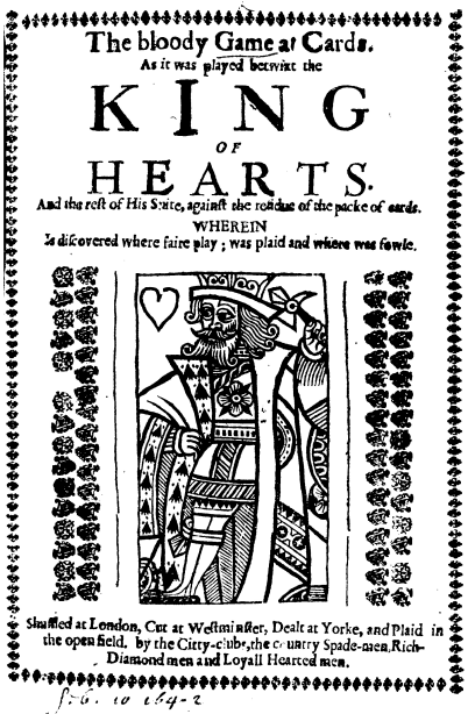
The bloody Game at Cards.
As it was played betwixt the
KING
OF
HEARTS.
And the reſt of His Suite, againſt the reſidue of the packe of cards.
WHEREIN
Is diſcovered where faire play; was plaid and where was fowle.
Shuffled at London, Cut at Weſtminſter, Dealt at Yorke, and Plaid in the open field. by the Citty-clubs, the country Spade-men, Rich-Diamond men and Loyall Hearted men.

**Figure 4: Title page of *The bloody Game at Cards*, 1643.**
**© British Library Board, E.246.(11).**

W. Gurney Benham discusses this tract but his interest lies in the woodcut and its provision of 'the earliest representation in existence of the King of Hearts in the English pack', proving the derivation of our English King of Hearts from the Rouen pattern, c. 1567.[114] In describing the mutiny of the 'City-clubs' against the King of Hearts (Charles I) the writer states that in this 'Game of the times' the King of Hearts assembled by 'faire dealing' a 'suite of Hearts'

[112] Ibid, 17.
[113] Anon., *The bloody Game at Cards* ([London] 1643), title page.
[114] Benham, *Playing Cards*, 78, 29.

into a great army; and that 'under the Ace, which is the true Protestant Religion one in substance and essence, He intended to defend the Liberty of the Common cards';[115] that 'He stakt His Royall word' and desired his people 'to follow Suite'.[116] The King of Clubs is a 'brave noble Earle whose Title is exprest by two of the last Letters' (which Benham reads as a reference to Robert Devereux's title as the Earl of Essex and Ewe [the letters being 'x' and 'u']). The Knave of Clubs is 'a Roundhead full of citty sermons and loving to talke treason in Taverns', who threatens to 'trump the King and win the field from Him', and the Knave of Spades sows treason, suggesting that under the government of the King of Hearts the people would 'have a hundred trickes put upon them', with none respected but 'court cards'.[117] Every card play term is assiduously mined; the colours too are deployed in the report that whereas the King's men 'were all Hearts not onely in colour but in courage', many of the Diamond men ran away, and 'when they saw their owne red blood, there was nothing red about them but their scarlet coates, for their colour was as pale as if a dish of milke had been throwne in their faces'.[118] The conceit of card play continues to the end when the gamesters on both sides 'counted their Cards', as an army would count its dead.[119]

## Games and Drama – an overview

Dramatists were even more inventive at using cards as virtual portraits and games generally as structural metaphors, often demonstrating a *sprezzatura* worthy of one of Castiglione's courtiers. *The Book of the Courtier* is a prime example of the ludic milieu in which dramatists were at work; one where so many daily occurrences were games or contests – whether it was the coterie game of exchange and answer poetry, or hiding meaning in emblems, mottos, heraldry, numerology, and of course allegory, or making after-dinner conversation a game, as do Castiglione's fictional courtiers. Count Ludovico states that in order to obtain the required 'grace' a courtier should 'avoid affectation' and 'practise in all things a certain *sprezzatura*, so as to conceal all art and make whatever is done or said appear to be without effort and almost without any thought about it'.[120] Artless art was paramount in drama, another form of

[115] Anon, *The bloody Game at Cards*, 3.
[116] Ibid, 4.
[117] Ibid, 5.
[118] Ibid, 6, 7.
[119] Ibid, 7.
[120] Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 32.

'conversation' where wit was similarly prized and considered to be a game.[121] Shakespeare might as well be complimenting himself, whilst making the game element clear, when in *Love's Labour's Lost* the Princess congratulates Rosaline and Katherine after their verbal sparring on light and dark, on 'a set of wit well played' (5.2.29). As M.M. Mahood notes, 'at least ten meanings of *light* are brought into play' in this combative exchange of wit.[122] Often characters in city comedies have names expressive of their wit: Savourwit, Lovewit, Witgood, Wittypate and Cunningame; and several in tragedies pride themselves in cunning. Plays and games also have inherent parallels and connections, beyond etymology. As Huizinga states, both are 'a stepping out of "real" life into a temporary sphere of activity'.[123] Both are limited and constrained by locality and duration within which certain rules operate for both forms of 'player'. As Roger Caillois remarks, at the end of a play the applause is not merely a sign of the audience's approval, it 'marks the end of the illusion'.[124] The final show of cards in poker and checkmate in Chess similarly return the gamester to reality. And as Robert Weimann points out, the connection also exists in the physical location of the first playhouses, which were built in areas where people went to play sports or watch contests, such as the open fields outside the city walls, or on Bankside where bear-baiting and other displays were held.[125] Indeed 'stage-plaies to dice houses, and other like places' are linked in one proscriptive breath in declamatory tracts.[126] Polemicists such as John Northbrooke, the earliest, and Philip Stubbes, the most vehement, left a stigma hanging over these 'unlawfull' games which could be used in didactic tales.

The scope of my project is limited, of course, to those plays which have survived loss or disasters such as the fire of December 1621 which destroyed the Fortune playhouse, and with it the stock of 'apparell and play-bookes' of its company, the Palsgrave's Men (formerly the Admiral's Men / Prince's Men).[127] Nevertheless, game references and metaphors occur in a large number of extant early modern play texts. Leaving aside the more physical games

[121] Whilst 'wit' has many meanings, including ingenuity, reason, prudence, the meaning to which I refer is 'that quality of speech or writing which consists in the apt association of thought and expression, calculated to surprise and delight by its unexpectedness', *OED, n*, II. 8.a.
[122] M.M. Mahood, *Shakespeare's Wordplay* (London: Routledge, 1957), 51. See also Louise Fang, 'Players, Cheats, and Games of Wit in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Actes des congrès de la Societe française Shakespeare*, 32 (2015),.
[123] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 8.
[124] Roger Caillois, trans. Meyer Barash, *Man, Play and Games* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1962 ), 49.
[125] Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 170.
[126] William Gouge, *Of domesticall duties* (London, printed by Iohn Haviland for William Bladen,1622), The seuenth Treatise 'Duties of Seruants', Treatise 7, 631.
[127] John Chamberlain cited in David McInnis and Matthew Steggle, *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 18.

such as Tennis, Bowls, Shuttlecock and Balloon ball, as well as chasing games such as 'Barley-break' and 'Hoodman blind', there are around eighty plays which mention games that took place indoors – in domestic parlours, taverns and gaming houses, in the Groom Porter's lodging at court, and in the very Presence chamber itself.[128] For reasons of economy and taxonomy this thesis concentrates on four rubrics, Dice, Tables, Cards and Chess, and focuses mostly on those plays which feature a dramatized game as part of the plot, an inset game.

Tantalisingly there are two plays which, judging by their titles, might have played a central role in my research were they extant. The titles, nevertheless, preserved thanks to Philip Henslowe's *Diary* and the records of the Master of the Revels, serve as 'witnesses to otherwise unrecorded theatrical events', and as David McInnis and Matthew Steggle state, 'valuable things can be said about plays which do not survive in a main playscript'.[129] This requires conjecture and making use of whatever historical gleanings are available. The first of these lost plays, *A Game at Cards* or *Game of the Cards*, is described in the Accounts of the Revels for the year 1582 as 'A Comodie or Morrall devised on a game of the Cardes shewed on St Stephens daie at night before her Ma[tie] at Wyndesor.[130] E.K. Chambers suggests that this play was 'possibly the piece which, according to Sir John Harington was thought "somewhat too plaine"'.[131] Joseph McCullen quotes Chambers but states that what happened in the play 'is not known'.[132] If Chambers's assumption is correct, Harington does give us some idea for, in a separate text, his evaluation of comedies, he asks:

> How much good matter, yea and matter of state is there in that Comedie cald the play of the Cards? in which it is showed, how foure Parasitical knaues robbe the foure principall vocations of the Realme, *videl*. the vocation of Souldiers, Schollers, Marchants, and Husbandmen.[133]

It is clear that the play struck a controversial note. According to Harington some 'aduised that it should be forbidden' on account of it being 'too plaine'.[134] 'Plaine', here, must mean bluntly direct; he goes further, suggesting that 'as the old saying is, *sooth boord is no boord*'.

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[128] 'At court, her majesty hath graced the dancing and plays with her own presence, and played at cards in the presence at primero with the lord treasurer (Lord Buckhurst), Mr Secretary, and the Lord North', Letter of 28 December 1599 from Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sydney, in George Scharf, 'Observations on an Elizabethan picture of four persons of distinction playing cards', *Archaeologia: or Miscellaneous tracts relating to antiquity, 1770-1992*, Jan 1888, 51, 347-350 (349).
[129] McInnis and Steggle, *Lost Plays*, 7, 11.
[130] *Extracts from the Accounts of the Revels at Court in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I*, ed. Peter Cunningham (London: Shakespeare Society, 1842), 176.
[131] Sir John Harington, cited in E.K.Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), II, 37.
[132] McCullen, 'Parlor and Tavern Games', 8.
[133] Harington, 'An Apologie of Poetrie prefixed to Orlando Fvrioso' (1591) in *Ancient Critical essays upon English poets and poesy*, Vol. 2, ed. Joseph Haslewood (London, 1815), 135.
[134] Ibid, 135.

This means ‘a jest spoken in earnest is no jest at all’.[135] On the other hand, Harington recalls ‘a notable wise counsellor that is now dead, who […] would have it allowed, adding it was fit that *They which doe that they should not, should heare that they would not*’.[136] Whether the play was suppressed, as McCullen conjectures, did not make the transition to print, or was simply lost, we cannot know but there seems no doubt that it was didactic. This ‘Comodie or Morrall’ presented both error and, presumably, some penalty for such. We can see that the four suits were adopted to represent ‘vocations’, much as in the Civil war satire *bloody Game at Cards*, with the knaves of the pack likened to rogues, as in Samuel Rowlands’s book of satires addressed to ‘Fustis Knave of Clubs’, a fellow with a ‘swaggering life’ and ‘tricks and feates’ at cards.[137]

The second lost text is *The Set at Maw*, performed as a new play at the Rose by the Admiral’s Men on 14 December 1594.[138] Martin Wiggins conjectures that ‘perhaps the play’s narrative proceeded according to the rules of the game which were most distinctive’.[139] Based on my research this must have been the case. Maw was a trick-taking card game, reliably known to be the chief game at the court of James I. Now known as Twenty Five, it did indeed proceed in a distinctive way, as it still does today, little changed in four hundred years. The three best cards are the five of trumps (called the ‘five-finger’), the Ace of Hearts and the Jack of trumps.[140] Additionally the black suits rank upside down so that ‘the least of the black, and the most of the red wins’.[141] There is no mention of the game of Maw by Willughby but other research documents offer help. One of Harington’s epigrams, *Of the games that have beene in request at the Court*, states:

> Then thirdly follow’d heaving of the Maw,
> A game without civility or Law,
> An odious play, and yet in court oft seene,
> A saucy knave to trump both King and Queene.[142]

Harington’s epigram already signals the ability of the jack or knave to trump higher ranked cards and Breton’s *Machiuells Dogge* presses home the point:

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[135] The expressions ‘in earnest and in game’ and ‘in earnest or boord’ seem to be interchangeable. See *The Proverbs, Epigrams, and Miscellanies of John Heywood*, ed. John S. Farmer (London: Early English Drama Society, 1906), 333.
[136] ‘Syr Frances Walsingham’, judging by the marginal note in Harington’s *Apologie*, 135..
[137] Samuel Rowlands, *The Knave of Clubs* (printed at London for Ferebrand, 1609), A2$^{r}$.
[138] As evidenced in Henslowe’s ‘Diary’, f. 10$^{v}$, *Henslowe’s Diary*, 2$^{nd}$ edn, ed. R.A. Foakes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
[139] Martin Wiggins in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue*, III (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), entry 977.
[140] In card games the trumps suit is the suit ranking above all the other three, determined by the dealer turning up a card at random.
[141] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 59.
[142] Harington *Epigrams, Both Pleasant and Serious* (London, 1615), Vol. 1 no. 11.

a set or two at Maw:
the Knave fiue fingers, and the Ace of Harts;
It was a Clowne that first deui'sd the law,
That Pesants so should come to play their parts,
And basenesse so about the Game should bring
A knaue should take the stake vp from the king.[143]

Not only does the knave trump the king and queen but, as a tract by Barnabe Rich confirms, a mere five, in Maw termed 'the fiue-finger', 'may commaunde both him and all the rest of the pack'.[144] Any play called *A Set at Maw* would, I suggest, make use of its feature of trick-taking and this subversion of the normal hierarchy of the pack. It is also likely to have a court setting. A 'set', or round, at Maw was five tricks since five cards are dealt apiece. As Wiggins suggests, the 'traditional five acts of a play' may have been useful in this respect.[145] There would possibly have been five tricks or ruses played involving a 'saucy knave', and perhaps with a group of five quick-witted rogues finally triumphing, representing the 'five-finger' trump card.

Harington is not alone in using the expression, 'heaving of the maw', which became attached to references to Maw. Since another meaning of 'maw' is the stomach of an animal, such as a ruminant, I speculate that 'Maw' might well have been rhymed with 'cow' at some point in the text with use made, in double-entendre, of the various meanings of 'heave', such as throw, swell, pant and vomit. Heave was also thieves' cant for 'lift' or rob, and as 'robbing the pack' (taking the trump turn-up in exchange for any unwanted card) was also a feature of Maw, it is highly likely that use would have been made by the dramatist of this phrase, as would befit a game described by Harington as 'odious'. It is imaginative interplay of this sort that I find dramatists bring to bear, making emblematic use of particular games and their features.

One very special source that testifies to Maw's popularity as a court game is *The Groome-porters lawes at Mawe, to be obserued in fulfilling the due orders of the game* (c. 1600).[146] This single sheet lists sixteen 'laws', or more properly penalties, for incorrect play (such as incorrect dealing or improperly looking at a card). The laws do not explain the method of play but do, nevertheless, usefully show that vying was another important factor and also that, as Cotton's description (under its later name of 'Five Cards') indicates, it was a

[143] Nicholas Breton, *Machiuells dogge* (printed by Barnard Alsop for Richard Higgenbotham, London, 1617), stanza 22.
[144] B. Rich, *Greene's Newes both from heauen and hell* (London, 1593) A2$^{v}$-A3$^{r}$.
[145] Wiggins, *British Drama*, entry 977.
[146] *Ancient ballads & broadsides published in England in the sixteenth century, chiefly in the earlier years of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (1867) (reprinted from the original copies in the library of Henry Huth), 180-2.

game for just two.[147] This suggests that *Set at Maw* would have involved a contest between two characters. Given the importance of the ace of hearts there is likely to have been love (or lust) involved, thus a contest between a man and a woman, or a contest with a woman as the stake. The hearts suit regularly provides a parallel to the human heart and love, as is clear in Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1605):

> LUCRE And is that gentleman, sayst thou, presently to marry her?
> HOST Faith, he brought her up to town, sir. H'as the best card in all the bunch for't, her heart. (2.1.64-7)[148]

We will see later a very clear instance of the conflation of the human heart and card hearts in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. Supporting my speculations on *Set at Maw* are the mentions of Maw in two later plays listed in Appendix B, Chapman's comedy, *Mayday* (1611), and William Rowley's only tragedy, *All's Lost by Lust* (c. 1619), both references illustrating contests between two characters. In the first of these, Lodovico, mistaken for a suitor, is ushered into Lucretia's bedchamber. Whatever offstage indiscretion he commits ends with a sword fight, the gentlewoman proving to be a disguised gentle*man* by the name of Lucretio. Ludovico later describes his unsuccessful seduction in terms of a dream in which he loses at Maw, despite being 'sure of the set, hauing the varlet and the fiue finger to make two tricks'. The 'Ace of Hearts' is a clear metaphor for Lucretia in his account:

> Shee had in her hand the Ace of Hearts, me thought, and a Coate-carde, shee led the bord with her coate, I plaid the varlet, and tooke vp her coate, and meaning to lay my fiue finger vpon her Ace of hearts, vp start a quite contrary card; vp shee rises withal, takes me a dash a the mouth, drew a rapier he had lay by him, and out of dores we went together by the eares.[149]

Through the game he metaphorically undresses her, taking her 'Coate-carde', and anticipates the sexual conquest, the 'ace', but finds instead a 'quite contrary card', a penis.[150] In Rowley's very bloody tragedy Lothario, the pander, and Malena, a bawd, are both tasked with making the chaste Jacinta receptive to King Roderigo's lustful advances. They each try to foist the task on the other, imagining it as a game at Maw played by the devil. Lothario says:

> A bawds a thing that when the deuil plaies at maw,
> He turns vp trump, because shees a helpe. (*All's Lost* 2.1.14-15)

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[147] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 59.
[148] Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, ed. Valerie Wayne in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 73-413.
[149] George Chapman, *Mayday* (Printed for Iohn Browne London,1611), K3$^{r}$ (77).
[150] Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London: Athone, 1994), Vol.1. Williams defines ace as 'vulva'.

Malena counters:

> But the pander, playing with the deuill robs the bawd
> To make his hand the stronger, and the cards being
> The deuils, he makes out a little heart (and thats all
> He has) into the stocke. (2.1.16-19) [151]

Their vying game continues until Lothario declares that the devil, 'fearing he has not tricks enough / Gives vp his dealing to the bawd, so they shuffle again' (2.1.24-5). The stake in this game of 'royall seruice' (2.1.29), which falls to Malena, is Jacinta's maidenhead.

These two uses of Maw illustrate well how games and game scenes cannot be neatly corralled into genre – not only do they occur in comedies, tragedies and histories, but even the same game can be used in comedy and tragedy. The same trend occurs across all four rubrics – dice games, cards, Tables and Chess. Scenes of tavern dicing are prevalent in city comedies and in this context there is frequently an economic intersection, with land and inheritance lost and won at the dicing table, such as is the case in *Michaelmas Term* and *Greene's Tu Quoque*. Middleton writes of 'young dicing landlords that pass away three hundred acres with three dice in a hand'.[152] Whilst he may exaggerate, Theophilus Lucas records a Leicestershire squire who came to London in 1660, and 'lived by his wits, that is to say, by gaming', raising himself to Lieutenant-Colonel through his winnings.[153] Lucas records that:

> his chief game was at Hazard, at which he got the most money; for, in one night, at this play, he won as many thousand pounds as purchased him an estate of above 1500 *l.* per Annum insomuch as he built a whole Street near Leicester-fields, which, after his own name, he called Panton Street.[154]

These examples establish a direct connection with the old divinatory use, supported by etymology, of dice to allot land. But dicing scenes are not unique to comedies; the hazardous nature of dicing also suits tragedies, such as Fletcher's *The Tragedy of Valentinian* and Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda*. In both of these tragedies instead of land it is a woman that becomes the metaphorical stake in a dice game. In Fletcher's play, Maximus, a soldier, is one of several playing dice with the Emperor Valentinian. The emperor is on a winning streak, forcing his fellow gamesters to stake horses and property. Maximus is reluctantly persuaded to bet his ring and when this too is won by Valentinian it becomes the means for the emperor

[151] William Rowley, *All's Lost by Lust, and A Shoemaker, A Gentleman*, ed. Charles Wharton Stork (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1910).
[152] Middleton, *Father Hubburd's Tales, Or, The Ant, and the Nightingale* (1604) ed. Adrian Weiss in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 164-182, ll 284-5.
[153] Theophilus Lucas, *Lives of the Gamesters* (1714) in *Games and Gamesters*, ed. Hartmann, 153.
[154] Ibid, 157.

to lure and rape Maximus's wife, Lucina, who tragically dies of shame after the deed, having compared the emperor to Tarquin in her curses.[155] Similarly Chess, often referred to as a 'Royal game', is not always linked to noble characters.[156] While there are courtly backdrops to its use in *Bussy D'Ambois*, *Game at Chess* and *Women Beware Women*, and while it is an appropriately high status game for Ferdinand and Miranda in *The Tempest*, it operates just as well for an attempt to seduce a lawyer's wife in *The Spanish Curate*. In like manner we will see examples of Tables played in the parlours of respectable homes in Porter's comedic *Two Angry Women of Abington* and the tragedy, *Arden of Faversham*, while as a metaphor it is also used in the brothel scene of Dekker's *Blurt, Master Constable.*

My focus is on indoor games but, as Appendix B shows, other games similarly defy neat division by genre or social strata. Tennis is such an example. Willughby lists tennis as the game 'Used most' by men.[157] It was also considered an aristocratic pastime and the French Dauphin's gift to Henry V of tennis balls makes use of the semantic double of the tennis court and royal court. But tennis terminology, such as its 'chases' and its 'hazards', and its imagery of balls being struck into openings, provides a much wider span of metaphoric opportunity. Take, for example, Philip Barnes's description, in *Two Angry Women*, of his somewhat wanton sister's maidenhead which, he says, 'Stands like a game at tennis, if the ball / Hit into the hole or hazard, farewell all' (2.1.788-90). Heavy bets were placed on tennis matches and when, in Heywood's *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon*, Old Chartley comes to the city in search of his wayward son, he has a shrewd idea of the places he might be found and instructs his men to 'Enquire about the taverns, tennis courts, [and] gaming houses' (5.1.7-8). Here the image of tennis is far from upper class and respectable. Similarly, the opening stage direction of Chapman, Jonson and Marston's comedy *Eastward Ho* (1605) describes the journeyman, Quicksilver, '*with his hat, pumps, short sword and dagger, and a racket trussed up under his cloak*' (1.1sd).[158] When the suspicious Touchstone subjects his apprentice to a search and finds the sword and tennis racket, sticking out of his belt, he exclaims, 'Heyday, Ruffians' Hall! Sword, pumps, here's a racket indeed!' (1.1.17-18). Ruffians' Hall was a field in West Smithfield and the site of brawls; as Heiner

[155] Cursing her 'ravisher' Lucina alludes to Romulus's rape of the Sabine women and Tarquin's rape of Lucrece, saying 'The sins of Tarquin be remember'd in thee', 3.1.91, *The Tragedy of Valentinian*, ed. Robert K. Turner, Jnr in *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, Vol. IV (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966-1996).
[156] Cotton refers to Chess as 'a Royal game', *Compleat Gamester*, 24.
[157] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 94.
[158] Ben Jonson, George Chapman & John Marston, *Eastward Ho!*, ed. C.G. Petter (London: A & C Black, 1994).

Gillmeister notes, Touchstone infers that 'Quicksilver was heading for it in order to gamble away his money in a tennis match, and later perhaps regain its possession by some nice little sword-play'.[159] Quicksilver is well attuned to the vernacular of tennis and when he plans to escape work and weighs up alternative ways of maintaining his lifestyle he compares the risk of seafaring trade to tennis:

> What are these ships but tennis-balls for the winds to play withal? Tossed from one wave to another: now under-line, now over the house; sometimes brick-walled against a rock, so that the guts fly out again; sometimes struck under the wide hazard, and farewell, master merchant! (2.2.59-64)

Tennis was a long-established game, Gillmeister recording 1396 as its first instance in England. Even if the wider populace did not themselves play tennis, the game and its equipment were general knowledge, and so much so that the solid tennis ball provided a useful unit of measure for writers of household advice books.[160] A remedy in a medical treasury for an ache reads, 'take stone Pitch, to *the quantitie of a tennis ball*, a spoonful of Tarre, a peny worth of Treacle, *the quantitie of a tennis ball*, of Rossin & a spoonefull of Hunnye, boyle it over the fier in a kettle' (my italics).[161] Likewise the recipe for 'Trouts stewed' in a cookery book instructs:

> Take three of four Trouts or more according to their bigness, and put them in a Dish with somewhat more than a quarter of a pint of Sack, or instead thereof White wine with a piece of Butter about *the quantity of a Tennis-ball*, a little whole Mace, some Parsley, a little Winter-savory and Tyme minced all together. (my italics)[162]

A number of repertory-based studies have identified thematic patterns. For instance, Andrew Gurr finds a tendency for disguise and travel plays in the plays of the Admiral's Men, and Lawrence Manley notes 'an apparent preoccupation in the Strange's repertory with human immolation' and other pyrotechnics.[163] In a study of the boy's troupe at Whitefriars, The King's Revels, Mary Bly finds a proclivity for homoerotic wordplay to be a unique device to attract playgoers.[164] On the other hand, Tom Rutter's recent work charts reciprocity

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[159] Heiner Gillmeister, *Tennis: a Cultural History* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), 143.
[160] Real tennis balls are smaller than today's lawn tennis balls, and are solid. Their composition in the seventeenth century is described by Willughby: 'the ball is made of taylors shreds beaten by a hammer & shaped in a wooden mould. Then its hard tyed about with packthread. After this they sow white cotton about it or kersy', Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 106.
[161] A.T. practitioner in physicke, *A rich store-house or treasury for the diseased* (London, printed for Thomas Purfoot and Raph Blower, 1596), D4$^{v}$.
[162] Anon, *The English and French cook* (London, printed for Simon Miller, 1674), 20-21.
[163] Andrew Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites: the Admiral's company, 1594-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Lawrence Manley, 'Playing with Fire: Immolation in the Repertory of Strange's Men', *Early Theatre*, Vol. 4 (2001), 115-129 (118).
[164] Mary Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

between companies and deliberate allusion by the Admiral's Men to Shakespeare's plays, appealing to a shared spectator base.[165] Mark Hutchings, too, finds that plays featuring Turks were 'a significant component of the Rose repertory', but that ultimately the Turk play was 'a cross-repertorial phenomenon'.[166] Game scenes and metaphors are too widespread to be categorised. As the appendices show, game references occur across the play-making spectrum and theatre history – across companies, indoor and outdoor playhouses, and dramatists.

## A Metaphoric Classification of Games

Where it is possible, however, to apply some sort of 'game taxonomy' is in terms of their use and signification. Games and game scenes are not just props and decoration. At the most basic level, reference to a game is a signal of error, wrong-doing or over-reaching of some kind. I have found no exception to this moral sign-posting. Games are also signals of an important moment, turning point or crisis, often preceded by striking theatrical action, such as the introduction of stage properties necessary for a game. In texts such as *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, *The Spanish Curate* and *All Fools*, stage directions, whether relatively brief, such as '*A Drawer or two, setting a [gaming] table*' (*AF* 5.2.1sd) and '*Enter Moore with Chesse-board*' (*SC* 3.4.27sd) or the elaborate directions in *A Woman Killed*, '*Enter […] with cards, carpet, stools and other necessaries*' (8.117sd), followed by '*They spread a carpet, set down lights and cards*' (125sd), make clear the dramatist's intention to highlight the ensuing development. As we will see in *Arden*, the audience hears Blackwill's detailed instructions as to how the gaming table and the chairs and stools should be set up in the parlour and knows what is to happen on the given watchword, 'Now I take you' (14.101) and so waits in anticipation. In this charged atmosphere spectators would be alert to the signal that something important is going to happen.

In addition to this, gaming language acts as shorthand with which dramatists communicate with spectators – because, as with the ancient cave paintings, allusions to games were made for contemporaries and assumed shared knowledge.[167] Weimann considers

[165] Tom Rutter, *Shakespeare and the Admiral's Men: Reading Across Repertories on the London Stage, 1594-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
[166] Mark Hutchings, *Turks, Repertories, and the Early Modern English Stage* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 97, 62.
[167] Murray, *Board-Games*, 2.

that, 'Like those who watched the mystery plays, the simple London public was well able to bring a surprising amount of intelligence and understanding to the theater'.[168] Of course the smaller, more expensive indoor 'hall playhouses' were frequented by a more affluent and privileged clientele, if not always as educated and attentive as writers such as Jonson and Webster would have liked.[169] I will speculate at certain points on staging and how the dramaturgy often mirrors the game, but the metaphor is dialogue-centric. For these early modern game simulations we do not need to see the 'pips', as both the dots on dice and the marks on cards were termed. Without today's proliferation of print it was a more aural world. As Gurr explains, whilst for the less educated playgoer spectacle rivalled poetry as the main playhouse attraction, a poet wants listeners and the 'hearing of plays, implicit in the Latin origin of the word "audience", was the basic expectation in the minds of all Shakespearean playgoers'.[170] For our vicarious play all we need to know is supplied by the dialogue. As Walker's 'M' might have told us, it is through familiarisation with the terminology and knowledge of the method of the game that we gain insights. We need to get inside the individual games to understand how they function and how dramatists use them and although he does not mention any dramatic intersection, Willughby is invaluable in this respect.

I will now address the principal defining characteristics of my taxonomy, fuller illustrations of which follow in chapters 2-5. Dicing is the paradigmatic contract with chance and requires no skill (unless one includes the construction and timely deployment of counterfeit dice, designed to skew the outcome of a game). All dramatic instances of dice games have a defining feature: they all entail a sudden reversal of fortune. Dicing evokes and symbolizes danger and risk. Not only are the elements of chance in life represented by dice games but characters are referred to, metaphorically and pejoratively, as dice. When the early dice made of animal bones gave way to the cubic dice familiar today, the material from which they were normally made was still bone.[171] Willughby confirms this: 'A die is a little

[168] Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition*, 171.
[169] See Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), particularly 26-38 and 116-124. The basic admission price at an amphitheatre such as the Theatre was 'one penny and sixpence could buy a lord's room', whereas the minimum entry at the Blackfriars was between three and six pennies, beyond the reach of apprentices for example, and 'a box alongside the stage cost five times the top price at the Globe', 31.
[170] Gurr, *Playgoing*, 97. Gurr states that, though not alone, Jonson was the most ardent in hoping playgoers had 'come to heare, not see a play' (Prologue to *the Staple of News* (1626), and that 'every time [he] called his audience "spectators", as he almost invariably did, he was covertly sneering at the debased preference for stage spectacle rather than the poetic "soul", which he claimed they could only find by listening to his words', 102-3.
[171] The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford holds cubic dice from Greece of the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. See Murray, *Board-Games*, 8. Dice made of stone, wood and pottery have been found. See F.N. David, 10.

cube made of bone, the latus about 3/8'.[172] Through synecdoche, therefore, people could be referred to as dice, or false dice. In Thomas Dekker's *Blurt, Master Constable* (1602) the Spaniard, Lazarillo, is warned by Blurt to 'Take heed with what dice you pass, I mean what company, for Satan is most busy where he finds one like himself' (1.2.139-41). Blurt's pointed personification of dice suggests there are many false dice walking the streets of Venice, one of which is the braggart and chancer Lazarillo himself. In Dekker and John Webster's *Westward Ho* (1607), Mistress Tenterhook refers to herself and the other mischievous wives as 'false dice' as they outwit and reprimand their would-be lovers:

> O you are proper Gamsters to bring false dice with you from London to cheat your selues. Ist possible that three shallowe women should gul three such gallants?' (5.4.113-15)[173]

Conversely, dice are discussed as if they are living beings in *Michaelmas Term*, Salewood fearing that the dice they are using are 'the bones of some quean' (2.1.143-4) returning to haunt him. In Middleton's *The Blacke Booke* (1604) Sergeant Lucifer in disguise reckons that the 'crafty dice having peeped once, knew who I was well enough and would never have their little black eyes off o' me all the while after'.[174] The black pips in the white dice become the pupils and whites of an eye.

Cards, also oracular in origin and associated with error, are termed games of 'imperfect information' because although a player can see the cards he has been dealt, he does not know what remains in the stock, or what cards his fellow players hold, until they are discarded or turned face up.[175] Cardano refers to this as 'from ambush' and card games featured in drama signal these characteristics.[176] Furthermore, the 'court' or 'face' cards are used as miniature portraits, as glimpsed in *A bloody Game*. In France court cards even had specific names, inscribed on the card. The King of Diamonds, for instance, was traditionally called 'Julius Caesar', and his name still appears on French packs – see figure below.[177]

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[172] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 112.
[173] Thomas Dekker and John Webster, *Westward Ho* in *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, Vol. II, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).
[174] Thomas Middleton, *The Blacke Booke* (1604) in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, 207-18 (214, l. 514).
[175] Parlett, *Oxford Guide*, 19.
[176] Cardano, *Liber*, in Ore ed., *Gambling Scholar*, 206.
[177] The King, Queen and Knave/Jack of modern French packs retain the archaic feature of court cards bearing individual names, typically: Piques: David, Fallas, Hogier; Trèfles: Alexandre, Argine, Lancelot; Coeurs: Charles, Judith, La Hire; Carreaux: César, Rachel, Hector. See Parlett, *Oxford Guide*, 44.

**Figure 5: French King of Diamonds playing card 'Julius cezar', c. 1480.**
**carton moulé d'un jeu de cartes (détail), Lyon, Jean de Dale; Reserve KH-30 (A,2)-FOL.**
**By kind permission of Bibliothèque National de France/Estampes et photographie.**

As Benham points out, even in English packs today, the King of Diamonds is the only King with no sword; he holds a glorious battle-axe and 'there is reason to think that this […] was originally the Roman fasces – a bundle of rods with a protruding axe-head'.[178] Benham considers it likely that 'in Shakespeare's time one of the Court Cards was known in England as "Caesar". If so, it was probably the King of Diamonds'.[179] Editors of *Antony and Cleopatra*, since Nicholas Rowe in 1709, have amended Antony's accusation that his Queen has 'Packed cards with Caesars' (plural), 'and false-played my glory / Unto an enemy's triumph' to 'Packed cards with Caesar' (singular) (4.12.19).[180] The amendment alters the nuance: instead of meaning 'Shuffled the cards in Caesar's favour', what is meant is that Cleopatra packs her deck with kings – or, to be more explicit, she sides with power, all Caesars or rulers. The Latin *Caesar* (plural *Caesars*) derives from the cognomen of Caius Julius Caesar but became the title of all emperors, down to the fall of Constantinople in 1453.[181] My suggestion is supported by the extensive wordplay in Antony's lament, with

[178] Benham, *Playing Cards*, 105.
[179] Ibid, 107.
[180] Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. John Wilders (London: Routledge, 1995)
[181] Caroline Baird, 'Board Game Squares, Face Cards and Chess in Antony and Cleopatra, *Notes and Queries*, 262/2 (June 2017), 297-300 (298-9) doi.org/10.1093/notesj/gjx062. I also discuss the slippage between 'triumph' and 'trump'.

'knave', 'Queen', 'heart' and 'triumph' – and 'Caesars' – all creating the anachronistic card-playing image.

Levels of betting were high at cards as well as dice, and in one game more than any other – Primero, a forerunner of poker and considered by Cardano 'the noblest of all'.[182] Harington suggests that:

> If her Majestie would play at primero in that proportion of her estate as I have seen some of her mean subjects in theyr poor calinges, she should play a dukedome at a rest, and a barony stake.[183]

As a result of widespread knowledge of, if not personal involvement in, such high bets, a specific term used in Primero, to 'set up rest', came to be adopted as a stand-alone term, so well understood that reference to the game itself was not required. The 'rest' was the final bet, typically three times the basic stake. Often misunderstood, 'rest' comes from the Spanish term *echar el resto* and was adopted along with the game (and another of its terms, *flux,* which becomes 'flush'). The *resto* 'was what we term a bet' and to 'set up was equivalent to lay down, and arose from the piling up of the money ventured'.[184] Hence the term came to mean, colloquially, to resolve on, to do one's utmost. The rest/unrest binary provides a linguistic tool, as can be noted from a section of a Harington epigram:

> Poore Marcus, and his rest goes still to wracke,
> Now must he seeke new spoile to set his rest,
> For here his seeds turne weeds, his rest, vnrest.185

Shakespeare makes use of this binary for the bawdy inferred by Juliet's Nurse: 'The County Paris hath set up his rest / That you shall rest but little' (4.5.6-7).[186] Even without its binary other, 'rest' can signify effectively in a variety of situations. It can, however, go largely unnoticed nonetheless.[187] When Lear decides on abdication and division of his kingdom Cordelia refuses to play the game that her sisters play in the love contest he initiates. A distraught Lear admits, 'I loved her most, and thought to set my rest / On her kind nursery', before bidding her, 'Hence and avoid my sight' (1.1.124-25). R.A. Foakes glosses 'Set my rest' as both 'stake all' (misreading 'rest' as the 'remainder') and 'rely for my repose', 'with

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[182] Cardano, *Liber*, in Ore ed. *Gambling Scholar*, 206.
[183] Harington, *Nugae Antiquae*, ed. Thomas Park (London, 1804), 206.
[184] Thomas Keightley, 'Incony and Set up Rest', *Notes and Queries*, Vol. s2-XII, Issue 291, 27 July 1861, 64-5.
[185] Harington, *The most elegant and witty epigrams of Sir Iohn Harrington, Knight* (London, printed by G.P. for Iohn Budge, 1618), The second Booke, 99, 'The Story of Marcus life at Primero', H2[r].
[186] Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. René Weis (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).
[187] Shakespeare uses the expression in five plays: *AW*: 2.1.135; *CE*: 4.3.26; *RJ* 4.5.6; *KL*: 1.1.123; *MV*: 2.2.96, *H5* 2.1.16. Also see Webster: *The White Devil* 5.6.296; Ford: '*Tis Pity She's a Whore* 5.3.72; Middleton: *Anything for a Quiet Life* 1.1.228.

a hint of dying, or being laid to rest'.[188] Stanley Wells also reads rest as remainder but gets closer to its essence with his gloss: 'In gambling, "stake all that remains", so, figuratively, "set my final hope or trust", though with a sense also of "repose"'.[189] In view of Lear's wish to abdicate and the close coupling of 'rest' and 'nursery', a modern reader falls into the trap of understanding 'repose'. But if ever there was an example of an unwise, high-stakes gamester, it is surely Lear. Contemporaries would have understood much more readily the gaming analogy, inferring that Lear realizes the stakes and what a supreme gamble he is taking. The term is used as a more overt signal of awareness of risk in tragedies by John Webster and John Ford. In *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* the incestuous lover, Giovanni, tormented by guilt, declares, 'I have set up my rest' (5.3.72) as he summons the courage to kill his sister.[190] In *The White Devil* Count Lodovico goes to prison and torture with a defiant rhyming couplet: 'Here's my rest: / I limned this night-piece, and it was my best' (5.6.296-97).[191] We can start to see that there are games where we do not expect there to be games.

Playwrights also evoked physical games such as the game of chase and capture, Barley-break. Also known as 'Last Couple in Hell', references in drama to this more physical and primitive game work in a similar fashion. The game is a symbol of a particular error, wantonness, and it too is used in both comedic and tragic plays. Barley-break is played by three couples. 'The middle', where the central couple stand, 'is called Hel', writes Willughby.[192] 'All the 3 pare hold one another by the hands, and when the word Barly Break is given' the outer couples split and must try and change partners and join hands again before the central couple, still holding hands, catch them.[193] If caught they become the new tenants of Hell. The game is poetically described in Sir Philip Sidney's *Lamon's Tale* (unfinished at his death in 1587) and in another poem with a didactic message, made clear in its title, *Barley-breake, OR a Warning for Wantons* (1607). In both poems shepherdesses run off with men and are ravished and the men express delight at being in 'hell'. Several dramatists of the period make use of Barley-break's symbolism. Perhaps the most powerful example occurs in Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* (1622). Ann Pasternak Slater sees Barley-break as a 'potent symbol for the entire play', even though the two brief references to it are subtle.[194]

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[188] *King Lear*, ed. R.A. Foakes (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1997), 166 (gloss to 1.1.124).
[189] *King Lear*, ed. Stanley Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 106.
[190] John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore,* ed. Martin Wiggins (London: A & C Black, 2003).
[191] John Webster, *The White Devil*, ed. John Russell Brown (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).
[192] Cram et al., eds. *Willughby's Book of Games*, 162.
[193] Ibid, 162.
[194] Ann Pasternak Slater, 'Hypallage, Barley-Break, and *The Changeling*', *The Review of English Studies*, 34.136 (1983), 429-440 (436).

The cry by the asylum's madmen at play, 'Catch there, catch the last couple in hell!' (3.3.167), receives a very much more sinister inflection when De Flores gloats menacingly to Alsemero at the end of the play: 'I coupled with your mate / At barley-break; now we are left in hell' (5.3.162-63). Indeed, the game can be seen to be mirroring not only the changing character couplings that Pasternak Slater points out, but influencing the textual patterning itself. Building on the identification by Christopher Ricks of a set of polysemous words that De Flores subverts by forcing a sexual connotation, I find a key selection of what I term 'word couples' – words which are used in pairs in textual exchanges, as if they too are couples at Barley-break, chasing, catching, holding hands and breaking.[195] Looking at just one example, 'Deed' and 'Service' leave act two of the play partnered, and return together, like a couple who have evaded capture, when De Flores comes to report the success of his mission. A dicing analogy immediately beforehand draws attention to the element of game and risk:

DE FLORES Why, are not both our lives upon the cast?
BEATRICE Then I shall throw all my fears upon your *service*,
DE FLORES They ne'er shall rise to hurt you.
BEATRICE When the *deed*'s done,
I shall furnish thee with all things for thy flight; (2.2.141-44)

DE FLORES [*aside*] My thoughts are at a banquet for the *deed*.
[…]
BEATRICE Thy looks promise cheerfully
DE FLORES All things are answerable – time, circumstance,
Your wishes, and my *service*. (3.4.18-23)

This mirroring of game and text occurs in other plays too and shows how carefully a game is woven into the play. We will see, in Chapter 4, that when Porter's two angry women are playing at Tables the verse is in rhyming couplets. When the game is interrupted by their husbands, these couplets stop, only to resume again when the men leave and the women's game recommences.

As Touraj Daryaee notes, with its combination of luck and strategy and the symbolism of its circular track, Tables represents 'fate and the cosmic cycle', rather than the battle symbolized in Chess.[196] Board-games such as Tables can offer a further human analogy – that of the body, which is to say the *female* body. As Pennick explains, because of their basis in divination, 'the designs of traditional gameboards [featuring squares, crosses and

[195] Christopher Ricks, 'The Moral and Poetic Structure of *The Changeling*', *Essays in Criticism*, 10/3 (1960), 290-306.
[196] Touraj Daryaee, 'Mind, Body, and the Cosmos: Chess and Backgammon in Ancient Persia', *Iranian Studies* 35/4, 'Sports and Games' (2002), 281-312 (295).

circles] preserve their sacred origins'.[197] The quartered board – smaller squares subdividing the main one – has been shown to be a metaphysical symbol of the human body with its four limbs. Consider Da Vinci's iconic Vitruvian Man in this respect (see figure below).

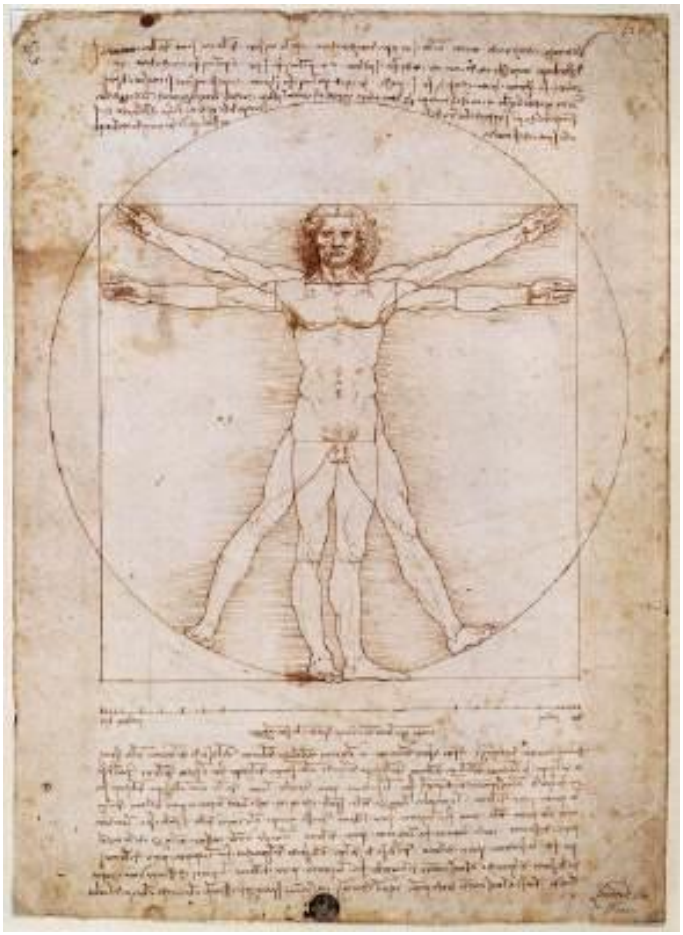

**Figure 6: Leonardo da Vinci, *Vitruvian Man* (1492). Man inscribed within a circle and a square illustrating the measurements of the ideal human body according to the rules of the Roman architect Vitruvius's *De Architectura*. Web Gallery of Art.**

James E. Doan has written on the erotic connotations of the game in sixteenth-/seventeenth-century Irish *dánta grádha*.[198] He cites David Greene's suggestion that 'these literary *jeux-d'esprit* were imported to Ireland from Provence or France by the Anglo-Normans along with the game itself'.[199] Doan finds the same sexual puns in both languages across several poems, with the game representing sexual intercourse, the board a woman's body, home her vagina

[197] Pennick, *Games of the Gods*, 144. Chess is square-based, whilst Tables has a circular track. See also Musser Golladay on the symbolism of the square and circle: 'Historical, Artistic and Metaphysical Dimensions', 1050.
[198] Love poetry influenced by the Provençal tradition of *amour Courtois*.
[199] David Greene 'Un Joc Grossier in Irish and Provençal', in *Ériu* 17, 7-15, cited in James E. Doan, 'The Erotics of Backgammon in Provençal and Irish Poetry', in *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium,* 12 (1992), 29-42 (31).

and a man or men being a penis or testes respectively.[200] This mimesis of sexual congress and its implicit prize may have increased the game's allure.

We can see how easily life can be illustrated by a square game board. As war manuals of the 1590s confirm, military formations or squadrons were squares (after the Italian *squadra*) and the diagrams of war and camp formations bear a remarkable likeness to game boards, as can be seen in the figure below. Shakespearean drama, too, refers to 'squares of war' and 'squares of battle'.[201]

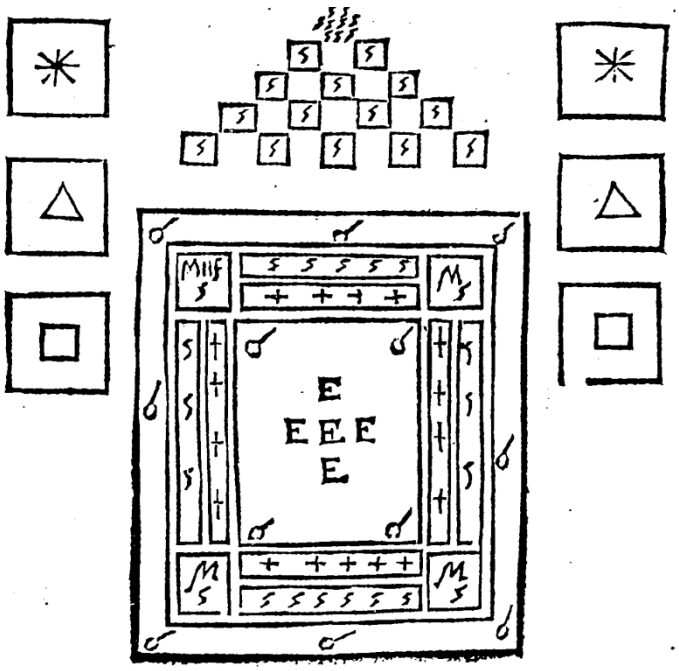


**Figure 7: William Garrard, *The Arte of Warre* (1591), 200.**
**RB 59154, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California**

Chess has always been a game of war, with the earliest known variant being called *Chaturanga*, which comes from the Sanskrit, meaning quadripartite, a term 'used to describe the Indian army which had four elements reflecting the fourfold division of the world'.[202] These four parts, and thus the original chess pieces, were the cavalry, infantry, elephants and chariots. Murray concludes that 'European chess is a direct descendant of an Indian game played in the seventh century with substantially the same arrangement and method as in Europe five centuries later'.[203] It was 'adopted first by the Persians, then handed on to the

[200] Doan, 'Erotics of Backgammon', 39.
[201] E.g., Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, ed. Wilders, 3.11.40; *King Henry V*, ed. Craik, 5.2.27.
[202] Pennick, *Games of the Gods,* 186.
[203] Murray, *Chess*, 27.

Muslim world, and finally borrowed from Islam by Christian Europe'.[204] It was then in Europe, in the closing years of the fifteenth century, that lasting and important changes were made to the moves of the queen and bishop, resulting in a swifter game. The game's new names – queen's chess, *scacchi de la donna, axedrez de la dama*, and *eschés de la dame* – reflected the importance of the queen.[205] Murray stresses the rapidity with which the new game displaced the old. By 1510 the older version was obsolete in Italy and Spain, with evidence of a longer reign in France, and before 1550 the new game had been widely adopted and the feminine suffixes fell away.[206] As Daniel O'Sullivan states, with these new rules, 'life on both real and virtual chessboards would never be the same'. [207] As he says, Chess comes down to simple parameters:

> Sixty-four squares. Thirty-two pieces. Two armies, each led by one king […] and yet in medieval culture it was – and remains today – capable of expressing so much of the human mind.[208]

It is claimed that Chess was invented by a philosopher to correct the life and manners of an evil king, and the concept of correcting or 'checking' behaviour or desire is a feature of its long history in allegory.[209] In the Middle Ages works were written 'to find parallels between the organization of human life and activities and the different names and powers of the chessmen'.[210] The most influential of these 'chess moralities' was Jacobus de Cessolis's *Liber de moribus hominum et officiis nobilium ac popularium super ludo scachorum* [*Book on the Morals of Men and the Duties of Nobles and Commoners, on the Game of Chess*].[211] It was translated into many European languages and is the basis of one of the first books to be printed in England, William Caxton's *The Game and Playe of the Chesse* (1474). Despite his title, Caxton imparts little instruction for chess-players. It is the image of order and hierarchy symbolized by Chess that is harnessed in his allegory of a regulated society. In the early years of the trope the allegories were, as O'Sullivan states, 'static or textually cumbersome', as poets could only rely on readers having a superficial understanding of the game; but as the

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[204] Ibid, 29.
[205] Ibid, 776.
[206] Murray, *Chess*, 779. The first work on the new game was that of Damiano, in 1512. This was translated into French in 1560 and thence into English, by James Rowbothum, in editions of 1562 and 1569. See Murray, *Chess, 787.*
[207] Daniel E. O'Sullivan, ed., 'Changing the Rules in and of Medieval Chess Allegories' in *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: A Fundamental Thought Paradigm of the Pemodern World* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 214.
[208] O'Sullivan, ed. Introduction, *Chess in the Middle Ages,* 13.
[209] See Murray, *Chess*, 542; William Caxton in Jenny Adams, ed., *William Caxton: The Game and Playe of the Chesse* [1474] (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009), especially 19-20 (Book One, ll. 48-9).
[210] Murray, *Chess*, 529.
[211] See Murray, *Chess*, 537-49 on this thirteenth-century work.

game gained popularity poets could be more inventive and create more 'dynamic allegories capable of conveying meaning more subtly and economically'.[212] What is important to take from the medieval period is that, 'at chess the sexes met on equal terms' and it was 'even permissible to visit a lady in her chamber to play chess with her or for her amusement'.[213] This intimacy was an important factor in the development of Chess as a vehicle for seduction. Medieval epics offer examples of the use of Chess for lovers: Lancelot visits Guinevere in her chamber ostensibly to play Chess; Tristan and Yseult fall in love while playing the game.[214] As Patricia Simons notes, Chess provided the occasion to conquer, either by outwitting the competition or by seducing the object of desire.[215] At the same time, however, a female chess-player might deliberately lose in order to be 'won'. As with the medieval epic, deliberately losing or wanting to 'lose' is also a feature in the early modern period and Shakespeare's Juliet and Miranda are just two examples.

The martial origins and characteristics of Chess are evident in its metaphorical and emblematic use, but the metaphor extends beyond war, or war as political struggle, to that of sexual conquest too and all Chess games in early modern drama relate to political or sexual struggle, or both. I have explained how people can be compared to dice and cards, and bodies to game boards. Similar slippage occurs as characters are described as if they are pieces on a game board. Middleton's split level stage in *Women Beware Women*, with the progress of a chess game below mirroring a rape on the upper stage, is the most widely discussed example. An even more overt example of this feature of slippage between player and piece occurs in *The Spanish Curate*. When asked to advise on the best move in the Chess game he has been observing, Leandro suddenly places himself on the metaphorical chess board and begs Amaranta to 'move [a piece] can serve ye, / Can honour ye, can love ye', 'I'le tell ye Instantly, / Move me' (3.4.71-2, 73-4).

Often, however, examples of such temporary metamorphosis are more subtle and may be missed. Critics such as Rick Bowers and Linda Woodbridge have noted the theme of contest in *Antony and Cleopatra* without commenting on an intriguing textual crux.[216] Just as he becomes betrothed to Octavia, Antony confesses to her that hitherto 'I have not kept my

[212] O'Sullivan, 'Changing the Rules' in *Chess in the Middle Ages*, 201.
[213] Murray, *Chess*, 436.
[214] Ibid, *Chess*, 437.
[215] Patricia Simons, '"(Check)mating the Grand Masters": The Gendered, Sexualized Politics of Chess in Renaissance Italy', *Oxford Art Journal*, 16/1 (1993), 59-74.
[216] 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 (London: Routledge, 2005), 193-211; Rick Bowers '"The luck of Caesar": Winning and Losing in *Antony and Cleopatra*', *English Studies*, 79.6 (1998), 522-535.

square' (2.3.6). The Romans were very keen on games – not just gladiatorial 'games' but board-games, using pieces, or men, and dice.[217] Here Antony sees himself (or Shakespeare portrays him as seeing himself) as one of these 'men' or playing pieces.[218] He promises Octavia that henceforward 'shall all be done by th'rule' (7). Editors gloss 'square' as a carpenter's tool or set square and some cite 'the square of prudence and rule of reason'.[219] This not only ignores the square of battle, but there is yet another definition to consider: 'a quadrilateral space esp. one of several marked out on a board, paper, or other surface for playing certain games'.[220] All games have rules, of course, and directly after Antony promises to keep to his square and abide by the rules, desiring to know who will win the metaphorical game, he asks, 'Whose fortunes shall rise higher, Caesar's or mine?' (2.3.15). The soothsayer is unequivocal, 'Caesar's' (16); and there are no riddles in the sage's final warning, which speaks directly to the gamester in Antony: 'If thou dost play with him at any game / Thou art sure to lose' (24-5). Antony registers the truth and recalls their habit of competing:

> He hath spoken true. The very dice obey him,
> And in our sports my better cunning faints
> Under his chance. (32-4)

Hereafter all Antony's references to games concern Cleopatra. 'Contrary to his promise to Octavia, he does move out of his "square" and it is as if we are being shown his dereliction of duty in his change of gaming partner, from his dice-controlling co-triumvir to the oft-dissembling, cross-dressing "wrangling queen" (1.1.49)'.[221]

In many of the plays listed in the appendices the references to a game are single instances – seemingly just part of the linguistic fabric; but they are there deliberately and invariably resonate and connect with the principal themes. Lear's acknowledgement of his gamble and De Flores's admission of his inappropriate and lust-driven game, are cases in point. And as can be readily seen from these lists, frequently there are several different games mentioned in a single play, one providing the dominant motif, with others reinforcing the competitive element and adding nuances. But where a game is set into the action its influence is more significant and its ramification wider. Whether the game scene opens the play,

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[217] Frescoes in Roman villas depict the game of *tabula* in progress and the excavators of Pompeii found a table, or game board, carved in the courtyard of almost every villa, Jacoby and Crawford, *The Backgammon Book*, 17. Game boards have been found on Roman sites in Britain, particularly along Hadrian's Wall, Murray, *Board-Games*, 30.
[218] Baird, 'Board Games Squares', 298
[219] From Thomas Wright's *Passions of the Mind in General* (1621), 1.3.13. See Wilders ed., *Antony and Cleopatra*, gloss to 2.3.6.
[220] *OED, n.* II. 6.a.
[221] Baird, 'Board Game Squares', 298.

functions as its denouement or occurs at some other, but significantly crucial, moment, its echoes can be seen reverberating and refracting throughout. I show, in Chapter 5, how the early scenes of *Women Beware Women* operate as the early stages of a larger game of Chess with the masque as its checkmate. *Arden of Faversham* offers opportunities to imagine the eventually murdered Arden, Franklin, Mosby and the henchmen Blackwill and Shakebag, as 'tablemen' on a Tables board. Arden is protected when he is with his companion but at risk on his 'home board' when he is a solitary 'blot', as a single man on a point is termed. Tables is one of the best examples of a 'race game' and provides a perfect analogy for the repeated attempts to take Arden's life, and the setbacks that befall his assassins until their eventual success. I find the characteristics of the game identifiable throughout the early acts, even though the scene at Tables does not feature until the end of the play. The same pattern, in reverse, occurs when a game scene opens a play – it percolates outwards. The Tables game with which *Two Angry Women* opens sets up the theme of anger which runs throughout the play, the race and capture game prefacing a much later race – the women's frantic attempt to stop the marriage of their respective offspring. Likewise the better-known card scene of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, which falls almost exactly at the play's mid-way point, connects with the themes of love, honour and forfeit. Examples of seemingly unimportant game references radiating outwards abound, such as the card game Noddy played in the brothel scene of Dekker and Webster's *Westward Ho*. Pre-dating Middleton's same inspired use in *Women Beware Women* of the two levels of the Jacobean stage to parallel games and sexual encounter, Birdlime entertains Master Honeysuckle at a game of Noddy, one of the oldest two-handed card games, whilst another muffled customer, Tenterhook, is ushered to the 'dining chamber' (4.1.46) above, where Luce, a whore described as 'the old party' (4.1.23), awaits. Noddy, as the knave of the pack is called in this game, was also a word for a fool or simpleton, but for reasons on which I speculate later, the game is used, not just here, to signify cuckoldry and sexual intercourse. As well as mirroring the sexual game above, the game on the lower stage not only emblematizes the brothel keeper's game of making winning combinations – Birdlime asks, 'God send me Duces and Aces with a Court Card' (4.1.33-4), metaphorically matching whores and gentry – but it also connects to the play's general theme of cuckoldry, predatory men and prostitution.

We can see, therefore, that games are not really about games. They are about many others issues – land and wealth acquisition, social climbing, patriarchal supremacy, risk and reward, abdication, war, politics, sexual conquest and congress, love, adultery and even murder. Games and game references can suddenly illuminate a situation we have only

partially understood, underline a theme and even provide the structural platform of a plot. Each particular gaming reference is carefully and deliberately chosen to form an integral part of the story's thread. As Lakoff and Johnson state, 'The essence of metaphor is understanding one kind of thing in terms of another'.[222] Having presented this general overview, I will next examine through close readings the detailed application of games and show how understanding the specific game and the reason for its inclusion provides new insights into these plays and opens up discussion of their role in early modern drama.

[222] Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 5.

## Two | DICE

Games find their way into a popular allegorical device of the period, the emblem.[1] One such by Wither begins:


> When we observe the Ball, how to and fro
> The Gamesters force it; we may ponder thus:
> That whil'st we live we shall be playd with so,
> And that the World will make her Game of us.
> Adversities, one while our hearts constraine
> To stoope, and knock the Pavements of Despaire;
> Hope, like a Whirle-wind mounts us up againe,
> Till oft it lose us in the empty ayre.[2]

Whilst the accompanying illustration is of ball players, the image the poetry paints, of man as an object in the game, is much like that of the Wheel of Fortune. As Kimberly Bell relates, it was Boethius's sixth-century treatise, *De Consolatio Philosophiae*, that popularised the ancient concept of the Wheel of Fortune and the goddess Fortuna's game with humanity. Her

[1] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 49.
[2] George Wither, *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Moderne, The First Booke* (London, printed by A[ugustine] M[atthewes] for Robert Milbourne, 1635), 16. Illustration from RB 79918,The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

turning of the wheel is described as a continual game, '*hunc continuum ludum ludimus'*.[3] Philosophy, in the voice of Fortuna, explains the rules:

> I delight to make the lowest turn to the top, the highest to the bottom.
> Come you to the top if you will, but on this condition, that you think
> it no unfairness to sink when the rule of my game demands it.[4]

As Bell remarks, 'if a person chooses to play the game, she or he must submit to Fortuna's whims'.[5] So it is with games of chance, in which the gamester is, as per Cotton's description, either 'lifted up to the top of mad joy with success; or plung'd to the bottom of despair by misfortune'.[6] Dicing is the paradigmatic chance-determined game and its thrill lies in this submission to, or contract with, fate. It was a hugely popular pastime in England and attempts at prohibition, mostly on account of the compulsion to gamble large sums, and the consequent fighting and swearing, in all probability merely fuelled interest in it.

Conveniently rhyming with vice, dice were a feature of medieval and Tudor Moralities as a form of parable. Their inclusion in a 'preaty interlude', *Nice Wanton* (c. 1560) is presented, as Joseph McCullen observes, as 'a way of degradation that leads to the pox and a scaffold'.[7] In later drama, too, dicing performs particularly well as an emblem of the vices of prodigality, mendacity and greed, but its metaphoric use becomes more sophisticated, more nuanced and targeted. For example, Jean-Claude Mailhol finds dice and the 'prodigal son' to be a recurrent theme in domestic tragedy, 'embodied in the gruesome hero of *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608) who is the plaything of an uncontrollable fate, and whose gaming passion brings about his and his family's ruin'.[8] As Mailhol notes, towards the end of the play the Husband virtually merges with the stage property of a die when he is thrown from his horse, drawing attention himself to the parallel, swearing:

> Heart, of chance
> To throw me now within a flight o' th' town
> In such plain even ground! 'Sfoot, a man
> May dice upon't and throw away the meadows. (6.4-7)[9]

As Mailhol puts it, 'In a game of theatrical synecdoche, the hero and the die become one'.[10]

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[3] Kimberly Bell, '"Rounes to Rede": Ludic Reading Games in the Alliterative Wheel of Fortune Poem *Somer Soneday*', in Patterson, ed., *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, 169-186 (172).
[4] Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. W.V. Cooper (London: J.M. Dent and Company, 1902), Bk II, pr. II.
[5] Bell, 'Ludic Reading Games', 173.
[6] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 1.
[7] McCullen, 'Parlor and Tavern Games', 7.
[8] Mailhol, 'L'Esthéthique du jeu cruel', 91 (my translation).
[9] Thomas Middleton, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, ed. Stanley Wells in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 452-466.
[10] Mailhol, 'L'Esthétique du jeu cruel', 100 (my translation).

If most of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century dicing games have disappeared or evolved, their names are immortalised in the poetry and plays: Mumchance, Inn and Inn, Novum, Passage and, above all, both on account of its suggestive name and its popularity, Hazard. One of the first dice-games mentioned in literature – by Dante for example – and the forerunner of modern casino craps, Hazard has altered little over the centuries.[11] It involves players betting on whether or not they will throw a certain number with two dice and throwing until they do. Since it was not until Pascal and Fermat's breakthrough in 1654 that averages and probability were fully understood, we are to infer, as Gerda Reith suggests, that early modern gamesters 'did not comprehend all the ways various combinations could be achieved with two dice'.[12] Certainly in plays such as Middleton's *Michaelmas Term*, with an inset dicing game, the characters show themselves unable to judge the odds of the gamble they take, and they come to rue their mistakes. In the legal trickery of Middleton's city comedy, in the 'magician/witch' play *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon*, and in *The Tragedie of Soliman and Perseda* we will discover the varied ways dramatists use dicing as a sophisticated dramatic device and how the specific game is carefully chosen, reflecting the themes presented in each play.

## Cheating Law in *Michaelmas Term*

Wide-ranging critical approaches to *Michaelmas Term* concentrate variously on the 'social index' of clothing, the sodomitical undertones, the animal imagery and the mixed legal and sexual language.[13] Largely ignored by commentators, even in discussion of the play's fierce portrayal of social competition, is the gaming scene which opens the second act. Even Nicholas Knight and Amanda Bailey, writing on its theme of law and inheritance, neglect the dramatic function of this dicing game and the ensuing gaming allusions, despite dicing being

[11] Hazard is mentioned in the sixth canto of the *Purgatorio*; see David, *Games, Gods and Gambling*, 35.
[12] Reith, *Age of Chance*, 77.
[13] Gail Kern Paster, ed., *Thomas Middleton Michaelmas Term* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 35. See also *inter alia* Ruby Chatterji, 'Unity and Disparity in *Michaelmas Term'* in *SEL*, 8.2 (1968), 349-363; A.L. & M.K. Kistner, 'Heirs and Identity: The Bases of Social Order in *Michaelmas Term*', *Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (1986), 61-71; Theodore B. Leinwand, 'Redeeming Beggary/Buggery in *Michaelmas Term*', *English Literary History* 61.1 (1994), 54-70; Leinwand ed., Introduction to *Michaelmas Term*, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 334-6; Mathew Martin, 'Begot between tirewomen and tailors', *Early Modern Literary Studies* 5.1 (1999), 2.1-36; Paul Yachnin, 'Social Competition in Middleton's *Michaelmas Term*', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 13 (1987), 87-99.

one of the main tricks proposed by the chief cozener, Ephestian Quomodo, to beggar Richard Easy of his inheritance.[14] Dicing and cheating may seem at variance with the legal framework to which the title, *Michaelmas Term*, makes allusion, and which is confirmed in the Induction and sustained throughout by myriad legal terms and the various bonds, recullisances and memoranda unwisely signed by the principal characters, but there are intriguing connections.[15] As Johan Huizinga suggests, the court of justice and gaming table are both 'play-grounds' with set roles, rules, and limitations of time and place for an agonistic contest.[16] He theorizes that the lawsuit 'can be regarded as a game of chance, a contest, or a verbal battle'.[17] Closer still to the world of Middleton's play, and not mentioned in Knight's otherwise thorough survey of the legal terminology, the derivation of 'cheats', the term given to false dice, is, according to Walker's *Manifest Detection of Dice-Play* (c. 1552), 'borrow[ed] from among our lawyers'; that is from 'escheat', whereby in feudal law property is confiscated and falls by escheat to the lord or state.[18] In the topsy-turvy Elizabethan underworld, the tract explains, the 'cheaters turned the cat in the pan', labelling their various villainies 'laws' 'to maintain plain dealing'.[19] The various forms of cozenage were defined by different prefixes – cheating law (play at false dice), sacking law (lechery), high law (robbing by the highway side), figging law (cutting of purses and picking of pockets) and so forth.[20]

From the first lines of the Induction the competition between city and country is made clear. A personified Michaelmas Term returns from the summer vacation and removes his '*whitish*' (1.1.1sd) cloak, declaring it 'weed for the country' (1.1.2) and exchanges it for his 'evil' robes of 'civil black' (1.1.3-4).[21] In this contest between country virtue and city cunning, one is white and one is black, almost as if the analogy to be deployed were a game

[14] W. Nicholas Knight, 'Sex and Law Language in *Michaelmas Term*', in *"Accompaninge the players": Essays Celebrating Thomas Middleton, 1580-1980*, ed. Kenneth Friedenreich (New York: AMS Press, 1983), 89-108; Amanda Bailey, *Of Bondage: Debt, Property, and Personhood in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).
[15] Michaelmas Term is the longest of the law terms and the first term of the legal year.
[16] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 76-88.
[17] Ibid, 78.
[18] Walker in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 35. See *Black's Law Dictionary*, 9th edn, ed. in chief Bryan A. Garner (St Paul, MN: Thomson Reuters, 2009): 'escheat *n.* (14c) 1. *Hist.* The reversion of land ownership back to the lord when the immediate tenant dies without heirs […] 2. Reversion of property (esp. real property) to the state upon the death of an owner who has neither a will nor any legal heirs […] 3. Property that has so reverted'; 'escheator. *Hist.* A royal officer appointed to assess the value of property escheating to the Crown. Corrupt officers led many to associate escheator with fraudulent conduct, giving rise to the word *cheat* as used in the modern sense'.
[19] Walker in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 35. The expression 'turn the cat in the pan' means 'to reverse the order of things so dexterously as to make them appear the very opposite of what they really are', *OED*, *n.*[1], III, 12.
[20] Greene, *A Notable Discovery* in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 135.
[21] See also Kistner, 'Heirs and Identity', 61.

of Chess. We are left in no doubt of the superiority of the city, with Michaelmas Term declaring that 'through wealthy variance and fat brawl / The barn is made but steward to the hall' (1.1.11-12), city skill making the country subservient to Westminster. His rural clients are likened to animals or vegetables, mere 'hops and harlots', 'asses' that 'graze' their pastures, lambs and 'dried straws' (1.1.14, 39, 40, 47, 60), leading earlier commentators to focus on the animal imagery rather than gaming. Middleton was to reserve Chess for *Women Beware Women* and his final masterpiece, *A Game at Chess*, and a different game metaphor is used for this city comedy. Game allusions are always carefully chosen and the citizen-gentry conflicts, and the subsidiary contests between characters, are established through the microcosm of a dice game. Dicing epitomizes the compulsive allure of the city to its country cousins, the gulled squire and the Country Wench – for one the attraction is 'liberty' (1.2.52) and homosociality, and for the other the irresistible temptation is a 'satin gown' (1.3.36); it also epitomizes the precarious quality of the personal relationships to be experienced. The dice game is the nucleus for the duplicity and overreaching that follow.

Quomodo's first speeches make even clearer the 'deadly enmity' (1.2.111) of the rivalry between city merchant and landed gentry: 'They're busy 'bout our wives, we 'bout their lands' (1.2.112). The socially ambitious city draper has also been to the country, making a recce of 'fair neat land' (1.2.106) in Essex. His target is the newly-inherited estate of one Richard Easy, a credulous gentleman lacking a 'city powd'ring' (1.2.60). Quomodo aims to:

> cleave the heir in twain;
> I mean his title: to murder his estate,
> Stifle his right in some detested prison. (1.2.107-9)

He knows 'means and ways enough to hook in gentry' (1.2.110) and employs one of his servants, Shortyard, to inveigle himself into Easy's company with some very specific instructions:

> Keep foot by foot with him, out-dare his expenses, flatter, dice and brothel to him. Give him a sweet taste of sensuality. Train him to every wasteful sin, that he may quickly need health, but especially money. Ravish him with a dame or two […]. Drink drunk with him, creep into bed to him, kiss him and undo him, my sweet spirit. (1.2.124-31)

Quomodo allows for various forms of sexual preference, but chief amongst the recreational delights Easy is to be tempted with is dice, with its inevitable consequence – debt. Once Easy is in need of money Quomodo can implement his commodity scam.

In this scene, most likely set in the middle aisle of St Paul's, the era's prime meeting place and where, indeed, *A Manifest Detection* is also set, the various 'competitors' are revealed. The central competition is between Quomodo, through his amanuensis, Shortyard

(disguised as the gallant, 'Master Blastfield'), and Easy.[22] The secondary contest is between the would-be courtier, Andrew Lethe, who has his sights on the dowry of Quomodo's daughter, Susan, and his rival in the marriage game, the gallant, Rearage (whose name of course connects with the theme of inheritance, suggesting that he is in arrears). As Baldwin Maxwell says, Lethe was 'intended to be recognised as a Scot' through his name, and therefore as the villain, there being general animosity towards Scots due to the preferential treatment of the King's Scottish retinue.[23] His rival refers to him as a man of 'forgetfulness, lust, impudence, and falsehood' (1.2.160) and, as Knight remarks, expresses this contest over Susan 'in courtroom vocabulary; "I rest most doubtful, my side being weakest"' (1.2.71). Lethe and the gallants arrange to meet for a meal of venison at the Horn tavern. Meanwhile Lethe's pander, Hellgill, has lured to London a 'Northamptonshire lass' (1.3.13), one of Middleton's nameless characters addressed only as 'wench', who is seduced by the idea of fine clothes and Hellgill's other 'sweet enchantments' (1.3.53). The Country Wench finds herself in competition with Susan in a town-country morality conflict. Quomodo and Lethe are the two comic villains, and so are both eventually defeated.[24]

As Act 2 opens the gallants are '*at dice*' (2.1.1sd) in one of the tavern's rooms devoted to after-dinner gamesters. Lethe is winning, just as he has the lead in the marriage stakes. Rearage is losing, exclaiming, 'Dice? Devils!' (2.1.2), as if the bones still had life and agency. Salewood, another prodigal, voices the belief even more strongly, convinced that the dice are 'the bones of some quean that cozened me in her life and now consumes me after her death' (2.1.143-45). Kevin Chovanec notes the commonness of such expressions of belief in demonic agency, or indeed in the animism with which materials of gambling were possessed.[25] The game they are playing is not stated. Speculating on the possibilities, we know from Cotton that Inn and Inn 'is a game very much used in an ordinary and may be play'd by two or three, each having a box in his hand' and four dice.[26] Since Rearage soon invites Easy and Blastfield to 'draw in' (2.1.36), making five players, this has to be

[22] Speech prefixes in the text are all 'Shortyard' but for clarity I use 'Blastfield' when he is in disguise as the gallant and Shortyard when he is himself or in further disguises.
[23] The animosity towards Scots stemmed from the knighthoods bestowed by King James on his retinue. Maxwell Baldwin, 'Middleton's *Michaelmas Term*', *Philological Quarterly*, 22, (1943), 29-35 (33).
[24] Leinwand, ed. *Michaelmas Term* changes her speech prefixes from 'Country Wench' to 'Courtesan' from Act 3. Gail Kern Paster, ed., *Michaelmas Term* retains 'Country Wench' throughout.
[25] Kevin Chovanec, '"Now if the devil have bones,/ These dice are made of his": Dice Games on the English Stage in O'Bryan ed., *Games and Game Playing*, 139-156 (144). See also Reith on 'Animism and the omnipotence of thought' in *Age of Chance*, 164-66.
[26] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 80.

discounted, as does Passage, which was 'play'd at but by two […] with three dice'.[27] Novum is a game for five players, but they had commenced play with fewer gamesters so my guess is Hazard. From Cotton we know that 'This game is play'd but with two dice, but there may play at it as many as can stand round the largest table'.[28] In some plays conjecture is easier, with Hazard's terms, such as 'main', and 'chance' deliberately exploited, as, for example, in Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk* (c. 1612), which opens with gaming taking place in the cabin of John Ward's pirate ship on the open seas. In Daborne's play there are several puns about hazard, and, as Daniel Vitkus notes, on the term 'main' which comes to mean a variety of things, including the open sea.[29] One French merchant states in gaming terms that they came to 'deal merchant-like, put it upon one main and throw at all' (1.6-7) and his compatriot argues that a venting merchant 'puts to the main / With hazard of his life' (1.63-4), making the link between the risk of seafaring trade and dicing. [30] Although Middleton does not obviously exploit such terms, and we know only that the game requires the gamesters to continuously 'set' (2.1.36) down stakes, I believe that later clues suggest the hugely popular game of Hazard, 'a proper name for this game', as Cotton remarks, 'for it speedily makes a man or undoes him; in the twinkling of an eye either a man or a mouse.'[31]

A number of period texts suggest that gaming was considered a gentlemanly accomplishment. Northbrooke remarks:

> What is a man now a dayes if he know not fashions, and how to weare his apparel after the best fashions, to kepe company, & to become Mummer, & Diceplayers, and to play their twentie, forty of 100. li at Cards, Dice, &c.[32]

The city-wise Blastfield draws the naïve Easy into debt, teaching him the requisite gentlemanly nonchalance. When Easy announces he is out of money, Blastfield counsels the need to show indifference to loss: 'You must always have a care of your reputation here in town, Master Easy, although you ride down with nothing; it skills not' (2.1.44-6). Brathwait's advice in *The English Gentleman* is similar:

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[27] Ibid, 81.
[28] Ibid, 82.
[29] Daniel J. Vitkus, ed., *A Christian Turned Turk* in *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 148-239 (232-3). Vitkus appears convinced they play cards whereas I contend the terminology is that of dicing. It is clear from Cotton's *Compleat Gamester*, 80, that Hazard is a dice game.
[30] References are to Vitkus's edition in *Three Turk Plays*, as above.
[31] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 82.
[32] John Northbrooke, *A Treatise wherein Dicing, Dauncing, Vaine playes or Enterluds with other idle pastimes &c. commonly vsed on the Sabboth day, are reproued by the authoritie of the word of God and auntient writers* (London, printed by H. Bynneman for George Byshop, 1577), A4$^{r}$.

> there is nothing that may derogate more from the native Character of a Gentleman, than to expresse the least semblance of feare, for the losse of ought that he shall play.[33]

Blastfield immediately loans Easy several crowns and the grateful Easy makes the ironic admission, in legal terms, that he is now caught in the trap: 'Sir, you *bind* me infinitely in these courtesies' (2.1.43; my italics). Showing off his newly acquired indifference to loss, he bets all, but loses. Lethe openly states, 'I came not hither but to win' (2.1.52), a phrase which covers both his intentions at dice, and design in coming to London to escape the stigma of his 'staining birth' (1.2.288). A fraudster who has changed his name from his native Gruel and bought his knighthood, Lethe makes himself unpopular by leaving when he is winning. This was not considered gentlemanly behaviour. Blastfield complains, voicing the general animosity, 'But he's more base that carries out his winnings; / None will do so but those have base beginnings' (2.1.55-6). Furthermore, Lethe's line 'Tut the dice are ours / Then wonder not at those that have most pow'rs' (2.1.59-60), suggests he has brought false dice to the game which he now pockets, saying, 'Welcome, dear angels; where y'are curst, ne'er stay' (2.1.62), prompting Easy to suggest that they search him.[34] Easy is now without funds; he explains, ''Twas all I brought up with me, I protest, Master Blastfield; all my rent till next quarter' (2.1.78-9). The game is adjourned as Blastfield claims also to be out of ready money.

Blastfield now implements stage two of Quomodo's scam. Before banks, credit relationships existed 'all over the social scale […] across boundaries of hierarchy', with merchants dominating the city's wealth.[35] Blastfield leads Easy to believe he has a very 'spacious' (2.1.102) credit network, and will obtain funds from Master Gum the mercer, Master Profit the goldsmith, or, dissembling a last-minute thought, Master Quomodo the draper. Easy is to propose a re-match and 'invite 'em tomorrow to another breakfast of bones' (2.1.119-20). Referring to dice simply as 'bones' was common, but here 'breakfast of bones' is an ominous warning of the meal to be made of Easy himself. Easy tries to extricate himself, saying he will 'forswear dicing' (2.1.121), but Blastfield is ready to show him how shameful this would be:

> What? Peace, I am ashamed to hear you. Will you cease in the first loss? Show me one gentleman that e'er did it. Fie upon't, I must use you to company, I perceive. (2.1.122-25)

Blastfield assures him that 'Fortune alters in a minute' (2.1.131-32) and that he can swiftly recover his losses in another game. Easy would have been better to heed Rearage, who

[33] Richard Brathwait, *The English Gentleman* (London, printed by John Haviland, 1630), 224.
[34] Calling the dice angels puns on the coins of the same name.
[35] Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 57, 97.

exclaims, ‘O worse than consumption of the liver! Consumption of the patrimony!’ (2.1.134-35), adding, ‘Forgive me my posterity, yet ungotten!’ (2.1.137). As Knight says:

> Punning legally, sexually, financially, and alcoholically on his being the living possessor of the estate, Rearage laments his inability to maintain and improve it as a legacy […] articulating the main thesis of *Michaelmas Term*.[36]

His pun compares the wasting disease with reckless waste of inheritance, acknowledging that prodigality is a worse sickness. The Husband of *A Yorkshire Tragedy* similarly connects disease and addiction to gaming:

> What is there in three dice to make a man draw thrice three thousand acres into the compass of a round little table, and with the gentleman’s palsy in the hand shake out his posterity, thieves or beggars? (4.65-8)

Prodigality is not Easy’s natural demeanour but he is tricked into squandering his patrimony at the gaming table.

Before they leave the tavern, Hellgill comes to report to Lethe that he has secured a courtesan for him. The respective dangers of the two country innocents trapped by city wiles are linked by some notable verbal parallelisms and textual juxtapositions. Firstly, following closely on Rearage’s apology to his ‘ungotten’ posterity, the Country Wench’s father, a former rake, admits that in his youth he ‘surfeited away [his] name and state / In swinish riots’ (2.2.23-4). He has come in search of his daughter, knowing too well, ‘how soon maids are to their ruins won; / One minute, and eternally undone’ (2.2.29-30). The suggestion of *winning* ruin and his aphorism ‘One minute, and eternally undone’ resonate strongly with Quomodo’s aim to achieve Easy’s ruin through dicing and Blastfield’s assurance (or warning) that ‘Fortune alters in a minute’. The Father reconfirms the antithesis between country and city in his final line, ‘I leave calm state to live amongst you, devils’ (2.2.38). Rearage has referred to dice as ‘devils’ (2.1.2) and now city-dwellers are so described, almost as Mailhol finds the compulsive gamester merging with a bone die in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*. Secondly, Hellgill has described the Country Wench as ‘Young, beautiful, and plump – *a delicate piece of sin’* (2.1.152; my italics), falsely claiming her to be ‘a gentlewoman of a great house’ (2.1.155). In the following scene, Quomodo, in soliloquy, describes Easy’s estate using a similar string of adjectives and an alliteratively similar phrase – ‘that sweet, neat, comely, proper, *delicate parcel of land*, like a fine gentlewoman i’th’ waist’ (2.3.91-2;

[36] Knight, ‘Sex and Law Language’, 97.

my italics).[37] The girl and the gull are linked semantically by 'delicate' and 'gentlewoman' as dice and the city are by 'devils'.

Easy, his name now seen as indicative of a sexual availability, has quickly become Blastfield's intimate 'bedfellow' (2.3.151), and his naïve 'good confidence' (4.3.16) blinds him to the signposts to his ruin, such as the board outside Quomodo's shop, which, we learn, is the 'sign of Three Knaves' (2.3.102-3), an appropriate gaming allusion, and the richly suggestive names of the cloth merchants, Master Beggarland and Master Stilliard-down (2.3.248-49), beggaring and stealing being the aims of the knave, Quomodo, and his two accomplices. Anxious only to avoid the shame of not being able to honour his invitation to a re-match, Easy allows himself to be duped into co-signing a bond for 'two hundred pounds worth of cloth' (2.3.202-3), re-payable after one month. With the scarcity of gold and silver currency in circulation in the period, goods such as cloth and apparel had a currency of their own.[38] Gamesters sometimes staked their own fine clothing or swords when they had no more coins to hand.[39] In place of a monetary loan, Quomodo provides cloth, which he has in plentiful supply. The moment he has Easy's signature, Quomodo imagines he has 'one foot upon the land' (2.3.374-75). He is winning the game. Blastfield's aside states the precariousness of Easy's situation: 'So his right wing is cut; he will not fly far / Past the two city hazards, Poultry and Wood Street' (2.3.381-82); and the interpolation of 'hazards' here, used metaphorically, lends support to my conjecture that the dice game was Hazard. Trapped by a legal bond, Easy will have difficulty avoiding the hazards to which Blastfield alludes, the debtors' prisons in Cheapside. Elementary game theory teaches that trust is an integral part of gaming because 'in offering trust you are playing the odds of gaining trust in return against losing out if the other party proves to be untrustworthy'.[40] Perversely, Quomodo banks on Easy proving an *un*trustworthy debtor, breaking the bond. The next stage of the scam is the revelation that it is not possible to sell the cloth onward because all trade routes are blocked. In desperation, Easy persuades Blastfield to accept the derisory offer from the 'young setter-up' (2.3.470), Master Idem, of sixty pounds. Since Master Idem is Quomodo's other servant (Falselight, in disguise), the pun contained in 'idem', Latin for 'the same', the draper is in a win-win situation, gleefully boasting that:

> First have I caught him in a bond for two hundred pound, and now I have my two hundred pounds worth o' cloth again for three-score pound. (2.3.483-85)

[37] Chatterji also notes the 'delicate' parallel. See 'Unity and Disparity', 35.
[38] Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, 98.
[39] cf. the gambling scene in Middleton *Your Five Gallants*, ed. Cohen (2.4).
[40] Len Fisher, *Rock, Paper, Scissors* (London: Hay House, 2008), 151.

So the two villains, Quomodo and Lethe, are both currently winning. It is in the third act that the wheel of fortune turns for Lethe. He proudly exhibits the Country Wench to the gallants, still unaware that Rearage is his rival for Susan Quomodo. The Country Wench has undergone a substantial re-birth, the progeny of 'tirewomen and tailors' (3.1.6), and she now has the outward appearance of a gentlewoman but, in Hellgill's words, the 'true phrase and style of a strumpet' (3.1.31-2), the speed of her outward progress up the social scale in direct opposition to her rapid moral decline. The gallants swarm eagerly around her, and her man-servant (her father, though neither party knows their real relationship) fears that 'the loins / Can ne'er be safe where the flies be so busy' (3.1.118-19). Soon Lethe's miscalculations in his game are revealed. A cheat is 'dependent upon others obeying the rules' but he has misjudged his fellow gamesters, who let out his secrets.[41] First, Rearage and Salewood quash the Wench's belief that he is a courtier; they counter that, in court hierarchy, the king's fool 'has a better place than he' (3.1.101). Next his 'drudge' (3.1.262), Mother Gruel, delivers Thomasine Quomodo's response to his lewd suggestion that marriage to her daughter would also accord him ready access to her. Thomasine not only rejects Lethe and divulges publicly that he came to London with no money, but trusts that her daughter will 'not be carried away with a cast of manchets, a bottle of wine, and a custard'(3.1.264-65), contemptuously deriding his gifts, using the word 'cast', as if they were produced by a bad throw of dice. A mortified Lethe exclaims, 'Horror, horror! I'm smothered' (3.1.279), buckling under the gallants' counter-intrigue. The Country Wench, suddenly aware of his deception, asks, 'Are you toward marriage i'faith, Master Lethe?' She threatens to 'forbid the banns' and 'send a messenger into [his] bones, another into [his] purse' (3.1.288-91). The threat to send disease into his bones provides an echo of the gaming scene and Salewood's fear that the dice were the bones of a whore he had known. Our Northamptonshire lass is no longer a wholesome girl but a whore whose body is both polluted and polluting and representative of the fleshly lust of all London. Following a short speech by Shortyard's boy, the next scene sees Easy's arrest for debt, and with this close juxtaposition Middleton shows that Easy has been as incapable of resisting the hazards of London and keeping his birth-right as the Country Wench was of keeping her maidenhood in London, where, as Hellgill warned, 'Virginity is no city trade' (1.3.47).

Easy (through Blastfield) is now in debt to Quomodo to the tune of 'seven hundred pound' (3.1.140), all in commodities. Seduced into 'wasteful sin' (1.2.127) as Quomodo

[41] Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games*, 45.

desired in his shrewd gamble, Easy has shown himself eager to enter the press surrounding the lusty wench, considers it worth spending 'a hundred pound […] to pursue a good jest' (3.1.282-83)[42] and gets drunk on the eve the bond falls due. Realisation slowly dawns that in co-signing the bond he is fully liable for the debt because, as Gail Kern Paster states, he considered the bond merely 'a document of fellowship bonding him to his friend'.[43] Despite Quomodo's lecture that bonds are like children, he still fails to foresee the risk to his estate. Even Blastfield's sudden disappearance awakens no suspicion, and in a bid to avoid prison he again trusts the shape-shifting Shortyard, disguised first as a sergeant and then as a wealthy citizen. Shortyard makes it appear that his offer of bail is his own 'venture', a 'desperate voyage' (3.3.231, 239), rather than Easy's risk. Like another young landlord, in Middleton's *Father Hubburd's Tales*, where 'A dash of a pen stood for a thousand acres', taking 'no more account of acres than acorns', the dupe signs a further 'recullisance' (3.4.248), guaranteeing 'Body, goods, and lands' (3.4.229) as security.[44] Shortyard (disguised as a citizen) warns Easy: 'You must have an especial care now to find out that Blastfield' otherwise 'Quomodo will come upon us, and forsake you' (3.4.250-51, 254). Although he answers, 'I know that, sir' (3.4.255), it is only Quomodo's wife, Easy's compassionate admirer, who understands that his 'misery but begins' (3.4.261).

By the beginning of Act 4, Quomodo has all the papers to Easy's forfeited lands. He has won – or rather he has won by cheating, boasting, ''Tis sleight, not strength, that gives the greatest lift' (4.1.70). A 'lift' (or lifting law) is a canting term for stealing.[45] When, in Act 1, Shortyard first asks Quomodo for the name of the gentleman at whose estate he aims, and Quomodo replies, 'Young Master Easy', Shortyard's response is: 'Easy? It may fall right' (1.1.118). As Knight says, there are several levels of meaning in these words (including the easy matter it will be to trick him):

> there is a play on the legalisms of "fall" and "right": In Scotch law "fall" is to legally lose possession – to fall from a right is to forfeit that right. In other words [Shortyard's] remark may also describe the falling into a right or possession that is backed by law.[46]

[42] It is not clear from the text what jest they have paid for but I believe 'Blastfield' and Easy have had a hand in Lethe's humiliation by Mother Gruel/Thomasine.
[43] Kern Paster, ed., *Michaelmas Term,* 32-33.
[44] Middleton, *Father Hubburd's Tales,* 172, ll. 485-8.
[45] See Greene, *The Second Part of Cony-Catching* [1591] in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld,* 149-178 (149).
[46] Knight, 'Sex and Law Language', 94-5. It should be noted that Knight incorrectly assigns this remark to Quomodo, rather than to his 'spirit', Shortyard.

Easy's estate has 'fallen' to Quomodo through the use of false dice, known as 'cheats', a term subversively derived, as explained earlier, from the feudal law of 'escheat', the forfeiture of property or a person's estate, and through the commodity scam that ensues. But now we find that if walking away the winner, as Lethe does in the early dice game, is not good gamesmanship, it can equally be a grave mistake to carry on playing Fortune's game, as the inveterate gamester Quomodo does. He is still thinking in gaming terms in his new daydreams about the land in Essex, imagining that he and fellow citizens will drive there and they will 'laugh and lie down, get all [their] wives with child against a bank, and get up again' (4.1.83-5). 'Laugh and lie down' was a contemporary card game and its use here is heavily ironic. In this game, when a player could no longer make any tricks from the cards face up on the table he had to throw in his hand. 'From this laying downe of cards & the rests [sic] laughing at him […] comes the name Laugh and Ly Downe'.[47] As Theodore Leinwand's gloss notes, 'bank', not just a river bank but the dealer's pile of money, continues the gaming imagery.[48] But Quomodo is soon to find himself laughed at, with no tricks left. He has engineered Easy's ruin at the gaming table and he knows that customarily:

> Cozenage in the father wheels about to folly in the son, our posterity
> commonly foiled at the same weapon at which we played rarely. (4.2.91-3)

Not wanting to see his gain dissipate in the hands of his heir he tries to prevent that 'by policy, which without it must needs be destiny' (5.2.98-9). His strategy involves making a will, leaving everything to his son, Sim, and faking his own death. In disguise as a parish beadle, he intends to observe his wife's grief and his son's affection. Instead he hears that his son is ashamed even to attend the funeral and intends to 'revel' (4.4.46) away his gains, and when, still in his beadle disguise, he visits Thomasine to collect the funeral costs, Quomodo makes a childish gamble. A pervasive and linking metaphor noticed by both Knight and Bailey is one 'relating to hands'.[49] The most obvious occurrences of this are in the handshake and the signing of binding legal writings such as the debt bond. It is also present in an arrest when, as Knight says, a sergeant claps his hand on the shoulder of the accused.[50] Bailey writes that *Michaelmas Term* 'offers a diacritical reading of the signature or the hand, which served as the material sign of consent', explaining that 'In early modern England, the word

[47] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games,* 138.
[48] Leinwand, ed., *Michaelmas Term,* 4.1.85.
[49] Knight, 'Sex and Law Language', 106.
[50] Ibid, 106.

"hand" referred to both instrument and object', a theory stemming from Aristotle.[51] She writes that 'the hand – the bodily site of instrumentality […] – emerges as the corporal locus where struggles over dominance and submission are played out'.[52] I propose that gaming furthers the hand metaphor; the hand is central to gaming – for shaking and rolling the dice (and dealing and holding when at cards), for making the stake, and for agreeing loans. Unlike the face of a card or the spots of a die, which Gina Bloom is concerned cannot be properly seen by spectators, the gamester's hand and what he does with his hand is a legible theatrical image, and one easily exaggerated with theatrical flourish. Gaming thus forms part of this key metaphor, woven into the main theme of inheritance and lineage. Gaming is the raison d'être for Easy's debt bond and the power that Quomodo consequently has over him. We will also find the hand to be an important image in marriage and card-play in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (in the next chapter), but for now we should return to its role in Quomodo's gamble. Thomasine asks the beadle to sign a memorandum to confirm full settlement of 'all his due he can claim here i'th'house' (5.1.92-3) and, unable to control his gaming spirit, he thinks it would be a 'lively jest' (5.1.97) to sign with his real name, Ephestian Quomodo, and give her a shock. The shock is his when he learns that she has married Easy and that the memorandum to which he puts his hand dismisses all claims. Horrified, he cries, 'I'm undone, beggared, cozened, confounded forever' (5.1.126-27). Conversely, Easy's luck has changed and, newly empowered in his game of Hazard, which, recalling Cotton, could 'make or undo' a man[53], he has cursed Quomodo's coffin with the words: 'The devil grind thy bones thou cozening rascal' (4.4.60), an echo of the 'breakfast of bones' he himself has so narrowly escaped.

Quomodo learns that Shortyard has tricked the foolish son, and obtained all the papers to the lands and goods, and then, in the face of Easy's new-found anger and threats, surrendered all writings back to Easy. Easy has grasped the rules of the game and kept the 'good deeds' which confirm his right to the land and burned the 'bad deeds' (5.1.54) which gave it away, and the memorandum Quomodo signed in jest cancels any claims (except that in regard to his wife, poor Thomasine, who has to relinquish her happiness). Law has trumped the gamester. The final blow to the plans of the other chief gamester, Lethe, is again

[51] Bailey, *Of Bondage*, 78. 'Aristotle's assertion, in *De partibus animalium*, that the hand represents the "instrument of instruments" is the locus classicus of definitions of the hand, commonly accepted as the direct source of Galen's definition in his *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, a treatise widely translated in the early modern period', see Katherine A. Rowe 'Dismembering and Forgetting in *Titus Andronicus*, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45/3 (1994), 279-303 (281).
[52] Ibid, 86.
[53] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 82.

his fellow gamesters' work. He is caught by officers with his drab on the morning he is due to marry Quomodo's daughter. The Country Wench claims enough witnesses are gathered to make their union binding, and Susan swiftly apologises to Rearage and offers herself to him in marriage. Rearage, the earlier loser, has suddenly won.

In the game of hazards played out in *Michaelmas Term*, Quomodo is the archetypal rogue who gets his comeuppance. In the words of Cotton's poetic description of Hazard, the 'Nicker's nickt':

> Next here are Hazzards play'd another way,
> By box and dice; 'tis Hazzard is the play.
> The Bully-Rock with mangy fist, and pox,
> Justles some out and then takes up the box.
> He throws the main, and crys, who comes at seven?
> Thus with a dry first nicks it with eleven.
> If out, he raps out oaths I dare not tell,
> Hot, piping out, and newly comes from hell.
> Old-Nick o're hearing, by a palming trick
> Secures the Gamester; thus the Nicker's nickt.[54]

Quomodo could not stop playing this addictive game; as Cotton writes:

> Certainly Hazzard is the most bewitching game that is plaid on the dice;
> for when a man begins to play he knows not when to leave off.[55]

Dicing has proved to be the model for the dramatic action in microcosm. In what Paul Yachnin describes as a 'morally and socially reformative conclusion' the early winners finish as the losers.[56] Lethe, whose incentive was Susan's dowry, is shown to be a 'base slave' (5.2.11); Rearage, loser in the dice game, but who has 'land and living' (2.3.64) and who loved her, is declared the 'true gentleman' (5.2.11). He wins both the social and moral contest. Quomodo, who has tried to meddle with Fortune and gain by deceit, learns that 'Deceit is her own foe, / Craftily gets, and childishly lets go' (5.3.73-4), as his winnings slip out of his hand. Easy, nearly 'Master Prodigal Had-land' (5.1.120) becomes 'master once more' (5.3.77). The fortune of a dice player, including the vicarious play of Quomodo, is shown to alter in a minute, just as Blastfield predicts. In Middleton's hands dicing becomes a vehicle of cultural signification, embodying the allure and competitive economy of the city in the portrayal of the hazards of urban competition. It is also a fool's paradise (wittily referred

[54] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, xxi.
[55] Ibid, 84.
[56] Yachnin, 'Social Competition', 92.

to in another Middleton play as a 'fool's pair-o'-dice'), in which 'body, goods, and land' are at risk, thus playing a central role in the play's overarching theme of inheritance.[57]

## Throwing Dubblets and *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon*

The 'nicker nicked' / cozener cozened topos can also be seen in Thomas Heywood's *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon*, a play that announces its fusion of didacticism and entertainment on the title page with Heywood's customary Latin motto, '*aut prodesse solent, aut Delectare*' (either to profit or delight).[58] Indeed Paul Merchant argues that with the opening parable of dice-play, the descent into vice, and the final discovery scene

> The *Wise-woman of Hogsdon* is a conscious or unconscious refashioning of *Everyman* as high comedy with a redemptive twist, and the Wise-woman will resemble both Luxuria, the Prodigal's misleader, and Fortuna, his nemesis.[59]

By the end, as Daniel Gibbons so succinctly states, 'the consummate deceiver must himself be deceived into facing up rather than outfacing'.[60] I will show how the specific dice game of this play has been carefully chosen and how it sets up the various social and gender contests, and I suggest that the final scene of denouement mimics a dice game, the characters seated in the Wise-woman's house as if they are players around a gaming table, each casting in turn. Jean Howard calls the cunning woman's house 'a transgressive space where deceptive and illicit activities are carried on'.[61] In my reading it also acts as what Huizinga terms a 'play-ground', a confined, temporary world 'dedicated to the performance of an act apart', just as much as the gaming room in the tavern does in the opening scene. [62] Consequently, not only does the opening dice game resonate in the contests throughout the play but it may also have influenced the staging of 5.5.

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[57] Middleton and Rowley, *Wit at Several Weapons* (5.2.21), ed. Michael Dobson in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 980-1026.
[58] Paul Merchant, ed., *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon* in *Thomas Heywood: Three marriage plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 38-103. Merchant's gloss for the title page motto is 'A slight strengthening ("solent" for "volunt", perhaps the result of quoting from memory) of Horace's comment in *Ars Poetica* that "poets would either profit or delight"' in Jonson's translation (Herford & Simpson VIII, 327). It was Heywood's motto in the second half of his career', 38. All line references for *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon* are to Merchant's edition.
[59] Merchant, ed., *Three marriage plays*, 9.
[60] Daniel R. Gibbons, 'Thomas Heywood in the House of the Wise-woman', *SEL*, 49.2 (Spring 2009), 391-416 (408).
[61] Jean E. Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 86.
[62] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 10.

A brief summary of the somewhat sprawling plot of this comedy of intrigue may be helpful. Young Chartley, described in the *Dramatis Personae* as a 'wild-headed gentleman', is more than that; he is a prodigal gamester, a compulsive trickster, a rake and a serial runaway bridegroom. On the eve of his wedding to a young country gentlewoman, he has fled to London where he resorts to tavern life and gaming. Lusting after Luce, the chaste daughter of an impoverished goldsmith and the beloved of Boister, a 'blunt fellow' (*Dram. Pers.*), he showers her with gifts hoping to 'enjoy her' (1.1.126). He has to agree on another marriage, witnessed by her father, before the virtuous girl will succumb. Thinking he can contain the problem of his own father finding out, he insists on a secret ceremony. This is to take place at the house of the Wise-woman, where, unbeknown to him, his first wife, seeking her wayward husband, has taken employment, disguised as a boy. When Chartley's drunken insults anger the Wise-woman, opportunity is provided for the jilted but resourceful first wife to propose that the Wise-woman can be revenged by thwarting the marriage. Boister, in the meantime, also seeks the Wise-woman's help to secure Luce as *his* bride. To make a laughing-stock of Chartley, the cunning woman has the idea of disguising her (already disguised) boy-apprentice as a masked bride. In an offstage double marriage, Chartley thus marries (again) his first wife, assuming she is Luce (and who the Wise-woman imagines to be her boy), while Boister marries his beloved Luce who assumes he is Chartley. The sexual appetite of the just-married Chartley is whetted again by a knight's daughter, Gratiana, the beloved of another gaming companion, Senser. He arranges yet another marriage contract, deceiving her gullible father. The abandoned Luce involves the Wise-woman again and Chartley is lured back to the cunning woman's house in Hogsdon for a scene of revelation and resolution.

Howard examines this play for its portrayal of class and gender struggle, finding it 'a site for ideological contestation and negotiation' but she does not mention that the theme of competition is established in the opening scene of gaming.[63] As the play opens Chartley and three male friends enter '*as newly come from play*' (1.1.1sd). Chartley and Boister have each lost a hundred pounds at dice to the other two, Senser and Haringfield, and Chartley curses the dice and alludes to the devil, much as Rearage does in *Michaelmas Term*:

> Price of my life! Now if the devil have bones
> These dice are made of his. Was ever such
> A cast seen in this age? Could any gull
> In Europe, saving myself, fling such a cast? (1.1.1-4)

[63] Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, 90.

Chovanec, whose argument is that 'staged dice games almost always invoked the occult', uses these opening lines as his essay's title.[64] This might have opened up discussion of the witch theme but he affords this play minimal discussion. Chartley has lost heavily, but determined to win back his money he lures the initially reluctant winning duo into a further game. Locating the play as the last in a group of 'at least eight magician/witch plays in Henslowe's repertory', most of which are lost, Merchant considers that by 'bringing together the prodigal husband/patient wife traditions into the realm of magic, the dramatists had found a fresh metaphor for the precarious quality of personal relations'.[65] Dicing surely plays a key role in representing this social precariousness. Indeed, Merchant states that the game 'provides a model for the play's larger action', adding only that 'the pattern of changing fortunes anticipates the play's denouement'.[66] No critic has noticed how carefully the particular game has been chosen, even though Merchant identifies it as 'In and In' (or Inn and Inn), directing readers to Cotton's description of the game.[67] Cotton explains Inn and Inn as follows:

> Out is when you have thrown no Dubblets on the four dice; Inn is when you have thrown two Dubblets of any sort, as two Aces, two Deuces … Inn and Inn is, when you throw all Dubblets, whether all of a sort or otherwise, viz. four Aces, four Deuces, or four Cinques, or two Aces, two Deuces, two Treys, two Quaters, or two Cinques, two Sixes.[68]

From this it is clear that the significant feature of Inn and Inn is 'dubblets', or, in modern parlance, 'doubles'. Just like Inn and Inn, this play is all about 'doubles', for which read both 'rivals' and 'couples', and the plot concerns, as Barbara Baines notes, 'the pairing off of the right young man with the right young woman'.[69] There are also 'double' Luces – two women called 'Luce': the virtuous Luce desired by both Chartley and Boister, and Chartley's first wife, who is announced in stage directions as '*Second Luce, a young country gentlewoman in the habit of a page'* (1.2.146sd). Moreover, as we will see, 'Second Luce' spends most of the play disguised and therefore with a double persona. It is the gamesters' dialogue that allows Merchant to identify the game, just as it surely enlightened contemporary playgoers. Haringfield invites Chartley to 'trip for the dice' (1.1.33) to throw to see who starts. They both toss a die, together or severally.[70] Chartley achieves the highest, for he declares: 'The

[64] Chovanec, 'Dice Games on the English Stage' in O'Bryan, ed., *Games and Game Playing*, 153.
[65] Merchant, ed., *Three marriage plays*, 6-7.
[66] Merchant, ed., *Three marriage plays*, opening commentary to *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon*, 40.
[67] Ibid, 40.
[68] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 80.
[69] Barbara Baines, *Thomas Heywood* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1984), 38.
[70] Merchant's stage direction states only that '[*Chartley throws to begin*]' (1.1.34sd).

dice are mine' (1.1.35). He and Boister are playing together and Chartley, 'having nothing left to set at a cast' (1.1.24), stakes the ring from his finger, stating 'This diamond I value at twenty marks. / I'll venture it at a throw' (1.1.36-7). Haringfield matches the bet, saying: ''Tis set you' (1.1.37). 'Then at all', Chartley cries as he throws, and 'All's mine' (1.1.38), as he wins. He throws again and wins, at Haringfield's expense, with double fives, crying 'Gramercy, cinques' (1.1.40). Next '*Chartley throws out*' (1.1.46sd), but Boister 'passes all with treys' (1.1.49) – double threes. Senser cannot resist being drawn in and pairs up with Haringfield, but he '*flings out*' (1.1.60sd) and so loses. Having won back his money, Chartley wraps up the game (and receives the same disgruntled reaction Lethe did for leaving a winner).

One contest might be over but he immediately embarks on his next: to solicit Luce and foil Boister's attempts to woo her. 'He thinks with his blunt humour to enter as far as I with my sharp. No, my true Trojan, no' (1.1.119-20), Chartley says, making clear, in the antithesis of 'blunt' and 'sharp', that he regards himself as superior in this contest of suitors. The two scenes of wooing by Boister and Chartley are juxtaposed. The blunt Boister lacks any subtlety or eloquence and his declaration of love is rejected. Chartley comes with a shower of gifts and twenty angels in coin but Luce does not take kindly to his 'sharp' humour; he underestimates his challenge. He is forced to moderate his coarse language and propose marriage before she can be won, the handfast betrothal witnessed by her father. The arrangement for a private ceremony, and Luce's suggestion of the Wise-woman to arrange it, is overheard by Second Luce, setting up the implicit competition between the two Luces. Howard considers that it is in these two women that one example of the contest between ideological positions is manifest; that whereas Luce is 'inscribed within the discourse of the good woman familiar from the conduct books, Luce 2 is her transgressive double, embodying an alternative to, and demystification of, her sister'.[71] Such a statement needs, of course, to be qualified, as Howard acknowledges, by noting the play's conventional ending to the gender struggle. Nevertheless, both Luces vie for Chartley and both, independently, team up with the Wise-woman in their contest.

The Wise-woman and Chartley are also in combat from the first time they meet, as Howard notes:

> These two knaves are presented as natural enemies. He calls her every sort of name – blackness, witch, she-devil, sorceress, Lady Proserpine, Madam Hecate

[71] Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, 90.

> – and tries to beat her; she, in turn, vows to do anything to frustrate his desires. Twice, using highly theatrical ruses, she deceives him.[72]

Chartley announces his intention to 'make some sport with the wise-woman' (2.1.91-2) after drinking at Mother Redcap's tavern. This is both a class and a gender struggle, with the lower class, illiterate woman, whose ethics and activities are as problematical as Chartley's, proving to be the one with 'the power to right the social world threatened by gentlemanly profligacy and theatricality'; as Howard adds, 'Fire drives out fire'.[73] The Wise-woman has the idea of disguising 'Jack' (who is of course *already* disguised) as a woman, so that in the secret ceremony Chartley will be tricked into marrying a boy. Second Luce / 'Jack' is delighted with the plan, declaring 'O super, super-excellent' (2.1.177). With 'Jack', now called 'Mistress Luce' (3.1.74), wearing a black veil and Luce also 'masked and disguised' (3.1.61), the confusion can be easily imagined. It is compounded by the fact that Chartley and Boister are also vizarded. Chartley questions why they need be masked, or what he calls 'hoodwinked' (3.1.81), and is fooled by the Wise-woman's excuse that the vicar, Sir Boniface, may 'blab' (3.1.83), and that the other couple getting married are a young heir and lord's daughter who 'would not have their faces seen for a world' (3.1.85). Being an inveterate cozener he readily joins this new game and declares 'they shall see, my sweet Luce, we can vizard it with the best of them' (3.1.91-2). Though cozener par excellance, he does not realize that he is indeed being 'hoodwinked' as Sir Boniface marries Chartley to 'Jack' / 'Mistress Luce' and Boister to Luce in an offstage, and of course *double*, wedding.

Further contests, all the while reflecting the 'doublets' of Inn and Inn, are set in motion when, newly married, Chartley catches sight of Gratiana, Senser's beloved, and regrets allowing such a 'goodly poppering' (3.3.55-6) to escape. He plans to woo again, reasoning that only Luce, her father and the vicar know of their secret marriage, and he is prepared to gainsay them, arguing:

> I'll outface the priest, and then there is none but she and her father, and their evidence is not good in law. And if they put in me in suit, the best is, they are poor, and cannot follow it. (3.3.60-2)

Betting odds, or wagering, comes to the fore as he takes back the chain and money he gave to Luce, pretending he is off to buy her new apparel. In an aside (in Merchant's edition) as he takes his leave, he describes the likelihood of her seeing him (or the money) again: 'Ten to one but you shall hear of me ere you see me again' (3.3.167). As Merchant notes, Act 4 'presents two unfair competitions': Senser and Sir Boniface vie to become tutor to Gratiana

[72] Ibid, 87.
[73] Ibid, 87-8.

and Senser wins with ‘a deception by false Latin’; and Chartley comes to woo Gratiana with a letter, supposedly from his father to hers, Sir Harry, consenting to the match and confirming that Chartley is worth ‘three hundred pounds a year’ (4.1.199), a ‘deception by forged letter’.[74] Senser is left the loser in this marriage game when, outraged at witnessing his rival’s trickery, he removes his pedant’s disguise and attempts to claim Gratiana, which only has the result of hastening Sir Harry’s resolve to ‘solemnise / These nuptial rites with all speed possible’ (4.1.229-30).

Luce, on her own, is powerless. Complaining that, with her marriage unconsummated, she has now been ‘disgraced, despised, discarded and cast off’ (4.2.92), yet realizing she has no proof of her marriage because it was secret, she resorts to the Wise-woman again to find a way to shame her errant husband. As Howard observes, Luce ‘has all the respectability the three t lacks and none of her power’.[75] The Wise-woman’s house is the scene of the plot’s denouement. Senser and Boister (the latter thinks that it is he that has been duped by the Wise-woman into marrying a boy) also arrive at her house. To each the Wise-woman whispers instructions, assuring them that she will ‘set all things straight’ (4.429). Senser, disguised as a serving man, is the agent to gather the remaining parties to Hogsdon. He hands Chartley a letter from Luce in which she releases him from the marriage but asks him to ‘bid fair’ (4.4.57) to enjoy her maidenhead which is to be ‘rifled’ that night ‘at the house where [they] were married, the wise-woman’s’ (4.5.55-6). The attractiveness of making a bid for such a prize has ready appeal to the gamester, Chartley, who is quite used to placing bets and taking risks; he has no hesitation in saying, ‘I’ll go, although the devil and mischance look big’ (4.5.68). He imagines he has won the jackpot, voicing his thoughts: ‘So, when I am tired with Gratiana, that is, when I am past grace, with her [Luce] I can make my rendezvous’ (4.5.61-2). But Chartley is being reeled in by the cunning woman and Luce, and Senser is delighted to play his part, avenging the theft of his beloved. With Chartley preparing to take horse, dissembling urgent need to see his sick father, he issues the Wise-woman’s invitation to Gratiana to have first refusal on ‘an admirable suit / Of costly needlework’ (4.5.126-27), which is, of course, Senser himself.

The Wise-woman carefully and separately seats first Luce’s father and Boister, then Gratiana and then Senser and Sir Harry ‘in several rooms that look / Into this one’ (5.6.1-2); out of sight, but within hearing. This staging causes some conjecture since, as Merchant

[74] Merchant, ed., *Wise-woman of Hogsdon*, 73, commentary on 4.1.
[75] Howard, *Stage and Social Stuggle*, 88.

states, ‘There is no evidence of as many as five doors or concealment spaces in the public theatres, two or at the most three being all that the extant texts require’. He reasons that:

> Rather than attempting to provide five concealment spaces and a sixth door, Heywood may have hit on the simple expedient here of placing five stools (or four stools and a cushioned chair) in different parts of the open stage, each seat establishing a hiding-place, from which the characters could play their reactions in full view, while ‘invisible’ to Chartley’.[76]

To my mind, the arrangement resembles a gaming table, the ‘players’ set round in a circle, ready to make their casts (as yet invisible to and unaware of each other) from different positions in a game of ‘Expose Chartley’. In another clever coupling, a final ‘player’, hidden with Second Luce / ‘Jack’, but unaware of her real identity, is her own father-in-law, Old Chartley. He has come to London in search of his prodigal son, instructing his men to ‘Enquire about the taverns, ordinaries, / Bowl-alleys, tennis-courts, [and] gaming-houses’ (5.1.7-8). He has chanced upon Sir Harry, an old friend, and, learning with horror of the impending marriage between their two offspring, has followed Sir Harry to Hogsdon. As Daniel Gibbons states, ‘each of these characters knows a different fragment of Chartley’s story’.[77] When Luce wails to Chartley, ‘O husband, husband’ (5.6.13), Gratiana is shocked, Sir Harry and Old Chartley are amazed, and Boister is, again, furious. Now, one by one, each player enters the game. When Luce plays harder to get than Chartley has imagined, he does indeed make his ‘bid’ for her maidenhood; he tells her that as soon as he has his hands on the dowry he intends to poison Gratiana and live instead with Luce. Whereupon Gratiana makes her ‘cast’ by appearing and giving Chartley such a shock that he cries ‘I am betrayed!’ (5.6.56). He tries to extricate himself by claiming that Sir Harry persuaded him to leave her. Now it is Sir Harry’s turn to play, revealing himself and calling Chartley ‘Vile boy’ (5.6.76). Chartley next claims it was his own father who advised him to divorce Luce and marry Gratiana. Cue Old Chartley’s ‘hand’ with the words, ‘Ungracious villain! (5.6.89). In dice games there can be no change of strategy; all Chartley can do is throw again, metaphorically speaking, and this time he blames his companions, claiming:

> I was
> As virtuously given as any youth in Europe
> Till I fell into one Boister’s company.
> ’Tis he that hath done all the harm upon me. (5.6.97-9)

When Boister enters the game too, Chartley realizes he has lost, admitting, ‘There is no outfacing them all’ (5.6.104-5). As per Cotton’s description of the rules of Inn and Inn,

[76] Merchant, ed., *Three marriage plays*, 11.
[77] D. Gibbons, ‘Thomas Heywood in the House of the Wise-woman’, 407.

'Every Inn you drop' (i.e. stake again) 'and every Inn and Inn you sweep all; but if you throw out, if but two plays, your adversary wins all'.[78] Chartley has, metaphorically, thrown 'out' too many times.

Instead of finding 'that he is conducting his ostensibly private sexual transgression in a room where he is visible to a multitude of concerned onlookers, each sequestered in a separate adjoining room, father, father-in-law, and assorted friends, plus his latest wife and his original betrothed', as Jennifer Panek says, I suggest that Chartley finds himself in another gaming room, but with luck against him.[79] Having initiated a web of intrigue and deception, he has been tricked – a reversal of fortune typical of dicing. It is now the Wise-woman's turn to play her hand. She tells Sir Harry how Senser has saved Gratiana from a 'wanton wagpasty' (5.6.135), and Gratiana gratefully accepts Senser as her new husband. Chartley, tries to keep Luce, stating, 'There's one gone already / But this is my wife, and her I'll keep' (5.6.145-46). The Wise-woman counters: 'Not from her lawful husband' (5.6.148), needing to explain to an equally puzzled Luce, to Boister's relief, that the vizarded gentleman she married in the secret ceremony was Boister. Chartley knows he married *somebody* and demands, 'Where is my wife, then? For a wife I had' (5.6.164). The Wise-woman summons 'Jack' to throw the final cast. Chartley thinks he has married a girl but, finds himself a laughing stock having married a boy. This, of course, is a familiar theatrical joke since all female roles were played by boys but there is to be a further twist with this boy who is playing a girl, disguised as a boy, playing a girl. Chartley concedes that the Wise-woman has shown him his imperfections, as if in a mirror, and he is duly contrite. But when 'Jack' '*scatters her hair*' (5.6.164sd) and reveals her true sex, she throws a metaphorical 'double' and wins. Chartley cries, 'First love, and best beloved!' (5.6.197). It is the Wise-woman's turn to be shocked at this final revelation – because in a dice game nothing is predictable and no-one is immune to chance. Howard remarks that whilst the Wise-woman outsmarts Chartley, the Wise-woman is in turn outsmarted by Second Luce:

> In the hierarchy of power and knowledge which emerges in the play [Second Luce] is at the very top, and she is the transgressive figure of the woman in man's attire seemingly free from the control of father or husband.[80]

[78] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 80.
[79] Jennifer Panek, 'Community, Credit, and the Prodigal Husband on the Early Modern Stage', *Journal of English Literary History* 80.1 (2013), 61-92 (80).
[80] Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, 89.

In a final 'throw' Chartley casts off his errors of 'knavery and riot' (5.6.190) and asks forgiveness of 'Luce, Luce, and Grace' (5.6.218), realizing that he 'sought to engross what now sufficeth three' (5.6. 219).

Do we need to know that it was a game of Inn and Inn the four gallants played in the opening scene in order to enjoy this comedy of errors? No. But when we see how carefully the game matches the action, we can better appreciate Heywood's stagecraft, and see how a game inspires a dramatist, reflects the principal theme, and, if I am right, even affects the staging. In the next chapter we will see a demonstration of Heywood's mastery of the metaphor of cards in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, a play inter-textually referenced in *Wise-woman* (at 3.3.137-38).[81] The dice game Inn and Inn serves as a clear dramatic device, reflecting the 'doubles' in the play as well as the gender and class contests, with their surprises and reversals, ending with Chartley's sudden renouncement of prodigality. The Wise-woman has no special abilities to interrogate the unknown other than instinct, but this dice game (in all but name) that she arranges at her house proves to be one of revelation, altering and regulating, if not predicting, the future.

## 'Blind can judge no colours' in *The Tragedy of Soliman and Perseda*

Changing genre, we look now at dicing in Thomas Kyd's *The Tragedy of Soliman and Perseda* (c. 1589-92). Most critical discussion of this play focuses on its treatment of East-West relations.[82] New trading between Turkish dominions and England, established by charter, and the resulting influx of exotic cloth and spices, was increasing contemporary fascination with the power of the Ottoman Empire.[83] As Mark Hutchings states, such interest was in tension with the embedded narrative of the Empire as 'a warmongering state that threatened Christendom' and he argues that the motif of the Turk provided writers and

[81] *A Woman Killed with Kindness* ed. Brian Scobie (London: A & C Black, 1985): 'Peace fool. We shall else have thee claim kindred of the woman killed with kindness!', 3.3.137-8.
[82] See, for example: Dennis Britton's 'Muslim Conversion and Circumcision as Theater' in *Religion and Drama in Early Modern England: The Performances of Religion on the Renaissance Stage,* eds Jane Hwang Degenhardt and Elizabeth Williamson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 71-86; Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion and Christian Resistance on the Early Modern Stage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 161-7; Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 189-195; and Daniel Vitkus, *Turning Turk*: *English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), particularly 119-128.
[83] The Levant Company was formed in 1592, joining the Turkey Company and Venice Company, first chartered in 1581 and 1583, into one company. See M. Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London: Routledge, 1908), 36.

dramatists with new 'theatrical capital' and, as we will see, a useful rhetorical strategy.[84] Süheyla Artemel considers that audiences, 'noblemen and commoners alike', enjoyed the 'complexities of the image' of the Turk and *Soliman and Perseda* was one of a proliferation of plays featuring conflicts between Christians and Turks.[85] Criticism to date has not touched on this play's game scene whereas I aim to show the importance of understanding the particular game featured; how it resonates in the tragic events that follow; and how gaming discourse intersects with the cultural and religious discourse. Just as Kyd is one of the first dramatists to include a play-within-a-play, so too he is one of the first to include a game staged within a play.

The eponymous Soliman is a fictionalised representation of Suleiman I (or Süleyman) (1520-1566), the ruler at the height of Ottoman glory and strength. Kyd follows a source – in fact, according to Lukas Erne, it is 'one of the earliest extant plays based on a novella' – Henry Wotton's *A Courtlie Controuersie of Cupids Cautels* (1578), itself a translation of Jacques Yver's *Le Printemps D'Yver*.[86] The details of Wotton's plot and Kyd's dramatization have been carefully traced by Gregor Sarrazin, Frederick S. Boas, John J. Murray and Erne.[87] Rather than duplicating this work, I will highlight some aspects that have been more neglected, particularly the dice game, which derives directly from Wotton but is substantially developed. Erne states that source studies are somewhat out of fashion today and that, 'our insight into a writer's mental laboratory will always be limited', but appreciation of the play is enhanced by noting how certain aspects of the source are given prominence by the dramatist.[88] It does not appear to have been recognised, for instance, that *A Courtlie Controuersie*, like Castiglione's *The Courtier*, was itself a game, a story-telling game, 'Discoursed uppon wyth Argumentes of Loue, by three Gentlemen and two Gentlewomen entermedled with diuers delicate Sonets and Rithmes, exceeding delightfull to refresh the

[84] Hutchings, *Turks, Repertories*, 27, 145.
[85] Süheyla Artemel, '"The Great Turk's Particular Inclination to Red Herring": The Popular Image of the Turk during the Renaissance in England', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 5/2 (1995), 188-208 (200). Artemel states that 'more than 20 extant plays written during 1580-1642 have plots or subplots specifically concerned with Turkish affairs', 201. Hutchings, *Turks, Repertories* provides appendices which show a hundred or so plays that include allusions to Turks, 206-217.
[86] Lukas Erne, *Beyond the Spanish Tragedy: A Study of the Works of Thomas Kyd* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 168-202 (169-170).
[87] In addition to Erne (above), see also Erne's '"Thoroughly Ransackt": Elizabethan Novella Collections and Henry Wotton's *Courtlie Controuersie of Cupid's Cautels (1578)* in *Cahiers Elisabéthains*, 64.1 (2003), 1-8; Frederick S. Boas *The Works of Thomas Kyd* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955); Gregor Sarrazin, *Thomas Kyd und sein Kreis. Eine litterhistorische Untersuchung* (Berlin, 1892), and John J. Murray's edition, *The Tragedye of Solyman and Perseda* (New York; London: Garland, 1991).
[88] Erne, *Beyond the Spanish Tragedy*, 168.

yrkesomeness of tedious tyme'.[89] The 'historie' of Soliman and Persida comprises 'the first dayes Sport'.[90] Kyd patently engages with this aristocratic game-play. Firstly, in place of the gentlemen and ladies in Wotton, who discuss whether 'all lamentations, miscontentmentes, and misfortunes chauncing in loue, proceede on the behalf of women', he inserts his own choric and arguing trio, Love, Fortune and Death.[91] These figures contest with one another as to who is best to 'serue for chorus to this Tragedie' (1.1.18).[92] Their argument begins:

DEATH I tell thee, Fortune, and thee, wanton Loue,
I will not downe to euerlasting night
Till I have moralliz'd this Tragedie,
Whose cheefest actor was my sable dart.

LOVE Nor wil I vp into the brightsome sphere,
From whence I sprung, till in the chorus place
I make it knowne to you and to the world
What intrest Loue hath in Tragedies.

FORTUNE Nay, then, though Fortune haue delight in change,
Ile stay my flight, and cease to turne my wheele,
Till I haue showne by demonstration
What interest I haue in a Tragedie.
Tush, Fortune can doo more than Loue or Death. (1.1.25-37)

John Murray follows Frederick Boas in feeling that the chorus has a negligible dramatic function and does little except 'mark a five act structure'.[93] On the contrary, not only do the allegorical figures represent central themes, but this contest for chorus master, engaging with the competition inherent in argument, underlines the omnipresent atmosphere of contest in this tragedy of intercultural conflict and the frequent references to Fortune, and to winning and losing. Although Fortune claims that she can 'cease to turne' her wheel at will, Boethius's *Consolatio* states, 'If Fortune begin to stay still, she is no longer Fortune'.[94] There are many swift reversals of fortune and the tally of events for which each chorus figure claims responsibility changes as quickly as the score in a tennis match, imagery provided in the second line as Fortune quips, 'Why what is Loue but Fortunes tenis-bal' (1.1.2). And, like Revenge in *The Spanish Tragedy*, the chorus knows the ending all along, and the frequent prolepsis heightens the anticipation of disaster. Erne states that 'the characters' progress from misery to happiness and back to misery is completely beyond their control' and close

[89] Henry Wotton (trans.) / Jacques Yver (orig.), *A Courtlie controuersie of Cupids Cautels* [1578] (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1997, Early English Prose Fiction Full-Text Database), title page.
[90] Ibid, 85.
[91] Ibid, 79.
[92] All references follow John Murray, old-spelling edition, *The Tragedye of Solyman and Perseda*, as above.
[93] J. Murray, ed., *Solyman and Perseda*, xxxiv/v. See also Boas, *Works of Thomas Kyd*, lvii.
[94] Boethius, *Consolation*, Bk 2, Pr I.

consideration of the pervasive gaming imagery will add substance to this statement.[95] Kyd also takes part in the courtly 'sport' of story-telling himself, as other dramatists do, by manipulating historical facts to create a fiction that resonates.

The theme of competition is immediately apparent when the action proper begins with Erastus, a young knight of Rhodes, asking his beloved Perseda to confirm their betrothal, suggesting that he has been the more constant of the pair. Perseda is quick to show her competitive streak (as she is in the source), asking him 'watch you vauntages?' (1.2.30), and gives him a precious carcanet, almost as if it were a stake in the courtship game.[96] He responds with a ring 'to equall it' (1.2.40), promising to keep her chain carefully and wear it over his armour to spur him on against the other much more experienced combatants in the forthcoming tilting tournament. He declares, 'I'll winne / Such glory, as no time shall ere race out, / Or end the period of my youth in blood' (1.2.97-9). Perseda, however, prophetically warns that winning will cost him dear:

> Oh, my Erastus, there are Europes Knights
> That carry honour grauen in their helms,
> And they must winne it deere that winne it thence. (1.2.77-9)

The text makes clear that Piston, his servant, and Basilisco, his rival for Perseda, are able to identify Erastus and his competitors during the various courses of the tournament – Basilisco remarks, 'Now comes in the infant that courts my mistresse' (1.3.191) and Piston exclaims 'O, well run. My maister hath ouerthrown the Turke' (1.3.194). His identity, hidden by his helmet, is, nevertheless, a mystery to his fellow competitors. Charles Edelman relates that 'a beaver definitely had to be down in a tournament joust or trial by combat', and the cowardly Basilisco, when watching, wishes, 'Oh that my launce were in my rest / And my Beauer closd for this encounter' (1.3.192-93). Against the odds, Erastus overthrows the other contestants, one by one, including the Turkish general, Brusor, and on his victory there are demands that he 'vnmaske' (1.4.5), with the Turk saying 'I long to see thy face, braue warrior (1.4.10). In Wotton it is the bridegroom, for whose nuptials the tilts are held, who seizes the 'hinder skirt', or outer edge, of Erastus's helmet and draws it up roughly to reveal his face.[97] In the play it is Lucina, a young woman, who declares she will 'disarme' (1.4.15) Erastus. A feature of Kyd's play, noted by critics, is the deliberate pairing and contrasting of characters and the dramatist makes a number of changes to this part of the source material. As Erne states, he

[95] Erne, *Beyond The Spanish Tragedy*, 192.
[96] In Wotton's *Courtlie Controuersie* Erastus is the first to give his love token 'but bycause she would neither remayne indebted to hir louer in courtesie or good will: she requited him wyth the gifte of a Chaine', 43.
[97] Wotton, *Courtlie Controuersie*, 46; *OED*, *n* II, 4, c says skirt can mean the 'border, rim, outer portion, extremity, or tail-end of anything'.

'substitutes the bridegroom – who has no further importance in the tale – with Lucina, who takes an active part at a much earlier stage than in Wotton by making Erastus lose his chain' (presumably dislodging it while lifting the helmet).[98] Kyd also invents the participation in the tilting contest of Lucina's suitor, Ferdinando. Contrasting unfavourably with Erastus's performance, Ferdinando embarrasses himself by losing a stirrup, noting how Lucina hangs her head in shame. With these changes, coupled with Lucina's combative expression, 'disarme', and Ferdinando's reluctantly admiring comment, in chess-playing terms, that Erastus has 'matcht and mated too' (1.4.38), two new contestants are brought into play. Lucina and Erastus are to compete again shortly, as are Ferdinando and Erastus, though none yet knows it. Two important motifs are, therefore, contained in this scene: the creation of character pairings, or contestants, and the concealment of identity, and the consequent blindness of the antagonists. The motif of blindness has been overlooked by commentators and I will return to this.

Erastus should be triumphant but we find him desolate; in a speech full of antithesis (advance/fall, war/peace), and other rhetorical flourishes, emphasising the win/lose dichotomy in life, he apostrophises to 'treacherous Fortune, enemy of Loue' (1.4.116). The irony of Perseda's warning becomes apparent: he has paid dearly for his win though not in the way she imagined; he has lost the carcanet she gave him and would now willingly exchange the honour of winning for the return of the love token. He does not know that Ferdinando, shamed in the tournament, has, on the other hand 'by good fortune', found 'the Carcanet of worth' (1.4.45-6), and is to give it to Lucina. Basilisco, in a parallel apostrophe, bewails, 'cursed Fortune, enemy of Fame' (1.4.48), cataloguing his injuries with typical hyperbole. Through apostrophe, Basilisco, also in love with Perseda, is thus paired and contrasted with Erastus, as his 'foil' or 'other'. He is later to show himself unworthy to take Erastus's place in Perseda's affections by 'turning turk' and, when ruminating on death, voicing the realization that he loves himself more than he loves her.

The next contests result directly from the carcanet's change of hands. Lucina is angered when Basilisco suggests that her beauty is outshone by Perseda's. The modest Perseda is ready to concede first place to Lucina, her friend in Kyd's version, proffering the excuse that Basilisco is impartial as 'Loue makes him blinde, / And blind can iudge no colours' (2.1.45). The affliction of blindness is one that will beset all the central characters; it

[98] Erne, *Beyond the Spanish Tragedy*, 171.

is a central theme. Perseda and Lucina soon change from friends to foes – within half a line of text – as Perseda spies the chain:

LUCINA Why, then the mends is made, and we still friends.
PERSEDA Still friends? Still foes; she wears my Carcanet.
Ah, false Erastus, how am I betraid. (2.1.46-8)

She imagines Erastus has been unfaithful; in fact she imagines so in competitive terms, which she expresses with synecdoche, telling Basilisco:

her beautie far surpasseth mine,
And from my neck her neck hath woone the praise. (2.1.56-7)

Their necks are rivals: Lucina now wears around hers the carcanet which Perseda inherited from her 'Grandame' (1.2.33), and which she gave to Erastus. She thinks Erastus gave it to Lucina but until she berates him and reveals her knowledge of the chain's new owner, Erastus has no idea that Lucina has it. Failing, again in gaming terms, to 'win remorse' (2.1.160) from the flint-hearted Perseda, who has converted all her love to hate, Erastus decides to try to win back the chain from Lucina. The chain is now more than a jewel: it symbolizes Perseda and his ability to keep her rests on his ability to retrieve the chain. Arguing that 'Fortune made the fault, not Loue' (2.1.168), he makes an appeal to Love to 'inspire [him] with some present stratagem' (2.1.178), and formulates a plan to surprise Lucina with a mummery and play her for it, declaring:

It must be so, Lucinas a franke Gaimster,
And like it is, in plaie sheele hazard it,
For if report but blasen her aright,
Shees a franke gaimster, and inclinde to play. (2.1.179-82)

The repetition of 'a franke gaimster' suggests Lucina's reputation for risky play. Kyd both departs from and elaborates on his source at this point. In Wotton, Erastus's strategy involves courting Lucina's favour 'by amorous practises', creating much greater cause for jealousy.[99] The novella's description of the gaming incident is brief:

> One night going in Maske to visite his newe Mystresse, proffered to aduenture a riche Carquenet agaynst the Chayne, requiring the same by signes in playe, the whiche after a matche concluded, by good fortune he wanne, and presently departed the ioyfullest man liuing, without discouerture of his person.[100]

In his dramatization, Kyd eliminates entirely any adulterous behaviour by Erastus and develops the game scene, retaining the important suggestion that it is played in disguise, and in 'signes', i.e. in dumb show and masks. Erastus, appealing to the stars, wills Lucina to be

[99] Wotton, *Courtlie Controuersie*, 58.
[100] Ibid, 58.

receptive to play and prays to win: 'Ah virtuous Lampes of euer turning heauens, / Incline her minde to play, and mine to win' (2.1.190-91). He asks the trusty Piston to summon his companions, Guelpio and Iulio, who should bring 'some store of crownes', 'foure Vizards, foure Gownes, a boxe, and a Drumme' (2.1.186-88), explaining to them:

> Sirs, thus it is, we must in mummerie
> Vnto Lucina, neither for loue nor hate,
> But, if we can, to win the chaine she weares,
> For, though I haue some interest therein,
> Fortune may make me maister of mine owne,
> Rather than ile seeke iustice gainst the Dame,
> But this assure your selues it must be mine,
> By game, or change, by one deuise or other. (2.1.199-206)

Erastus intends to surprise Lucina by arriving unexpectedly in disguise, not to dance or perform a play, but to entertain her at dice – in mummery and mime, so that his identity is concealed. The dice game is not named, but it was surely Mumchance. Delmar Solem records mentions of Mumchance by Stow and by Holinshed, and writes that:

> Mumchance is characterized as a sort of dice or card game requiring silence. The idea of silence is based on the prefix "mum" and is the key to most of the etymological surmises about the game. *OED* indicates that the prefix could also mean "To act in dumb-show; to play as a mummer".[101]

It could, it seems, be played with cards, but most references link it to dice, such as Birdlime's metaphoric use in *Westward Hoe*: 'I thought I had bin at Mum-chance my bones ratled so with iaunting' (2.2.6-7).[102] In other words, she is so weary that the bones of her body feel as if they have been shaken like dice. It was evidently a risky game of chance but the significance is the requirement to play in silence, confirmed by a poem of 1617 which reads: 'And for Mum-chance, how ere the chance doe fall, / You must be mum for feare of marring all.'[103]

To eliminate the uncertainty of chance, Piston advises taking false dice and has no qualms in stating 'I vse not to go without a paire of false Dice. / Heere are tall men and little men' (2.1.218-19). As Iulio points out, they were more usually called 'Hie men and low men' (2.1.220). We should recall that Walker's *Detection* advised: 'You must be furnished with

[101] Solem, 'Elizabethan Game Scenes', 17.
[102] Greene's *Notable Discovery of Cozenage* in Judges ed., *Elizabethan Underworld* mentions 'mumchance at cards', 119-148 (129), and Dekker's *Belman of London* (printed at London for Nathaniell Butter, 1608) refers to cards being fetched for 'mumchance or decoy', F3$^{v}$.
[103] Breton, *Machiuells Dogge*, st. 29.

high men and low men for a Mumchance'.[104] The analogy of dice as people was common, but the names of these particular false dice make them almost accomplices in the game. In Wotton, Lucina receives a jewel in exchange; in the play '*when she hath lost her gold, Erastus pointed to her Chaine*' (2.1.227sd) which she then gambles and loses to Erastus. As in Wotton, communication is by pointing and gesturing, as these stage directions indicate. From the moment she opens the door to the mummers and drummers, Lucina is the only one who speaks. She assumes that the group includes Ferdinando, asking 'What, shall we play heere? content, / Since Signior Ferdinand will haue it so' (2.1.226-27). At the end of the game, after Erastus has won the chain (though lost his gold) she asks him to 'vnmaske' (2.1.229), just as the Prince and knights did after the tournament, so that she can know who to thank for her 'so courteous and vnlookt for sport' (2.1.231), but he and the other mummers decline. Again she has to answer her own question: 'No wilt not be?' (2.1.232). Boas feels that 'a needless stain is thrown upon Erastus's honour by making him win back the chain from Lucina by the use of false dice'.[105] But surely Kyd is deliberately portraying Erastus as a flawed hero, and one identifiable to his audience. Erastus does not fulfil his potential and his judgement is seen to be flawed; he is not the play's true hero. Gaming already signifies error and false dice strengthen the transgressive signification. Erastus fools Lucina into believing she is playing with her beloved, tricks her into taking a risk, confirmed by his comments afterwards to his friends: 'Gentlemen, each thing hath sorted to our wish, / She tooke me for Fernando, markt you that' (2.1.235). The false dice also confirm the high stakes of his gamble to win the carcanet: Perseda is both the stake and *at stake*. In several other plays an object symbolizes a woman who becomes, in effect, the wager. The scope of my project does not allow for in-depth readings of all the plays (listed in Appendices) that feature dice games, but in *The Tragedy of Valentinian* (2.1) a ring functions similarly: the ring that Maximus is ordered to stake, while dicing with the emperor Valentinian, represents (though he does not know it) his chaste wife (another Lucina).[106] When Valentinian wins the ring he uses it to summon Lucina in order to rape her. By playing with false dice Erastus tampers with fate. As Loue later says, the dice 'ran not by Fortune, but necessitie' (2.3.7). In Erne's

[104] According to Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 'High men are dice which may have a high number substituted for a low on one or more faces' and 'low men would be presumably foisted on the opponent', 493. Cotton's *Compleat Gamester* discusses 'high or low Fullams' which are biased by bristles or weighted with quick-silver, 6-7. John Murray cites Cotton. I disagree with Solem, who, having discussed Mumchance, as cited, goes on to conclude that a logical choice for the dice game played in *Soliman and Perseda* is Passage 'because of the false dice it requires', 'Elizabethan Game Scenes', 18.
[105] Boas, *Works of Thomas Kyd*, lxi.
[106] Fletcher, *Tragedy of Valentinian* ed. R.K. Turner, Jnr. Act 2.1 opens with Valentinian, Maximus and other courtiers 'discovered playing at dice'. See ll. 15-28.

opinion, the scene 'is not one of the play's highlights' but when we pay attention to gaming, and the particular form of the game, I consider it to be key.[107] Here in the mummery, Lucina does not know who her opponent is; she thinks she knows but is blind to the reality. Similarly, in the tournament and in the tragic events that follow, there is someone with perfect sight, yet unaware who their antagonist (killer, or victim) is, as if blind. This pattern is substantially developed by the dramatist and I believe that this masked game resonates throughout and functions as an emblem for the whole play.

Victorious once again, Erastus promises rewards to his accomplices and the drummer, and when Piston asks, 'But is there no reward for my false dice?' (2.1.238), he too is rewarded, confirming that biased dice were indeed used. Following the pattern I find in my research, with dicing signalling sudden reversal, Erastus the joyful gamester finds his joy turned to misery within moments. He runs into Ferdinando, who recognises the chain and accuses him of theft and treachery and draws his sword. In retaliation Erastus draws too, and kills Ferdinando, thereby effectively signing his own death warrant. He barely has time to accuse first Fortune, the 'fickle and blind guidresse of the world' (2.1.248), and then all three of the chorus, 'fell Fortune, Loue, and Death' for conspiring together to cause his 'tragedie' (2.1.256-57), before making the decision to flee to Constantinople. When Piston returns the carcanet to Perseda and she enquires how Erastus managed to retrieve it, the serving man answers: 'Faith in a mummery, and a paire of false dice' (2.2.10). There is heavy retrospective irony in Perseda's response, 'I rather thinke it cost him very deare' (2.2.12), words which echo her warning about winning 'deerly' before the tournament, thus linking these two games. Piston relates Erastus's contest of honour with Ferdinando and his flight to Turkey and the court of the sultan, Soliman, where he will try to 'tempt a foe for ayde' (2.1.268).

And 'foe' Soliman is. The Rhodians, including Erastus, have been blind to the real threat to their island; the true reason for Brusor's participation in the tilting contest is revealed. The play's subject is the famed siege of Rhodes in 1522, when the Knights Hospitallers of St John were finally overcome and forced to leave the island stronghold, a key territory which lay in a direct line between the capital of the Ottoman Empire and its newly acquired province of Egypt.[108] The jousting tournament earlier in the play purported to transcend religious boundaries by including 'Knights of Christendome, and Turkish both'

[107] Erne, *Beyond the Spanish Tragedy*, 175.
[108] See Roger Bigelow Merriman, *Suleiman the Magnificent* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1944), 61.

(1.3.1), but we learn that, aiming to expand his empire, Soliman sent Brusor to the tilts to reconnoitre Rhodes's defences and see how best to plan a renewed attempt 'to win that plot' (1.5.6) which was keeping 'the hart of Christendome' (1.5.16) from Ottoman control. The formalised mock-battle game conceals Soliman's ulterior game plan. In a scene set in Constantinople, disagreement over war strategy between Soliman and his two brothers escalates to accusations of treachery, followed by a scene of fratricide as Amurath kills Haleb, provoking Soliman to kill Amurath in revenge. Soliman repents as quickly as he lashes out, claiming that 'wilfull folly did … blind mine eyes' (1.5.97). The scene is considered 'digressive, gratuitous [and] irrelevant' by Arthur Freeman and 'unnecessary' and detrimental to the structure by John Murray.[109] Yet with this brutality and with Soliman's rhetorical question, 'Ah, what is dearer bond than brotherhood?' (1.5.95), Kyd engages with the story-telling game with some cultural coding. As Murray's gloss notes, brotherhood is a 'non-Turkish sentiment'.[110] The contemporary audience would know of the infamous Ottoman custom of fraternal assassination, practised at every change of sultan (and even perhaps know that Suleiman himself had no need to adopt the practice as he had no brothers or near blood relatives).[111] As Benedict Robinson remarks in his discussion of Shakespeare's reference to Turks and 'Amurath' in his Henriad, 'The murder of brothers […] marks the difference of tyranny from kingship, despotism from constitutional rule, Turkishness from Englishness'.[112] It creates alterity and a spectre of conventional tyranny, against which to project the new pairing of Soliman and Erastus. The erring knight has killed a man in a duel when wrongly accused but the Turkish sultan, wilfully blind, jettisons his grief in favour of revenge on Rhodes. In particular, Soliman's reference to folly blinding his eyes reiterates the core theme of blindness and the pattern of conquest, followed by immediate regret.

The contest between Christian and Turk is immediately apparent when Erastus comes to the mighty Soliman. The sultan wants to know why he has come, stating: 'you Christians / Account our Turkish race but barbarous' (3.1.58-9), but on hearing Brusor's report of

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[109] Arthur Freeman, 'Shakespeare and "*Solyman and Perseda*"', *MLR*, 58/5 (Oct 1963), 481-487 (484); John Murray, ed., *Solyman and Perseda*, xxxv.
[110] Murray, ed., *Solyman and Perseda*, 33, gloss to 1.5.95.
[111] The fratricide law was inaugurated by Mehmed II who, on his accession in 1451, had his young brother drowned in his bath. He later had it enacted as law in the following terms: "Whichever of my sons inherits the sultan's throne, it behooves him to kill his brothers in the interest of world order", Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and his Time*, 2nd edn [1959], ed. William C. Hickman, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 65-6. Suleiman's father, Selim, had not only his two brothers killed, but also his eight nephews. Suleiman had no brothers. Kyd's audience may have heard about the assassinations ordered by Murad, or Amurath III, on his accession in 1574.
[112] Benedict S. Robinson, 'Harry and Amurath', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 60/4 (2009), 399-424 (416).

Erastus's valour in the tournament, he wants to harness it for his own benefit and martial strength, talking, again in gaming terms, of *winning* Erastus:

> Heauens brought thee hether for our benefit,
> Know thou that Rhodes, nor all that Rhodes containes,
> Shall win thee from the side of Soliman. (3.1.77-9)

Soliman's duplicity is evidenced in oxymorons and antonyms in his speech. He admits to a 'vertuous enuie' (3.1.104) to test Erastus's valour in a further contest, exhorting him to 'thinke me thine *enemie*, / But euer after my continuall *friend*, / And spare me not, for then thou wrong my honour' (3.1.108-9; my italics). Erastus wins the friendly fight and, having petitioned for, and been granted, the right to live as a Christian, he accepts the position of Captain of the Janissaries. As Godfrey Godwin explains, the Janissaries were 'an élite infantry corps', recruited as young boys by means of a dreaded and compulsory levy on Christian families, known as the *devşirme* system.[113] Taken from their homes, principally in the Balkans, these Christian boys were circumcised and given Muslim first names, and, when enrolled into a company (*orta*), had its number and symbol tattooed on their limbs. Although wage earners and in one sense the 'heart of the Ottoman army', they were clearly, as Godwin states 'all slaves of the sultan'.[114] The dubious honour of being appointed to their command epitomises Erastus's untenable position. Whilst he manages to be excused from actively fighting against his native land, he does little to dissuade Soliman from his 'vow[d] to conquer Rhodes' (3.1.116). Brusor is sent to lay siege to the island, where a scene, replete with stichomythia between Perseda and Lucina, illustrates the women's deliberate pairing and their contrariety. The guilt-ridden Perseda cries, 'But why was I so carefull of the Chaine?' and Lucina, with a change of adjective, cries, 'But why was I so carelesse of the Chaine?' (3.2.9-10).[115]

When Rhodes falls to Brusor's troops and the Governor and his heir are slain, the male prisoners who refuse to 'turne Turke' (3.5.6), as demanded, are stabbed to death. Only Basilisco shows himself to be inconstant to his faith, abandoning all bravado and begging, 'I turne, I turne, oh, saue my life I turne' (3.5.10). He presents, in Jane Hwang Degenhardt's words 'an exaggerated and comic version of Erastus's failures as a Knight', and 'demonstrates the potential bodily consequences of masculine inconstancy' as he loses 'a collop of [his] tendrest member' (4.2.16-7) in the circumcision required of his new

[113] Godfrey Goodwin, *The Janissaries* (London: Saqi Books, 2006), 69. On the *devşirme* see especially 32-45.
[114] Ibid, 69, 70.
[115] The contrasted pairing is entirely Kydian since in Wotton 'Persida' is found by Turkish troops living a solitary life in a monastery of nuns, while Lucina disappears from the story after the mummery in which Erastus retrieves the carcanet.

religion.[116] Basilisco construes the ceremony to be a tribute to his renown, an extreme case of the blindness omnipresent in the play. Matthew Dimmock suggests that this was 'the first relation of complete conversion and circumcision on the English stage', predating 'the more celebrated examples in Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk* (1609-1610) and Massinger's *The Renegado* (1623-1624)'.[117] Dennis Britton notes that the text indicates that Basilisco's conversion was also denoted by a change of costume; for instance when he later returns to Rhodes, Lucina comments that he no longer wears his 'turkish bonnet' (5.3.12-13), an absence explained by the turncoat who says, 'I now am Christian againe' (5.3.14). Her remark, as Britton states, 'directs the audience's attention to the "body beneath", a body that has been marked irreversibly through the religious rite of circumcision, but a body nevertheless concealed by clothing'.[118] Even this episode of Basilisco's apostasy therefore resonates with the theme of concealment of identity, deceit and blindness and with the dice game in which identity is concealed by vizards and silence, making Lucina 'blind' in consequence.

When Erastus realizes that Rhodes is captured, and foresees the threat to Perseda's life and chastity, his soliloquy, as Daniel Vitkus points out, conflates 'the captive body of Perseda and the captive island':

> And Rhodes it selfe is lost, or else detroyde;
> If not destroide, yet bound and captiuate,
> If captiuate, then forst from holy faith; (4.1.17-19)

It is only now that he regains his own faith, ending, 'For what is misery, but want of God / And God is lost, if faith be ouerthrowne' (4.1.21-2). Perseda's danger from both sexual assault and death becomes very real when she and Lucina are brought to the sultan as 'Part of the spoile of Rhodes' (4.1.64). As trophies from the game of war, the women, vulnerable to rape, stand for Rhodes itself. Soliman gives Lucina to Brusor, to use as he will, but keeps Perseda for himself, captivated by her beauty which he extols in a flight of Petrarchan blazon. It may be the language of love but it cannot disguise his war-like mind which describes her cheeks in agonistic terms: 'where the Rose and Lillie are in combat' (4.1.80). When he finds that pleasantry does not work, he changes tactics, as can be heard in his aside:

> Nay then I see my stooping makes her proud.
> She is my vassaile, and I will commaund.
> [*Aloud*] Coye Virgin, knowest thou what offence it is
> To thwart the will and pleasure of a king? (4.1.99-102)

[116] Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 164.
[117] Dimmock, *New Turkes*, 194.
[118] Britton, 'Muslim Conversion', 78.

Perseda steadfastly thwarts him, outspokenly declaring the impossibility of a union. As Degenhardt proposes, the play 'recasts the Ottoman invasion as a sexual seduction' epitomised in this scene.[119] Soliman has to reassess his game tactics again and resorts to threats, demanding that she yield to his desire or to his sword. This fails too as she chooses to die chaste, willing her end nearer by saying, 'Strike, Strike' (4.1.112). Soliman finds he cannot bring down his sword. Now he wills himself to be blind and tells Brusor to 'hide her' (4.1.114), but this is an instance where superficial covering cannot conceal. Even when Brusor covers her with a cloth, he finds himself haunted by the spectre of her 'milke white neck' (4.1.120). Her neck, formerly in competition with Lucina's neck, is now Soliman's adversary, an 'Alabaster tower' which, he imagines, will 'breake the edge of my keene Semitor, / And peeces flying back will wound my selfe.' (4.1.120-22). When, aloud, she commits her soul to Christ, it is the mighty Soliman who capitulates and promises henceforth to offer only chaste love. As Hutchings states, 'Soliman's infatuation with Perseda plays out the Irene legend', the tale of his historical predecessor, Mehmed II's, legendary infatuation with a Greek girl who was taken prisoner at the fall of Constantinople in 1453.[120] Kyd is again playing his own story-telling game, subtly offering the Irene myth, as Hutchings says, as a 'metonym, Constantinople/Europe gendered female, vulnerable to the barbarism of the conqueror-rapist from the east'.[121] It serves to highlight the unexpected Christian victory. Unlike Mehmed II, who demonstrated that he was master of himself by cutting the throat of the object of his desire, Soliman is not able to kill Perseda. It can be argued, however, that, for a short time only, his better self has won the 'complex inner conflict' that Erne finds in this character.[122] It is the understanding of Hans-Georg Gadamer, that 'in order for there to be a game, there always has to be, not necessarily another player, but something else with which the player plays and which automatically responds to his move with a counter move'.[123] Soliman's struggle is with his lust. From the first person 'My word is past, and I recall my passions' (4.1.142) he changes to the third person in the next lines, as if his conscience is

[119] Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 162.
[120] Hutchings, *Turks, Repertories*, 32. Vitkus (*Turning Turk*, 123) and Degenhardt (*Islamic Conversion*, 167) also note the Fair Greek evocation. At the Fall of Constantinople a beautiful young Greek girl, Irene, is brought before Mehmed II, who falls in love with her. When his aides intimate that he is neglecting affairs of state on her account he summons them to the palace and arrives accompanied by Irene who is looking especially radiant in fine clothes. To conclude the story, as related by Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror*: 'Turning to those around him, he asked whether they had ever encountered more perfect beauty. When all replied in the negative and vied with one another in lauding the sultan's choice, Mehmed cried out, "Nothing in the world can deter me from upholding the greatness of the house of Osman!" Thereupon he seized the Greek girl by the hair, drew his dagger, and cut her throat.', 427.
[121] Hutchings, *Turks, Repertories*, 32.
[122] Erne, *Beyond the Spanish Tragedy*, 180.
[123] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (Continuum, 1995), 106, cited in Scham, *Lector Ludens*, 249.

another person: ‘What should he do with crowne and Emperie / That cannot gouerne priuate fond affections?’ (4.1.143-44). When he summons Erastus, it is clear that he is torn between having ‘two captiue friends’ yet being ‘captiue to them both’ (4.1.150-51), but when he witnesses the joyful reunion of the two infidels, paired by the mirroring of each other’s words, he sees that they are inseparable. Miraculously, he joins them in marriage, somehow managing to argue that he has ‘conquer[ed] both by [his] deserts’ (4.1.171), and appoints Erastus the new Governor of Rhodes.

For the third time Erastus is overjoyed, and unexpectedly fortunate. But Soliman’s passion ‘reuiues againe to flames’ (4.1.189) when he crowns Perseda and notes how the ‘title so augments her beautie’ (4.1.187), and no sooner have the newly-weds escaped, effusive in their praise of his goodness, than Soliman regrets his altruism. He persuades himself that it was ‘abuse of Fortune’s gift’ (4.1.208) or ‘of Loues commaund’ (4.1.210), to give away his heart’s desire. Brusor, jealous of Erastus’s appointment, sees a chance to re-enter the game and bring his rival down; he suggests that Erastus be recalled under some excuse, accused of treason and executed. In the tilts Erastus had fought against Brusor and unhorsed him. Perseda and Lucina, formerly friends, had become foes when Perseda saw the other’s neck had won the carcanet. The same two pairs are now involved again. Brusor plays Erastus in a game of trust, asking him to return at Soliman’s entreaty ‘without inquirie what should be the cause’ (5.1.29). In Wotton Brusor is not involved in the narrative at all until now; Lucina is a ‘stranger’ to Persida until she is seen wearing the chain,[124] and drops out of the tale following the dice game. The deliberate pairing of Brusor and Lucina, pointed out by Erne, is Kyd’s invention, as is Lucina’s treachery now. Lucina’s role has been expanded again; she is Perseda’s ‘counterpart’, but also her competitor.[125]

Erastus, blinded by Soliman’s former kindness and generosity, is deceived by Brusor’s apparent sincerity (we should recall Perseda’s comment about Basilisco; that ‘Loue makes him blinde, / And blind can iudge no colours’). He returns to Turkey, where he is immediately convicted on false charges of treason. Soliman initially stands hidden, and Erastus is therefore blind to his real antagonist; he is sure his arrest is ‘without the leaue / Or licence of my Lord, great Soliman’ (5.2.19-20). Soliman does not remain ‘mum’, however and, as Degenhardt states, Erastus learns that ‘“friendship” with a Turk is an allegiance that

[124] ‘Persida, perceyuing a stranger beautified in hir feathers, grew in such choler […]’, Wotton, *Courtlie Controuersie*, 52.
[125] Erne, *Beyond the Spanish Tragedy*, 176.

cannot be trusted'.[126] In this episode, contemporaries may have been expected to know that Sultan Suleiman summoned his son, Mustapha, and 'stood behind a curtain, without the slightest sign of pity or remorse' as three mutes strangled the young man.[127] Imagery of an inter-Turk family conflict is here transposed onto a Turk-Christian conflict. Degenhardt argues that Erastus's execution is framed 'not as an act of tragic martyrdom, but rather as the consequence of his failure to extricate Rhodes from Soliman's "yoake"', in contrast with Perseda's heroic defence of the island.[128] As Kyd shows, Erastus is a gamester; he takes risks, uses false dice, seeks help from a foe, and accepts the captainship of an enemy force. Furthermore his character judgement is flawed. And like a gamester he has to submit to Fortune's rules. Soliman is still in inner turmoil and again he addresses himself in the third person 'O vniust Soliman' (5.2.84). In this contest between love and lust, his desire for Perseda outweighs his love for Erastus. It is, as Soliman himself admits, a 'wicked time, / Where filthie lust must murther honest loue' (5.2.84-5). No sooner is Erastus strangled than Soliman wishes him living, crying, 'O saue his life, if it be possible' (5.2.94), but death, like the rules of a game or the cast of dice, is irrevocable. In frenzy, the sultan kills all those involved in the false trial – Janissaries, false witnesses and the marshall.

Despite the choric inter-act metatheatre already supplied by Love, Fortune and Death, it is still disconcerting to hear Soliman's metatheatrical interpolation as he and Brusor set off to Rhodes:

> Heere ends my deere Eratus tragedie,
> And now begins my pleasant Comedie,
> But if Perseda vnderstand these newes,
> Our seane will prooue but tragicomicall. (5.2.134-37)

Such disturbances of the illusion by chorus and characters – Erastus earlier referred to his 'tragedie' too (at 2.1.257) – show Kyd engaging again with the debate at the heart of his source. Wotton's three gentlemen and two gentlewomen occasionally halt the 'historie' in this way for discussion amongst themselves as part of the 'sport'. Because storytelling is no longer recognised as a game today, we need reminding that in the period it was most definitely a participatory game. In *The Courtier*, the challenge of forming the perfect courtier

[126] Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 166.
[127] Merriman, *Suleiman*, 187. Suleiman's second wife, Roxelana (or Khurrem) hoped that Selim, her eldest son, would succeed Suleiman. The chief obstacle was the popular and able Mustapha, Suleiman's first son by Gulbehar. Roxelana incited Suleiman to dispose of Mustapha and whilst with his troops in Asia Minor he summoned the young man to his war headquarters at Eregli and hid behind a curtain as his son was strangled, Merriman, *Suleiman*, 183-7. The tragedy is 'treated' in Fulke Greville's closet drama, *Mustapha*, c. 1596 (Quarto printed 1609).
[128] Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 166.

in words is a courtly game, requiring wit and *sprezzatura*. We need to re-learn the game and to listen/watch/read as ludicly as the play invites. Soliman's suggestion of moving from a tragic phase to a comedic phase makes explicit the performativity of life as a series of scenes, or rounds – like a tournament or a dicing game. Hence, instead of seeing the structure of *Soliman and Perseda* as simply falling into two parts as most commentators do, the first ending with Erastus's flight to Constantinople, a structure suggested by Wotton,[129] my reading sees Erastus's story as a tournament of successive contests.

When Piston arrives to inform Perseda of Erastus's death, Lucina, who has been playing the part of Muslim temptress, tries to convince Perseda that he jests. Realising Lucina's role in the plot, Perseda asks Basilisco to kill the traitor, but he demurs, and it is Perseda herself who kills her. Lucina, the 'franke gaimster', has played for high stakes for the last time. Soliman's request that Brusor hold back his grief, so as not to 'spoile [his] commedie' (5.4.8), again shows him to be a paradigmatic dramatist from the same mould as Kyd's Hieronimo. He is in charge, he is winning the game, and near to his goal of conquering Perseda's chastity. Perseda, however, as Leonora Leet Brodwin points out, in killing Lucina, 'loses her claim to innocence'.[130] To turn this play into one of Christian triumph, Kyd's Perseda has to remain chaste and defend Rhodes in this final 'course', a conflation of military and sexual assault, and die a martyr. In its ending, the play departs from historical events, particularly in Soliman's death.[131] Perseda, dressed in man's apparel, challenges Soliman to 'single combate' (5.4.25), a contest she cannot win.[132] First she delivers a tirade against him in the same high rhetoric of other key speeches, rebuking Soliman as she defends Erastus's truth, valiance and loyalty and telling him, 'though [Perseda] liue[s], yet will she neare liue thine' (5.4.52). In the belief that he fights a 'foule mouthd knight' (5.4.54), Soliman mortally wounds his opponent. Only as she lies dying does she reveal her identity. Following the pattern of kill and repent, Soliman is aghast. Anticipating his long-held desire, Perseda grants him a kiss but has laced her lips with deadly poison – a theatre image that may have been a

[129] Wotton's *Courtlie Controuersie* narrator suggests that there are two occasions when the woman (Persida) causes misfortune, one when Erastus loses the chain and she banishes him without regard for his previous love and loyalty, the second when they are miraculously married but, by appearing too beautiful a bride, she reignites Soliman's desire, 79.
[130] Leonora Leet Brodwin, *Elizabethan Love Tragedy 1587-1625* (London: University of London Press, 1972), 67. In Wotton, where Piston dissuades her from committing suicide until she has avenged Erastus, Persida kills no-one.
[131] Suleiman died in 1566, aged c. seventy-two, in his tent during the siege of Sziget. Merriman, *Suleiman*, 289.
[132] In Wotton's *Courtlie Controuersie* she wears Erastus's armour.

particularly powerful moment in the play, one which may have inspired later dramatists.[133] Before he dies an agonising death Soliman engages in further bloodlust and slays Basilisco and Piston, and orders Brusor to the block. He wants to see Rhodes recaptured, commanding his soldiers to 'assault the towne on euery side, / Spoile all, kill all, let none escape your furie' (5.4.119-20) and the confirmation from his captain that it is recovered 'alayes the furie of [his] paine' (5.4.123). He has won the game of war but the game of love is still playing out as he dies from kissing Perseda. Degenhardt suggests that the play 'rewrites the masculine defeat at Rhodes as a triumph of feminine resistance and chastity', as a way of diffusing the tension and anxiety of the relationship with the Ottoman Empire.[134] Linda McJannet suggests anxieties are exaggerated since 'Tudor and Stuart England was never in danger of losing territory or significant civilian populations to the Turks, unlike the Holy Roman Empire or the Venetian republic'.[135] The stereotype of what McJannet terms the 'raging Turk' is nevertheless a useful rhetorical strategy.[136]

I have found that a scene of dicing in any play is always deployed at a crucial moment. Often it is early on and presents us an apparent winner who ends up being the loser. In *Soliman and Perseda* the game of Mumchance not only follows this pattern but additionally the dice game in mummery and mime in which Lucina thought she was playing Ferdinand, blind to her opponent's true identity, is mirrored by blindness in all the other contests – in the tilts when the concern of the people of Rhodes is to unmask Erastus, when, before their eyes, Brusor the Turk is planning the island's siege; in Erastus and Perseda's failure to see the treachery of Soliman behind Brusor's game of trust; and finally in Soliman's own blindness. In the performance of Soliman and Perseda within *The Spanish Tragedy*, killings happen under the very eyes of the King, Viceroy and Duke of Castile, but these characters do not realise that what they witness is actually happening for 'real'. If we agree that Kyd wrote both plays he appears to use the story of *Soliman and Perseda* twice to convey this sort of open-eyed blindness. Whatever the relationship and whatever the similarity between the two plays, a striking difference is the gaming imagery in *Soliman and*

[133] Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theater in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), writes that death by poisonous kiss, often from a woman dead or dying, emerges in a significant number of English tragedies. She notes: 'after *Soliman and Perseda*, it features in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1594-6), Anthony Munday's *The Death of Robert Earl of Huntington* (1601), *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607), *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (1611), Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (1623), John Webster's *The White Devil* (1612) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614), Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1613), and Philip Massinger's *The Duke of Milan* (1622), to name a few', 101.
[134] Degenhardt, *Islamic Conversion*, 167.
[135] Linda McJannet, *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), 34.
[136] Ibid, 13.

*Perseda.* Here the dramatist takes from his narrative source the story with its theme of misfortune following swiftly on fortune, but he develops the masked game found there, introducing false dice and creating pairs of players in counterpoint throughout the play, and he emphasises concealment and blindness. The allegorical figure of Death declares that the long list of the dead confirms his 'triumph' in the game, and dismisses his rivals, commanding, 'Packe, Loue and Fortune, play in Commedies; / For powerfull Death best fitteth Tragedies' (5.5.27-8). Following the concept of *serio ludere*, games have strayed into serious issues, not just the inter-family or inter-class conflicts of comedy, but concerns of spiritual and political dimensions. Through 'sport' with history, Kyd fashions a fiction that invokes England through its 'Other', as is clear in the play's final words, 'That Death shall die, if he attempt her end, / Whose life is heauens delight, and Cynthia's friend' (5.5.39-40), a reference to Elizabeth I's invincibility.

Exploitation of source text gaming references have been discussed in respect of *Soliman and Perseda,* and will follow in *Arden of Faversham* (Chapter 4) and *The Spanish Curate* (Chapter 5). One play in particular, *All Fools,* which ends with a tavern dicing scene, led to my early observation that if a dramatist uses a source text which mentions a game, that gaming reference is exploited. It would appear that dramatists could not pass up the opportunity to expand a gaming reference, to further the plot and symbolize certain traits in characters and action. Earlier scholars have shown Chapman's play to be based on two by Terence.[137] What has not been noted before is that in one of these, *Adelphoe* [The Brothers], one of the eponymous brothers declares:

> *Ita vita est hominum quasi quum ludas tesseris:*
> *Si illud quod maxime opus est iactu non cadit,*
> *Illud quod cecidit forte id arte ut corrigas*.[138]
>
> The life of man is like a game of dice; if the throw doesn't give you the number you most need, you have to use your skill to make the best of the number it does happen to give you.[139]

*All Fools* does not contain this phrase, or the direct analogy of man's life to a game of dice. But the play's theme of recklessness, contest and cunning culminates in a gaming room in the Half Moon Tavern. The characters are changing rooms as the scene opens, 'To see if Fortune

[137] Elisabeth Woodbridge, 'An Unnoted Source of Chapman's *All Fools'*, *The Journal of Germanic Philology,* 1.3 (1897), 338-341, finds Terence's *Adelphoe* to be a second source. Gerard Langblaine previously identified *Heautontimorumenos* as the main source.
[138] Terence, *Adelphoe*, 4.7, ed. Edward St John Parry, www.perseus.tufts.edu [accessed 17.11.2015].
[139] *Terence: The Comedies*, ed. Peter Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 293, lines 739-741. Brown's line numbers refer to the standard numbering of the lines in the Latin text. Since the translation is in prose the correspondence is not precise, xxiv-xxv.

will shift chances with us' (5.2.2) for it was a common superstition among gamesters that a change of room might bring a change of luck.[140] The scene features other such insights, such as their pipes being lit by a 'linstock' (5.2.44), made from a rolled up satire. It is in the ensuing dice game that Chapman brings to a head the various characters' stratagems to get even, the denouement resulting in a dramatic reversal in the fortunes of the two young lovers, Valerio and the aptly named Fortunio. With its sudden shifts between success and misfortune and the extremes of joy and despair in engenders, dicing epitomises the highs and lows of life itself (the visual image of which is provided by the Wheel of Fortune), and how fortune can change in an instant.

As mentioned earlier, dice were a feature of medieval moralities and indicative of vice. In early modern drama they are simililarly emblematic, but with considerably more nuancing and interesting synecdoche, and suggestive of allure, obsession and hazard. Dicing also assumes a more active role in plots, such as the connection between Inn and Inn and its requirement to throw doubles and the plot of *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon* with its emphasis on pairs and doublings. Dicing is arguably a natural fit for the amusing class, gender or generational contests and unexpected happy endings (usually marriages) that we find in city comedies like *The Wise-woman*, *Michaelmas Term* and *All Fools*, plays that feature a tavern gaming room. Gamesters frequently curse dice and expressions of belief in their animism are commonplace, and this air of mysticism and superstition, stemming from their early use in divination, is part of dicing's 'enchanting Witchery'.[141] Dicing, and the addictive nature of gaming's contract with chance, also works, however, as an equally fitting emblem in tragedies. This genre tends to end in carnage, of course, but also centres on error, struggle and change following on from the Senecan model with its hero with a tragic flaw, or *hamartia*, and ultimate dramatic reversal of fortune (*peripeteia*).[142]

[140] Chapman, *All Fooles And The Gentleman Usher*, ed. Thomas Marc Parrott (London: Heath, 1907). See Parrott's note on 5.2.2.
[141] Cotton, *The Nicker Nicked* – see Introduction, n.50.
[142] The surprise intervention of a *deus ex machina* in some examples of this genre is another means to achieve dramatic change to the outcome.

# Three | CARDS

Given the figures for the importation and domestic production of packs of cards outlined in Chapter 1, it is clear that card-playing was a huge growth industry. With ample evidence, as W. Gurney Benham states, that it was 'a favourite pastime with all classes in England, even in remote country parishes' and an 'essential part of Christmas revelry', it is hardly surprising that allusions to card games found their way into the playhouse.[1] The vogue for cards meant that their very terminology provided a *lingua franca*, with metaphors, analogies and implications widely understood, sometimes independent of context (as with the term 'set up rest'). Dramatists harness the pastime's appeal and its dramatic potential. Games such as 'Trump', 'Gleek', 'Noddy', 'Ruff' and 'Primero' not only define the characters of the plays in which they feature, *Gammer Gurton's Needle, Greene's Tu Quoque, A Woman Killed with Kindness* and *Your Five Gallants*, but the specific terms or rules of play in each game have a distinct role in the plot structures. I will show how carefully dramatists choose their references to cards, and how it pays to study these old games.

It has been remarked that 'cards and dice are common in descent narratives, because of their overtones of fatality and chance'.[2] There is, however, an important and nuanced distinction between cards and dice in my taxonomy: while all gaming references signal general error, the significations and applications are different. Instead of the dramatic and inevitable reversal of fortune illustrated by dicing, cards signal secrecy, the acquisition of initially hidden information, and ambush, aligning with the two-faced nature of cards themselves. And whilst dice are often referred to as 'devils', or ghosts from the past, cards and card games become living portraits, with the visual image of the Hearts suit providing a useful emblem of the human heart. The portraiture facility derives from the epithet 'face cards' (interchangeable with 'court cards' or 'coat cards'), referring to the King, Queen and Knave of the pack, although in fact *all* cards have 'faces'. We talk of cards being dealt 'face down', and in this position they are identical. It is only when they are turned over, or picked up, that their individual 'faces' or identities, are revealed, each card unique in rank and suit. The human element is also reflected in the lifelike names of some cards games, often relating to women, such as 'My Ladies Hole' and 'Laugh and Lie Down'. Combined with the

[1] Benham, *Playing Cards*, 26-7.
[2] Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 124, cited in Scham, *Lector Ludens*, 244.

inherent symbolism of the pack with its fifty-two cards, as many weeks as there are in a year, one can appreciate how cards are used as metaphors for situations in life.[3]

Unlike the fixed positioning of pieces at the commencement of play in board games, cards start from a random opening position. As David Parlett says, two basic characteristics define all card games, 'namely randomness from the front, in that they are shuffled before play, and secrecy from the back'.[4] This feature has led to their description as games of 'imperfect information' and it is on this definition that Gina Bloom's work on card-playing scenes focuses. In her two case studies, *Gammer Gurton's Needle* and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Bloom finds cards 'an ideal vehicle for investigating social relationships as information games'.[5] She considers that scenes of card play 'engage theater audiences in a game of imperfect information', inviting them 'to feel through theater the sometimes frustrating pleasures that make games and friendships worthwhile'.[6] Whilst I agree that secrecy and the goal of gradual acquisition of information inform their metaphoric use, I am not convinced that the audience plays a game of imperfect information. In early modern drama very few surprises are sprung on spectators who are often omniscient, unlike the protagonists. Moreover, surprise or 'ambush' is only part of the story and the specific characteristics of a game are more important. By way of explanation, let us take a brief look at *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, a university production in verse, probably written in the latter years of Edward VI's reign, which, as Charles Whitworth states, vies with Nicholas Udall's *Roister Doister*, for the distinction of being 'the first English regular comedy'.[7]

[3] An indication of the longevity of contemporary understanding of such symbolism, lost today, is a broadside that appeared in 1850, thought to be a copy of one that appeared about 1744 entitled *Cards Spiritualized*. A soldier, reprimanded for looking at cards during a church service is brought to the mayor of the city and makes the excuse that he considered his pack of cards 'A Bible, Almanack, and Common Prayer Book' because of the number of cards and tricks in a pack. Ashton, *History of Gambling*, 36. See also Ed Cray, '"The Soldier's Deck of Cards" Again', *Midwest Folklore*, 11/4 (1961-62), 225-234 (228).
[4] Parlett, *Oxford Guide*, 15.
[5] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 81.
[6] Ibid, 65-6.
[7] On the play's authorship and date, see Charles Whitworth, ed., *Gammer Gurton's Needle* [2nd edn] (London: A & C Black, 1997), xi-xvii. Whitworth reproduces the title page of the play by a 'Mr. S. Mr. of Art' and suggests it was performed as early as 1550-2 at Christ's Church, Cambridge. Authorship is sometimes attributed to William Stevenson but Whitworth believes that 'until further evidence comes to light, we can only continue to attribute the play to "Mr S., Master of Art". "S" may after all stand only for "Somebody"', xvii.

## Trump 'amongst the Vulgar' in *Gammer Gurton's Needle*

The dramatic potential in this early play is limited because it is generally assumed that the card game from which Dame Chat is called away happens offstage, in front of an imagined fireplace. J.W. Robinson considers that the play's action 'takes place in a street in front of two houses'.[8] Alan Fletcher also highlights the considerable amount of 'imagined offstage action', which tempts the audience, as he puts it, to 'colonize' the illusion.[9] When Diccon arrives at Dame Chat's door and calls out to her, 'Dame Chat, I say, where be ye! Within?' (2.2.19),[10] Whitworth inserts a stage direction '*At her doorway*' (2.2.21sd) for her response which reveals she is playing cards:

> What Diccon? Come near, ye be no stranger
> We be fast set at trump, man, hard by the fire;
> Thou shalt set on the king if thou come a little nigher. (2.2.22-4)

Diccon declines and Dame Chat asks her maid, Doll, to take over her hand, instructing her to:

> sit down and play this game,
> And as thou sawest me do, see thou do even the same.
> There is five trumps beside the queen, the hindmost thou
> shalt find her.
> Take heed of Sim Glover's wife – she hath an eye behind her! (2.2.27-30)

Despite being offstage the game offers some miniature portraits and an overarching metaphor, and that a card might represent a real person is suggested here in the fanciful idea that Diccon might 'set on the king'. Both Joseph McCullen and Lisa Martinez Lajous mention *Gammer Gurton* briefly, the latter in a chapter on women gamesters. McCullen feels that the card game merely 'helps to characterize' Dame Chat and 'provide an atmosphere of gaiety about her house'.[11] Lajous considers that 'the use of gaming in this play is inconsequential and it does not contribute much to the advancement of the plot', although she notes that the suggestion of cheating at cards links to the false play Diccon enacts in his 'sport' (2.2.18).[12] Bloom states that the game 'is mentioned quickly and happens offstage', but argues that its staging behind a door is essential to prevent some spectators seeing her

[8] J.W. Robinson 'The Art and Meaning of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*', *Renaissance Drama,* 14 (1983), 45-77 (46).
[9] Alan J. Fletcher, '*Gammer Gurton's Needle', The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama* , eds Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 284. Peter Womack does not mention *Gammer Gurton* but discusses the 'hidden world' conjured by offstage action and noises in 'Off-stage' in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. Henry S. Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 71-92 (76).
[10] All references are to Whitworth, ed., *Gammer Gurton's Needle*.
[11] McCullen, *Parlor and Tavern Games*, 8.
[12] Lajous, 'Playing for Profit', 157.

cards and for 'producing in audiences a state of imperfect information'.[13] But whereas Bloom proceeds to link *Gammer Gurton* with Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, proposing that the former 'displaces onto its female and lower-class characters anxieties about the feasibility of the humanist model of ideal male friendships'[14], I would be more inclined to advance the argument that the offstage action participates in the game theme, is even a game in itself. This would align with Peter Womack's ideas about how the offstage space renders the stage itself 'radically incomplete', and how we understand that 'there's more behind'.[15] It is not just the genre of game, i.e. cards, but the specific game – here Trump – that is the signifier. Trump was an early sixteenth-century name for 'Ruff and Honours', the forerunner of Whist. From Randle Holme we know that the term Trump was used 'amongst the Vulgar', and Parlett records that '[John] Eliot describes it, in *Fruites for the French* (1593), as "a verie common alehouse game"'.[16] Together with the confusion that occurs in this play due to 'dark corner[s]' (1.5.14), the search for an inch of candle and the difficulty experienced in lighting it – all metaphors for chaos, as Whitworth suggests – Trump points to the lower class of the characters.[17] Furthermore, it is a trick-taking game and hence provides the perfect metaphor for Diccon's scheming. A 'trick' can often be won by a low trump beating a court-card of a non-trump suit, subverting the hierarchy of the pack. 'Diccon the Bedlam', is a roving beggar.[18] Yet from his first entrance, he uses the language of Trump in relation to the women characters. The 'howling and scowling' and 'whewling and puling' in Gammer's house when she loses her needle is, he says, 'as though they had lost a trump' (1.1.11-12); and later, referring to Dame Chat, he reports to Doctor Rat that 'the crafty quean had almost take my trump' (4.4.11). Trump is part of Diccon's metaphoric language and this beggar, who steals bacon, manages to trick Dame Chat, Gammer, Hodge and Doctor Rat, just as a low trump card can beat cards of higher face value.

In contrast to *Gammer Gurton*'s offstage card game, Heywood and other later dramatists elect to stage games, whether in a tavern or parlour, exploiting the dramatic

[13] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 69, 73.
[14] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 71.
[15] Womack, 'Off-stage', 91.
[16] Randle Holme, *The Academy of Armory, Or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon*, Second Volume (London, printed for the Roxburghe Club, 1905): Ruffe and Honors, and Whisk, which are generally, amongst the Vulgar, Termed Trump', Book III.72; Parlett, *Oxford Guide*, 216.
[17] Whitworth, ed., *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, states that the author 'set his play deliberately in the twilight and evening hours' and that this 'is the first example of such emphatically nocturnal setting in English drama', xxv.
[18] He is described as such in the *Dramatis Personae*. A Bedlam was a former inmate of St Mary of Bethlehem Hospital or asylum. There is an entry in the Stationers' Register for the year 1562-3, licensing Thomas Colwell to print a play called *Dyccon of Bedlam* which may be the same play. See Whitworth, ed., *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, xi-xii.

potential of setting up the associated apparatus and the *patois* of a game in progress. Moreover in Heywood's play it is the game's preparation, discussion and signification that is crucial, because, as I will explain, the game structures the plot, although it never actually begins. If, as Lajous suggests, 'The image of Dame Chat walking onstage with a handful of cards generates interest and links the potential for false play at cards to the false play Diccon enacts with Dame Chat', then the heightened appeal of seeing gamesters seated around a gaming table, actively involved in gaming, and the centrality of the game as a plot device, can start to be imagined.[19]

## Three of a kind in *Greene's Tu Quoque* and Gleek

An excellent illustration of how deliberately a particular card game reference is chosen is in *Greene's Tu Quoque,* or *The Cittie Gallant* (1611) by John Cooke. The play was popular with its Red Bull audience and at the card-playing court of James I where it was presented no fewer than four times.[20] It features tennis rackets, tobacco and a tavern scene (scene 9) with named card and dice games. Alexander Leggatt states that all these 'establish a life of debauchery', but he looks no further at the specific games.[21] Alan Berman's critical edition focuses on the difference in tone between *Tu Quoque*, which he describes as 'one of the most good-natured spoofs on social climbing to be found in the drama of the period' and its source, Lording Barry's *Ram Alley or Merrie Trickes* (1611), a 'coterie comedy' with heavy satire and coarse bawdy.[22] Whilst his glosses show that he has researched the games involved, he does not make the connection between these and the competitive element of the dramatic action, or observe that the specific card game, substantially detailed in the text, is reflected in the plot. Neither cards nor dice feature in the source but in *Tu Quoque* they do targeted work.

A brief outline of the early stages of the plot may be helpful. The high-living Staines has lost his estate and is considering emigrating to evade arrest when his servant, Bubble, unexpectedly inherits a fortune from his uncle – the very usurer with whom Staines is

[19] Lajous, 'Playing for Profit', 157.
[20] Entries in the Revels Accounts show that the play was presented at court on 9 and 19 November 1611 by Queen Anne's Men, and again on 27 December 1611 and 2 February 1612. See John Cooke *Greene's Tu Quoque or The Cittie Gallant,* a critical edition, ed. Alan J Berman (London: Garland, 1984),vii, xi-xix. All line references are to this edition.
[21] Leggatt, *Jacobean Public Theatre*, 57.
[22] Berman, ed., *Greene's Tu Quoque*, xi-xix.

embroiled. In a reversal of roles, Staines becomes ‘man to [his] man’ (7.677). Meanwhile, celebrating his newly purchased knighthood, Sir Lionel Rash delegates the running of his mercer’s shop to his apprentice, Spendall, and sets about choosing husbands for his two daughters. Hearing that Whirle-pit, the usurer, has left all his wealth to Bubble he decides that this nouveau-riche will provide nicely for Gartred, his elder daughter. Gartred is, however, already in love with Geraldine, though the relationship stands little chance of progressing as Geraldine’s attempts at wooing are absurd and Gartred strives to bridle her feelings, exasperating her bolder sister, Joyce, with her coyness. Staines, now called ‘Gervase’, acts as both serving man and tutor in behaviour to Bubble, who knows nothing about being a gentleman. Bubble follows Gervase’s deliberately misleading advice and so appears an even greater fool than he is. Gartred, appalled at her father’s choice in husbands, notes how Joyce’s interest has been piqued by ‘Gervase’ and when she overhears her sister wrestling with ‘the insurrection Love hath trained in [her]’ (12.1606), believing the object of her affection to be a mere ‘slave / Unto one worse condition’d than a Slave’ (12.1601-02), she parrots the very words Joyce herself had used to her:

> Birds that want the use of Reason and of Speech, can couple together in one day; and yet you that have both, cannot conclude in twentie (12.1653-55) (identical to 6.661-63)

‘Gervase’/Staines is similarly love-struck and the game element of the amorous chase – ‘winning’ a woman – is openly acknowledged by both sexes.

The dice game, I find, connects with the secondary, but inter-connected, moral plot of Spendall’s profligacy, imprisonment and reformation. The card game, with its bluffing, secrecy and motif of ‘Hearts’ as the trump suit, connects intricately with the romantic plot, with its numerous bluffs and disguises. My previous chapter discusses dice so I mention only that the dicing follows the pattern of dramatic reversals of fortune – several in fact – and that it is one of the rare instances when the precise dice game is named. Spendall proposes: ‘Change your Game for dice, we are a full number for *Novum*’ (9.989-90). Little is known of Novum except that, as Alexander Dyce states, ‘its proper name was Novem quinque, from the two principal throws of the dice being nine and five’.[23] From *Tu Quoque’s* reference to it, we can establish that it was a game for five players: the gamesters are Staines, Scattergood, Longfield, Will Rash and Spendall. The requirement for five players is supported by another

[23] Alexander Dyce, *A General Glossary to Shakespeare’s Works* (Boston: Dana Estes and Co., 1904). Text converted to electronic form on www.perseus.tufts.edu [accessed 14/02/2019].

reference in *Love's Labour's Lost.* Berowne insists to Navarre that there are five Worthies in the first show, listing them and referring to Novum:

> The pedant, the braggart, the hedge-priest, the fool, and the boy
> Abate throw at novum, and the whole world again
> Cannot prick out five such, take each one in his vein. (*LLL* 5.2.538-41)

My focus, here, is the card game and the romantic plot. We learn through his soliloquy that Staines is making progress in regaining his property but needs to 'cheate a little' (7.798), explaining:

> I have been cheated upon, therefore I hope the world will a little the better excuse mee: what his unckle craftily got from me, I will knavishly recover of him. (7.798-801)

He arrives at the tavern disguised 'in sattin' (7.803) as '*Staines Gallant*' (8.867sd), equipped with false dice. Initially his 'aime is wholy at [his] worshipfull Master' (9.889) but Longfield, to whom he has 'unrip't' (9.876), persuades him to 'take' (9.890) Scattergood too. Scattergood plays into Staines's hands by proposing: 'shall we to cardes, till our Company come?' (9.908-9). Staines suggests: 'Why Gleeke, that's your onely game' (9.920). It quickly becomes apparent that Gleek provides a special language, Scattergood responding: 'Gleeke let it be, for I am perswaded I shall gleeke some of you; cut sir' (9.921-22). As Berman's gloss states, 'to gleek' means 'trick, prevail over' and the *OED* lists Cooke's use, elaborating that to give someone a (or the) gleek was 'to mock, make sport of, play a trick'.[24] Gleek is a classic game of trick-making and bluffing for three players.[25] The irony is that it will be Staines who tricks Scattergood – not only at cards, but as the plot progresses. Longfield suggests they play 'twelve pence gleeke' (9.923), but the profligate Scattergood raises the stakes to 'a crowne', disdainfully swearing 'uds foote I will not spoile my memory for twelve pence' (9.924-25). Gleek has four stages and first each player is dealt twelve cards from a pack from which the twos and threes have been removed, leaving eight in the stock. The top card of the stock is turned up for trumps and we learn that it is the King of Hearts. Hearts as the trump suit signals love and it is the amorous chase, later referred to by Rash as 'the Silver Game' (14.1816), that is the game at the core of the play; a game at which Bubble and Scattergood will be gleeked.

The text provides fascinating proof of the complex methodology of Gleek though it might mystify an audience today. The first stage is to bid for the remaining seven cards in the stock in the hope of bettering one's hand, after having laid aside seven of the worst in one's

[24] *OED*, *n.*[2] b.
[25] The specific requirement for three players is confirmed by Willughby. See Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 148, and Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 44.

dealing. The eldest (who must be Staines) starts the bidding at twelve and Scattergood raises it to eighteen, not wanting to be 'out-brav'd' (9.938); he is living up to his name and Longfield's introduction of him as one who 'laughs out his life in this Ordinary, thankes any man that winnes his money' (9.891-92). The next stage is to 'Vie the Ruffe' which means to bet who has most of a suit. Staines states simply, 'I vie it' (9.939). If either of the other two players 'thinkes hee has a better ruffe hee may see it', explains Willughby, but both Longfield and Scattergood decline to revie (make a further vie), and pass.[26] Scattergood has clearly not managed to better his hand with his gamble on the stock. The players now have to declare how many 'gleeks' and 'mournivalls' they have, which have to be paid. As Cotton explains, 'A Mournivall is either all the Aces, the four Kings, Queens, or Knaves, and a Gleek is three of any of the aforesaid'.[27] Pairs are no use and no other card gives any points.[28] Four aces beat everything else and Staines, who may be bluffing, claims he has 'a mournavall of aces, and a gleek of queens'; Longfield that he has a 'gleeke of knaves' (9.942-44). Scattergood puns, 'I am gleek't this time' (9.945). They now move to the final stage of the game, playing for tricks (as at Ruff/Whist), Staines giving the order 'Play' (9.946). At this juncture Will Rash arrives and Scattergood complains to him that he has 'a vile game' with 'not one Courtcarde, but the knave of Clubbes' (9.948-52); Will sympathizes and personifies Scattergood's hand, stating: 'thy small cardes shew like a troupe of rebelles, and the knave of Clubbes their chief Leader' (9.953-55). The comparison of his cards to a troupe of contrary forces (as we saw in *The bloody Game*) signifies the unlikelihood that Scattergood will win in the larger wooing game. Spendall is the next to arrive in the tavern gaming room and by the time they abandon the card game Scattergood has lost 'forty crowns' (9.987). We should note that a gleek (from the German *gleich*, or 'like') is three court-cards *of the same rank* and that Gleek is a game for three players. The game with its theme of three provides a template for the plot with its wooing games of *triangular* relationships and which will end with a *trio,* or 'gleek', of weddings, though not in the pairings Sir Lionel has envisaged. Several tricks and bluffs are required to bring the true love matches about.

Having sent 'Gervase'/Staines to 'all the trades whatsoe'r that belong to the making up of a Gentleman' (7.747-48) to fit him out, Bubble has become '*gallanted*' (16.2190sd) and insufferably effete. He has devised a Latin aphorism, 'Tu quoque', meaning 'you too', to

[26] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games,* 148.
[27] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 46.
[28] In some games, if agreed in advance, they can agreed to score for Tyde (Tiddy), which is the four of trumps, almost as a consolation, since this is the lowest card, the twos and threes having been removed, Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 149.

respond to any greeting and considers he has fully mastered gentlemanly nonchalance when he runs into an apparent stranger. Staines has shape-shifted again and is now attired '*like an Italian*' (16.2197sd) and fools Bubble by speaking Italian-sounding nonsense, including the word 'Coxcombie' (16.2201) to make the trick clear to the audience. He announces that he has arrived by boat that very morning and intends to gain a reputation, 'instituting' 'Honorable and Worshipfull personages' (16.2228) in 'the nature, Garb, and habit of the most exactest Nation in the world, the *Italian*: whose Language is the sweetest, Cloaths neatest, and haviour most accomplisht' (16.2220-22). The clinching moment is when he adds that the language is 'Cozen germane to the Latin' (16.2235). Bubble, proud of his Latin catch-phrase, falls for the bluff and asks, 'I pray sir, whats the lowest price of being *Italianated*?' (16.2244-45). Staines now plays his hand. He removes Bubble's cloak, ostensibly so that his pupil 'will be the nimbler to practise' (16.2254). Then, checking with Bubble that his 'Band' or ruff is 'loose' (16.2260), not fixed to his shirt, he removes Bubble's beaver hat, criticising the English habit of wearing the hat tipped forward as if 'in feare of Sargiants' (16.2265-66). The Italian fashion, Staines states, is 'contrarie' (16.2266), the hat worn tipped back.[29] Bubble duly asks him to 'set [it] on my head so' (16.2268). Staines also claims that Italian 'Signeors' (16.2282) do not wear cloaks and warns that at first the new fashion may 'strike your acquaintance into an extasie, or perhaps a laughter: but tis ignorance in them, which will soone be overcome, if you persever' (16.2290-92).

Staines tricks the gull and, remembering the terms of the earlier card game, we might say that he wins the ruff with a 'gleek' of Bubble's apparel – his cloak, hat and ruff – and that Bubble is 'gleek't'. When Sir Lionel, Will, Geraldine, Widow Raysby, Gartred and Joyce meet the newly 'Italianated' Bubble they can barely contain their derision, Sir Lionel asking:

> How now sonne Bubble, how come you thus attyrde? What, do you meane
> to make your selfe a laughing stocke, ha? (16.2314-16)

It becomes clear that Staines has played the same trick on Scattergood, for Geraldine says: 'For the love of laughter, looke yonder, another / Hearing in the same pickle' (16.2318-19). Funnier still is the meeting of the two foolish friends who mock each other, oblivious to how foolish they themselves appear, unaware that their ruffs have been removed and their expensive beaver hats replaced with 'Felts' (16.2334) tipped backwards. Scattergood is the first to realize that theirs is not the 'Italian fashion', admitting: 'No, it is the Fooles fashion / And we two are the first that follow it' (16.2344-45). Bubble can now use his catch-phrase

[29] Mary Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) suggests that these scenes involving Bubble's wish to be 'Italianated' portray 'the gulling of a sodomite (or the sodomizing of a gull)', 135.

appropriately, exclaiming, '*Et tu quoque*, are we both cozend? (16.2346). He complains, 'he was a Knave that cheated mee' (16.2349), and is sure that he will recognise him. But of course he fails to recognise Staines who now reappears as 'Gervase' (here spelt 'Jarvis').

Promising to provide for the cloak-less pair, Sir Lionel announces that he has planned the weddings for the next day. He intends to break the news to his daughters at bedtime, but Bubble is an inexperienced gamester and, re-assigning his *Tu quoque* to bawdy, tells Joyce: 'the time is come […] / For me to tickle thy *Tu quoque:* to doe the act / Of our forefathers'; and commands, 'prepare, provide / To morrow morne to meete me as my Bride' (16.2409-11).[30] To avoid this fate Joyce is now forced to be forward and admit her feelings for Gervase/Staines, telling him, 'Ile fast with you, rather than feast with him' (16.2428). Staines has not found Joyce an easy win because he initially came a-wooing dressed as a gentleman, not as the 'blew Coate' (12.1659) as she knew him. Imagining that her brother and sister had 'conspired together / To play upon me', and, to prevent their 'sport', (14.1853-54) she refused to speak a word. Failing to impress with remembered lines from *Hero and Leander*, Staines has to change his game-plan, using the term 'have at you' that a gamester uses when placing a bet: 'No? Why then have at you in another kind' (14.1875). Baffled by her silence, he is even more nonplussed when, suddenly unable to contain her emotions, her silence turns to a volley of abuse and the accusation of wearing 'a cast Suite of your goodly Maisters' (14.1929) and being treacherously presumptuous to aspire to her when she is 'set up for your Maister' (14.1953). The trick-making game of Gleek, which underpins this play, is a game won by matching face cards *of the same rank*. If we consider Staines and Joyce as face cards the relevance of this fact will become clear by the play's end.

Creating a parallel three-player game, the two girls beg their brother's help. Despite his reluctance to raise his personal stake, arguing 'Would you ha me run with you, / And so loose my Inheritance?' (16.2437-38), Will agrees to formulate a strategy to blind-side his father. Offstage night-time marriages take place, Gartred marrying her beloved Geraldine and Joyce marrying Gervase/Staines. On their way back in the early hours of morning they meet the former profligate, Spendall, also 'running away with the flesh' (18.2702). He has persuaded Widow Raysby, the benefactress who paid his debts and prison fees, that he is a much better marriage prospect than old Sir Lionel and they too are heading to the parson. Will sees that his father is 'fleeced of all' (18.2680). By the time Sir Lionel, Scattergood and Bubble wake, a 'gleek' of marriages has taken place and the wedded couples kneel for their

[30] Although Sir Lionel originally had Bubble in mind for Gartred, at scene 12.1437 Bubble states a preference for the younger sister, Joyce, leaving Scattergood happy to kiss Gartred.

elders' blessing in a genuflection to patriarchal authority.[31] Sir Lionel informs Scattergood and Bubble: 'you are both / Made Cockescombes, and so am I' (19.2834-35).

In all card games players have to acquire information gradually. In this game Staines holds the psychological and cultural advantage. Bubble studies the youth in satin and says 'How, let me see, are not you my man Gervase?' To which Staines responds, 'Yes sir' (19.2849-50). Bubble's next questions are: 'And have you married her?' and 'And doe you thinke you have used me well?' To both these questions, Staines also answers, 'Yes sir' (19.2851-54). These three identical answers might be interpreted as another gleek notched up by Staines. We are near the end of the game when, as Willughby might explain, 'they count their cards & reckon their honnours'.[32] Bubble tries to better Staines's hand by threatening him with a constable, but Staines reveals to Sir Lionel that Bubble has squandered all his wealth which 'Melted within his gripe, and from his coffers / Ranne like a violent streame to other mens' (19.2870-71). Staines has 'catch'd' (19.2872) at it and regained his estate and it is Bubble who faces arrest. Bubble is now well and truly gleekt. He asks Staines for compassion, changing his address back to 'master' (19.2890) and willingly accepts Staines's offer to be a 'blew coate' (19.2901) once again. The game of wit is now over.

The meaning of 'gleek' also links cleverly to the catch-phrase, *Tu Quoque*, 'you too' or 'like you'. The *OED* indicates that the aphorism stems from Cooke's use and has become known as a logical fallacy; an argument that is inadmissible because it applies equally to the person making it.[33] It does not apply solely to the pair of gulls; as Mary Bly notes, the romantic plot 'turns on each girl's inability to speak frankly' to the object of their desire.[34] Joyce's criticism of Gartred's reluctance to admit her feelings for Geraldine is proved to be a case of the pot calling the kettle black, illustrated by the two identically-worded criticisms Gartred later parodies back at her sister (Joyce: 7.661-63 and 10.1319-22; Gartred: 12.1653-55 and 12.1629-33). The dramatist's overlay of the trick-taking game of Gleek, with its etymological meaning of 'like' or 'the same' and requiring a set of three of equal rank is subtle and sophisticated.

From the offstage alehouse game of Trump in *Gammer Gurton* and the theatricality of the tavern game of Gleek in *Tu Quoque* we move now to the domesticity of a married couple's parlour and a game involving pairs of players: a game that is halted before it begins.

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[31] The expression 'A gleeke of Marriages', meaning a set of three, is used by Thomas Tomkis in *Albumzar*: *A Comedy* (1615), ed. Hugh G. Dick (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1944), 3.5.2142.
[32] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 150.
[33] The *OED* lists Cooke's use as the earliest.
[34] Bly, *Queer Virgins*, 132.

## The House of Cards in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*

Thomas Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is regularly grouped with *Arden of Faversham* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* as the pre-eminent examples of early modern 'English domestic tragedy'.[35] This sub-genre was codified in 1943 by Henry Hitch Adams as 'ordinarily set in the domestic scene, dealing with personal and family relationships rather than with large affairs of state'.[36] With transgression in the home leading to tragedy, Adams considers it 'a vehicle for reiterating commonplace moral lessons', with theology at its 'intellectual basis'.[37] *A Woman Killed with Kindness* has since garnered an extensive critical and theatrical reception history, some of which argues against straightforward didacticism, with controversy over whether John Frankford is a model of husbandly virtue or of hypocrisy and whether the self-starved wife, Anne, goes to salvation or damnation.[38] Heywood's play differs from its companion plays in having a fictional plot rather than one based on a true crime.[39] What it has in common with *Arden* is an important game scene (Scene 8), but Heywood's card-table scene does not derive from its source as *Arden*'s game of Tables does. This scene of domestic gaming plays a dramatically integral role in Anne's expulsion and exile. Bloom is one of the few critics to have looked in detail at it while others, concentrating rather on the genre, the much maligned sub-plot, or on contemporary attitudes to adultery and homo-sociality, tend to skate over this key scene, remarking only how it provides domestic detail and double-entendre. All critics miss-read the event.

The double-entendre should not, of course, be dismissed because the coded language of dancing and card-play, both hugely popular pastimes, is vitally instructive in *A Woman Killed* from the very first lines. Dance is central to the metaphoric language, of which cards form the centrepiece. The play opens upon a wedding, the bride's brother, Sir Francis Acton, acting as master of ceremonies:

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[35] Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Domestic Tragedy: Private Life on the Public Stage' in *Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 367-383, states that 'the canon of surviving domestic tragedies is most often taken to comprise *Arden of Faversham*, *A Warning for Fair Women*, *Two Lamentable Tragedies*, *1* and *2 Edward IV*, *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, *The Witch of Edmonton*, and *The English Traveller*', 371.

[36] Henry Hitch Adams, *English Domestic or, Homiletic Tragedy 1575 to 1642* [1943] (New York: Benjamin Blom Inc., 1971), 1-2.

[37] Ibid, 189.

[38] See especially Jennifer Panek, 'Adultery in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*', *SEL*, 34/2 (1994), 357-378 (370) on Frankford's psychological brutality.

[39] The plots of *A Woman Killed with Kindness* have been shown to be loosely based on several tales of adultery from William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1566). See McEvoy Patterson, 'Origin of the Main Plot of *A Woman Killed with Kindness'*, *Studies in English*, 17 (1937), 75-87.

SIR FRANCIS Some music there! None lead the bride a dance?
SIR CHARLES Yes, would she dance 'The Shaking of the Sheets'.
But that's the dance her husband means to lead her.
WENDOLL That's not the dance that every man must dance
According to the ballad. (1.1-5)[40]

As Michel Grivelet proposes, the innuendo-laden remark of Sir Charles Mountford anticipates the consummation of the marriage and contains ominous prolepsis in its image of the winding sheet in which a corpse is buried.[41] 'The Shaking of the Sheets', was the first line of a popular ballad, the 'doleful Dance, and Song of Death; Intituled, Dance after my Pipe'.[42] The ballad's speaker is Death who makes clear that none can escape him. Here is the first stanza:

> Can you dance the shaking of the sheets,
> A dance that every one must do?
> Can you trim it up with dainty sweets,
> And every thing as longs thereto?
> Make ready then your winding sheet,
> And see how you can bestir your feet,
> For death is the man that all must meet.[43]

Sir Charles is not the only character who knows this ballad. Wendoll, who is to lead the bride a fateful dance, seducing her into adultery, shows that he knows it, *mis*quoting the ballad's second line. He says 'that's *not* the dance that every man must dance' (my emphasis), and indeed leading his generous host's wife into sin is not a dance he should do. The name of a dance is providing a secret language, a code which is to be developed and replicated by encoded names of card games. I believe the contemporary audience would be alert to the prophetic code provided by Heywood. Besides which, beginning with a wedding is 'rarely propitious on the Renaissance stage', as Frances Dolan states.[44]

Grivelet also draws attention to the double use of the word 'match' in this opening scene to describe both the marriage and the hawking contest between Acton and Mountford. He states that the dramatist extracts from the idea of the perfect union of Anne Acton and John Frankford the idea of its opposite – contest; and that from this point the contrasted notions of union and hostility, love and hate, develop and cross over, forming the frame for

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[40] References follow *Thomas Heywood: A Woman Killed with Kindness* ed. Brian Scobie (London: A & C Black, 1985). There is a more recent edition, ed. Margaret Jane Kidnie (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017) but, although Kidnie uses the same control text (Q1) as Scobie, she makes changes to capitalisation and text which I question.
[41] Michel Grivelet, *Thomas Heywood et Le Drame Domestique Elizabéthain* (Paris: Didier, 1957), 213.
[42] *UCSB English Broadside Ballad Archive* gives this as the full title. There are five copies of the ballad including one in the British Library (Roxburghe 1.499). URL: http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30333/xml. [accessed 03/08/2016].
[43] *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (EBBA ID: 30333. ESTC ID:117492).
[44] Frances E. Dolan, ed., *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, revised edition (London: Methuen Drama, 2012), viii.

the dramatic action.[45] These joint notions are to come to a head in the card-table scene, where the word 'match' resurfaces.

Dancing occurs in both main and sub-plots in early juxtaposed scenes. The first scene closes with Acton and Mountford going to join the wedding dancing, after arranging a hawking contest the next day and having agreed stakes. Scene 2 opens with a mirrored image of dancing as Frankford's servants take time off to 'have a crash here in the yard' (2.5). The servants' animated debate (2.30-50) about which tune they should dance to is noteworthy as it is mirrored by the manner in which their master, mistress and house-guests, Wendoll and Cranwell, decide on *their* evening's amusement around the card-table a few scenes (and years) later, the encoded names of eight card games proving even more revelatory. Jack Slime opens the servants' discussion stating, 'I come to dance, not to quarrel. Come, what shall it be? / Rogero? (2.29-30). Jenkin appears not to like this suggestion, countering, 'Rogero? No, we will dance "The Beginning of the World"' (2.31-2). Line by line other suggestions are thrown into the mix: 'John, Come Kiss me Now', 'The Cushion Dance', 'Tom Tyler', 'The Hunting of the Fox', 'The Hay', 'Put on your Smock a Monday', until Jenkin proposes 'Sellenger's Round', to which they all say, 'That! that! that!' (2.49). They go through eight different options before choosing one of the early suggestions because the final choice of 'Sellenger's Round' was, as editors note, an alternative name for the dance 'Beginning of the World'. Gordon Williams proposes that the name of the dance suggests creation and that 'fertility is clearly marked in the dance figures: moving inwards and withdrawing are a symbolic enactment of the sexual act'.[46] Williams gives plentiful examples of this inference in contemporary literature. Likewise, the Hey (or Hay), is defined as 'the rhythmical interlacing in serpentine fashion of two groups of dancers, moving in single file and in opposite direction'.[47] With a little imagination eroticism can be read into any of the dances named above, providing a secret language.

Throughout the play there are parallels and contrasts in the plots and social strata and as Keith Sturgess notes, the servants 'symbolize normality and security' as their social superiors engage in excesses of rage and passion.[48] Though bawdy, the servants are at innocent play. The same cannot be said of Mistress Frankford and Wendoll. The latter has been a house-guest since he rode to the Frankfords' house in 'smoking heat' (4.25) to report

[45] Grivelet, *Le Drame Domestique,* 208.
[46] Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London: Athlone Press, 1994), 93.
[47] Cecil J. Sharp, *The Country Dance Book* (London: Novello, 1913), II.41.
[48] Keith Sturgess, ed., *Three Elizabethan Domestic Tragedies* (London: Penguin, 1969), 46.

the violent end to the hawking contest, when the enraged Mountford kills two of Acton's men and is arrested. Invited to 'use [Frankford's] table and […] purse' (4.65) as his own, Wendoll has become Frankford's closest companion. But he has also fallen for Mistress Anne and when directed by her to 'be a present Frankford in his absence' (6.78) he seizes the opportunity to tell her that he loves her in a seduction scene of such swift capitulation that many critics find it implausible. But the seduction scene subtly anticipates the card-table scene's imagery with terms used in card-playing, too many to be coincidental. To Anne's initial exclamation 'The host of heaven forbid / Wendoll should hatch such a disloyal thought' (6.109-10), Wendoll replies: 'Such is my fate; to this suit I was born: / To wear rich pleasure's crown, or fortune's scorn' (6.111-12). The word 'suit' has a number of meanings, particularly in the period, but Wendoll's meaning seems closest to the *OED*'s definitions III.13.a), 'livery, garb, sort, class', or e), 'condition, state'. It is, however, also the term for the four liveries of which a pack of cards consists and other card-playing terms and imagery follow: 'trick', 'table', 'hazard' 'heart' and 'hand'. Speeches by both Wendoll and Anne immediately before and after this open acknowledgement of his fate include the word 'heart'. Hearts will be the trump suit, with Anne the Ace of Hearts in the allegory to come. We have briefly considered the theatrical image of the hand and its connection to gaming in the previous chapter and in this play both the hand and the heart are dominant motifs, featuring forty-three and fifty-nine times respectively. Dale Randall has made the physiological connection between these two conventional symbols through his research into the handclasp motif that featured on traditional betrothal rings of the day and the emblem tradition:

> surviving through the Middle Ages and into the seventeenth century was the tradition that the betrothal or wedding ring should be worn on the third finger of the left hand – a tradition growing out of the belief that a special nerve or perhaps vein ran directly between this finger and the heart.[49]

The motifs will be seen as multivalent in significance, the hand symbolising faithful union, its owner's moral health, and God, yet also duplicity, and both connecting directly to gaming.[50] In his seduction Wendoll describes his heart as a 'red-leaved table' (6.126) in an impassioned speech in which he twice uses the gaming term 'hazard', as if he is already sitting round the card-table, partnered with her and trusting her hand: 'I was not fearful / Bluntly to give my

[49] Dale B.J. Randall, 'The Rank and Earthy Background of Certain Physical Symbols in *The Duchess of Malfi*', *Renaissance Drama* 18 (1987), 171-203 (178).
[50] See Farah Karim-Cooper, *The Hand on the Shakespearean Stage: Gesture, Touch and the Spectacle of Dismemberment* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016) 2, 27-30 on the hand, particularly the palm, as a microcosm of the self, as well as being a bodily reminder of the omnipresence of God.

life into your hand, / And at one hazard all my earthly means' (6.127-29). Hazard, a word so inextricably linked to gaming, is another leitmotif running through both plots. Wendoll calls Anne 'sweet saint' (6.151) and 'Saint' is one of the games she herself proposes in the innuendo-laden dialogue to come. Nick, entering 'in the nick' (6.166) to witness Wendoll kiss Anne, declares 'these tricks I like not' (6.168) before he delivers the scene's final line: 'Wendoll's a knave, my mistress is a etcetera' (6.182). The previous line ends with 'before' so, if the rhyme were completed, the missing word would be 'whore' (interchangeable with 'quean').[51] The knave and queen of a deck of cards symbolize Wendoll and Anne in the dialogue around the card-table. This is the next scene in the primary plot, separated from the seduction only by a scene which updates us on the life of 'hard shift' (7.1) now enforced on Mountford and his sister Susan and the trickery through which he is arrested a second time.

Nick's loyalty to his master requires him to warn Frankford: 'Wendoll is a villain' (8.53); the 'base slave / Enjoys my mistress, and dishonours you' (8.57-8). Frankford is shocked and, trying to make a judgement as to the veracity of Nick's report, is the next to use the words 'hazard' and 'heart', deciding whether he can 'hazard the dear salvation of [his] soul' (8.78) on the 'double gilt, the well hatch ore / Of their two hearts' (8.110-11). Torn, he resolves to appear untroubled and be secret himself, declaring, 'Till I know all, I'll nothing seem to know' (8.115). With that, he calls for the evening's entertainment, ordering 'Lights, and a table there!' (8.116). Card-playing is clearly habitual in the house, because Nick and Jenkin duly arrive '*with cards, carpet, stools and other necessaries*' (8.118sd). Nick sets down the carpet 'to cover the table' (8.121) and candles are lit.[52] Nick asks 'Where's Sisly with her counters and her box?' (8.122). Willughby's treatise provides a description of 'counters made of brasse, silver, bone, &c., a dozen of counters standing for a shilling, 20 schillings &c.' used to keep account of how much gamesters pay one another at the end of the game.[53] R.W. van Fossen and Margaret Jane Kidnie insert a stage direction for Sisly/Cicely to enter with the counters. In the quartos she remains missing – there is no stage entrance for her. No matter because, contrary to all critics' interpretations of this scene, the chosen card game does not properly begin, as I shall show. The foursome does, however, spend some time discussing which game to play and setting it up. First they decide how they will pair up and it is in this exchange that Heywood reintroduces the word 'match'. Anne asks who will play with her and Frankford answers that he will partner her. Wendoll counters: 'No, by my

[51] In Q1 the line ends 'a &c.', in Q2 with '–'. Kidnie, ed., *A Woman Killed with Kindness* states 'Both quartos suppress the word 'whore' which would complete the rhyming couplet', 186. She uses the dash as per Q2.
[52] I believe the carpet, like baize, is to stop the cards slipping.
[53] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games,* 134.

faith, sir, when you are together I sit out; it must be Mistress Frankford and I, or else it is no match'. Frankford is quick to respond: 'I do not like that match' (8.128-30). Reintroduction of this key word from scene 1 reminds us of the couple's seemingly perfect 'match' but also that competitive 'matches' can be dangerous; that, as Susan cries desperately when she hears that her brother has killed Acton's falconer and huntsman, an 'Unhappy jest' can end in 'such earnest' (3.58). Again it is used in contrasted meanings, companionship and competition, as the deep friendship between Frankford and Wendoll turns to rivalry for Anne in a contest played out in the coded language of cards, the games becoming virtual portraits of the seated gamesters. Asking Cranwell to pair with him, Frankford warns Wendoll: 'I must look to you, Master Wendoll, for you will be playing false, nay, so will my wife too' (8.135-36). Wendoll's retort above and this warning by his host mark the start of an extensive and artful sub-textual dialogue, to which Nick adds confirmatory asides, through which Frankford accuses and Wendoll goads. The tension rises but, as Grivelet says, 'without anything being said or even thought in a distinct fashion' (my translation).[54] Initially Anne appears to be unaware of the innuendo, though she ironically contributes to it. For instance, her interjection to the accusation of playing false is to establish the ground rules, saying: 'Let them that are taken playing false forfeit the set' (8.138). She will indeed forfeit 'the set', that is her marriage, children and, ultimately, her life. As Lisa Martinez Lajous says:

> The action following the card game involves the realization of all the innuendos and implications expressed during their gaming, including the punishment Anne consequently endures.[55]

To understand this insight we need to consider carefully the games which are now suggested and rejected, in the same manner that the various dances were by the servants, as code is contained therein on which editors' glosses tend to be perfunctory.

Cranwell is a genuinely innocent player who prompts the discussion, asking 'Gentlemen, what shall our game be?' (8.140). The games and the allusions they conjure would have been readily recognised by contemporary playgoers.[56] Aiding the modern reader Scobie uses proper name capitalisation for the games, as guided by the quartos. Critics misinterpret this vital part of the scene, believing that the dialogue represents snippets of conversation, and for this reason I will comment line by line to show that it is an entire sequence and I will embolden the text for clarity. Wendoll opens the sparring contest:

[54] Grivelet, *Le Drame Domestique*, 210. The translation from Grivelet's French is my own.
[55] Lajous, 'Playing for Profit', 165-6.
[56] In Katie Mitchell's 2011 production at the National Theatre the games were updated to more modern card games.

**WENDOLL** **Master Frankford, you play best at Noddy.** (8.141)

Game references work in the same self-reflexive way as metatheatrical references: they invite the spectator into the position of game player, inviting him to consider the game's particularities and strategies. Indeed, vicarious play as the means by which spectators might be 'drawn into the psychological and social dramas represented by the plays actors' is one of Bloom's principal arguments.[57] Scobie's gloss for Noddy is '(a) a card game (b) fool, the cuckold'.[58] Neither Scobie nor Kidnie, who glosses it as an 'early version of cribbage', explains that in the seventeenth century noddy was also slang for sexual intercourse. Gordon Williams defines noddy unambiguously as 'copulation'.[59] It is important to know, as contemporaries would, that Noddy, like Cribbage, its successor, was a two-handed game played using a wooden 'Noddie-board' to keep the score.[60] Small pegs, made of wood, ivory or bone are moved along rows of thirty-one holes in a leapfrog fashion, 'and hee that can get into the great hole at m first wins the game' (see fig. below).[61]

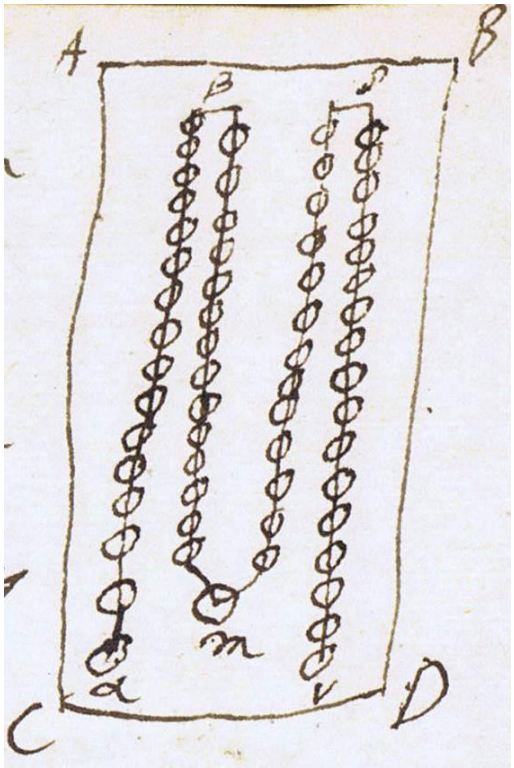


**Figure 8: Francis Willughby's drawing of a Noddie Board, Mi LM 14 (f. 67) .**
**By kind permission of Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Nottingham.**

[57] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 98.
[58] Scobie, ed., *Woman Killed with Kindness*, 45.
[59] Williams, *Dictionary of Sexual Language*, 2.953. See also *OED*, *n.2*,1.b.
[60] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 142. See also Parlett, *Oxford Guide*, 131.
[61] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 142.

The pegs and holes provide obvious metaphors for the male and female sexual organs, with the 'great hole', the thirty-first, presumably representing sexual climax. This would explain the definition of noddy as intercourse and why its interpolation is always for bawdy. The implicit sexual imagery is evident in satirical comedies such as Dekker's *Blurt, Master Constable* and Dekker and Webster's *Westward Ho*, both in brothel scenes.[62] Wendoll's presumptuous suggestion of this game not only sets up the question of which of them is the fool and which the 'Knave Noddy' (the jack of trumps), but shows the boldness he has assumed, fully taking on the role of a being a 'present Frankford', including using Mistress Frankford as his Noddie-board.[63] Frankford responds:

**FRANKFORD** **You shall not find it so; indeed you shall not.** (8.142)

This exchange alone contains layers of irony and ambiguity. Anne makes another suggestion:

**ANNE** **I can play at nothing so well as Double Ruff.** (8.143)

The editors of *Willughby's Book of Games* state that Ruff, Ruff and Trump, or simply Trump, were 'a family of variants on a single game with overlapping names', all similar to Whist.[64] Willughby himself states that 'Trumpe seems to have beene one of the first games from which Ruffe & Trumpe, Gleeke, & most others were afterwards invented, by adding ruffes, gleekes, &c.'[65] He records that 'The number [of players] is 4, 2 against 2, sitting mingled'.[66] It is pertinent that it is a *partnership*, trick-taking, game. Whilst Kidnie rightly suggests that 'double' alludes to duplicity, her statement that 'double hand' is 'not a known game' is incorrect.[67] Double Hand Ruffe is described by Willughby as being 'where the 2 partners reckon their ruffes & cards togather, & all the skill is to play the cards so that they may help one another'.[68] He adds that 'There is more cunning in playing a Double Hand Ruffe, where 2 are partners, then where they all play on their owne heads'.[69] Frankford must be aware of this because he responds:

**FRANKFORD** **If Master Wendoll and my wife be together, there's no playing against them at double hand.** (8.144-45)

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[62] In *Blurt, Master Constable* Fontinell is told that the courtesan Imperia is waiting for her reward for her part in the escape plan: 'I left her at Cardes; shee'll sit up till you come because shee'll have you play a game at Noddie', Thomas Berger, ed., *A Critical Old-spelling Edition of Thomas Dekker's Blurt, Master Constable (1602),* 3.2.4-5. See Chapter 1 re the reference in *Westward Hoe*. Parlett, *Oxford Guide*, 54, suggests noddy is implied in *Troilus and Cressida* (1.2.212) by 'Will he give you the nod?'.

[63] The board's thirty-one holes further reflect its similarity to a woman and her menstrual cycle.

[64] Cram et al., eds. *Willughby's Book of Games* note also that Willughby's account differs slightly from Cotton's and add: 'According to Cotton, Ruff and Honours was also called Slamm', 279.

[65] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 147.

[66] Ibid, 146.

[67] Kidnie, ed., *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, 204.

[68] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby*'s *Book of Games*, 146.

[69] Ibid, 147.

Anne's suggestion of 'Double Ruff' is highly appropriate given that she now has two sexual partners. Her suggestion fuels Frankford's growing belief in Nick's report of her illicit partnership with Wendoll away from the gaming-table.

At the time of his revelation Nick has been twice told by his master 'Thou art a knave' (8.45, 47) but now the servant, underlining his report and using the same card-game double-speak as his superiors, makes it clear who the real knave is:

| | |
|---|---|
| **NICK** | **I can tell you, sir, the game that Master Wendoll is best at.** |
| **WENDOLL** | **What game is that, Nick?** |
| **NICK** | **Marry, sir, Knave Out of Doors.** (8.146-49) |

It is interesting that it is Wendoll, rather than Frankford, who asks, 'What game is that, Nick?'. The game's full name is 'Beat the Knave Out of Doors' and we know it today as Beggar My Neighbour. It is, as Parlett explains, a 'simple turn-up gambling game'.[70] It is illustrated below in an eighteenth-century etching depicting political subjects as cards and 'A suit of clubs led by the Queen and King are kicking out the Knave'.[71]


**Figure 9: James Sayers, *The Battle of the Clubs or the Game of Beat Knave out of Doors*, 1792. Etching and aquatint. Yale University Library, 7927378.**

[70] Parlett, *Oxford Guide*, 64.
[71] James Sayers (1748-1823), *The Battle of the Clubs or the game of Beat Knave out of doors*, http://search.library.yale.edu/catalog/7927378 [accessed 20/04/2019].

Wendoll's interjection shows the boldness with which he is gambling in the wider sense and the game encapsulates Nick's advice on how to deal with Wendoll: 'eject him forcibly from the house'.[72] Further sexual innuendo is possibly implied too. 'Out (of door)' meant 'whore', from the French 'hors', meaning 'out/out of doors' and a homonym of 'whores' when anglicised.[73] Wendoll's riposte is a tacit acknowledgement that Anne is a whore:

**WENDOLL** **She and I will take you at Lodam.** (8.150)

Citing the *OED*, Scobie glosses Lodam (also written Lodum/Loadum) as 'a game of cards, in one form called 'losing loadum', in which the loser won the game'.[74] The dictionary does not give the full picture. Loosing Lodum is 'the onely game in which the good cards loose', that is the ace, ten, Knave, Queen and King, which were called 'Loaders'.[75] As Willughby writes, 'All the cunning is in avoiding winning tricks; when one has the Ace of Trumps or dangerous cards, [the aim is] to get shut of them as cheap as one can'.[76] There is increasing slippage in this discourse as the games become portraits of the players and as the protagonists are read as cards. Anne Frankford, in this scenario, is – or was – a good card, beautiful, educated and from a noble line; but in this game it is not helpful to have the good cards, and one needs to discard these quickly, as Frankford soon will with Anne. Lodam is emblematic of Anne's fall into sin, and a far cry from the 'Saint' of her next suggestion:

**ANNE** **Husband, shall we play at Saint?** (8.151)

The name Saint (sometimes Mount-Saint) derives from *cent* (a hundred), the target score upon which the game ends, but the Anglicisation contributes to the coded exchange and it creates an echo of Wendoll's term of endearment, 'sweet saint', as he seduced her. Kidnie spoils the pun by using the spelling 'cent' although her gloss records that 'Both early quartos

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[72] Martin Wiggins, ed., *A Woman Killed with Kindness and Other Domestic Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), gloss to 'Knave Out of Doors', 311.

[73] Frankie Rubinstein, *A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sexual Puns and Their Significance* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), 181. Rubinstein cites a passage in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, ed. Suzanne Gossett (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) which illustrates the phrase:

PUPPET DAMON Mistress Hero's a whore.
LEATHERHEAD Is she a whore? Keep you quiet, or sir knave out of door.
PUPPET DAMON Knave out of door?
PUPPET HERO Yes, knave out of door.
PUPPET DAMON Whore out of door!
PUPPET HERO I say, knave out of door.
PUPPET DAMON I say, whore out of door.
PUPPET PYTHIAS Yea, so say I too.
PUPPET HERO Kiss the whore o' the arse. (5.4.300-5)

[74] *OED*, *n.*

[75] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games,* 154.

[76] Ibid, 154.

print the alternative spelling "Saint" in order to emphasize Master Frankford's punning reply'.[77] Indeed his response indicates that he is now convinced of her moral fall:

> **FRANKFORD** **[*Aside*] My saint's turned devil. [*To them*] No, we'll none of Saint. You're best at New Cut, wife; you'll play at that.** (8.152-53)[78]

The sexual innuendo is mounting. Editorial glosses for New Cut go little further than the *OED* and although no description exists for its methodology the game appears in poems by Taylor and Breton and it is mentioned in Harington's *Treatise on Playe*.[79] Middleton, who is partial to naming characters as card games, includes a Mistress Newcut in *Your Five Gallants*: an unfaithful wife who eyes up the male clientele in a brothel though a spy-hole. Breton's stanzas, in particular, show the game's ready comparison with sexual congress:

> A pretty game to get into the hole:
> Loose a good Carde, and by an Ace bee eased,
> A lingering sport, the last man winnes the gole.[80]

One only has to consider that cards are 'cut', to decide things such as partners and the first deal, and that 'cutting' involves lifting off the top portion of the pack to reveal a card in the lower section, to understand the imagery and inference of a new sexual partner. Wendoll is prepared to bet on winning this metaphorical game:

> **WENDOLL** **If you play at New Cut, I'm the soonest hitter of any here, for a wager.** (8.154-55)

Willughby records that 'Hitter' was the term for the player achieving exactly thirty-one in another game, One-and-Thirty.[81] Breton's use, 'But he that hits the game vpon the head, / May in his bagge the money closely put', in the stanza prior to that cited above, suggests that it may also have been a term in New Cut.[82] Wendoll boasts that he will get the perfect score – sexual satisfaction – if they play at New Cut.

Convinced he is a cuckold, Frankford appears to be already devising a plan to shame the adulterers:

> **FRANKFORD** **[*Aside*] 'Tis me they play on; well, you may draw out. For all your cunning, 'twill be to your shame.**

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[77] Kidnie, ed., *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, 205.
[78] I have included Scobie's emendations in square brackets.
[79] Taylor, *Taylor's Motto,* D4$^{r}$, and Breton, *Machiuells dogge* (1617), st. 26-27, Harington, *A Treatise on Playe* in *Nugae Antinquae,* ed. Thomas Park (London: 1804), Vol. 1, 186-232 (214).
[80] Breton, *Machiuells dogge*, st. 27. It is well known that in the period 'cut' was slang for both a whore and the vagina. See Williams, *Dictionary of Sexual Language*, I, 357.
[81] 'Just one and thirtie is called Hitter, & whoever is hitter showes his cards & wins a double game of all the rest', Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 136. Scobie, ed., *A Woman Killed with Kindness* glosses hitter as 'scorer', noting the bawdy whilst Kidnie ed. assumes it means winner noting that the *OED* does not mention the term until 1813.
[82] Breton, *Machiuells dogge*, st. 26.

**I'll teach you at your New Cut, a new game.**
**[*To them*] Come, come.** (8.156-59)

Here the evening's guest, Cranwell, probably impatient to start playing, proposes a game:

**CRANWELL** **If you cannot agree upon the game, to Post and Pair.** (8.160)

Again the suggestion is encoded. Mentions of Post and Pair in early modern literature are numerous and although Willughby gives no description of the game, Holme and Cotton do. Each player is dealt three cards and 'a Pair-Royal wins all, both Post, Pair, and Seat'.[83] A pair-royal (or 'perryal') is three of a kind. As Scobie glosses, the emphasis on three draws attention to the triangular relationship between Frankford, Wendoll and Anne. Cotton writes that this game 'depends much upon daring; so that some may win very considerably, who have the boldness to adventure much upon the Vye, although their cards are very indifferent'. Cotton also advocates bidding 'high couragiously, by which means you daunt your antagonist, and so bring him to submission'.[84] Wendoll is indeed daring and comes out with the most blatant declaration of his treachery yet:

**WENDOLL** **We shall be soonest pairs, and my good host,**
**When he comes late home, he must kiss the post.** (8.161-62)

Frankford's response is threatening:

**FRANKFORD** **Whoever wins, it shall be to thy cost.** (8.163)

An exasperated Cranford makes another suggestion, returning to Anne's first suggestion of Ruff, or a variant:

**CRANWELL** **Faith, let it be Vide-ruff, and let's make honours.** (8.164)

Vide-Ruff is assumed to be a variant of 'Ruff' or 'Ruff and Honours'. The latter, Cotton states, was 'by some called Slamm' and was 'so commonly known in England in all parts thereof, that every child almost of eight years old hath a competent knowledge in that recreation'.[85] 'Making honours' was agreeing to score for honours – the Ace, King, Queen, and Knave – adding points at the end of play to the side which has most.[86] Their decision to play for honours is highly ironic and we can now add 'honour/s' to the key list of card game terms that feature throughout the text, connecting both plots. Frankford adds a pointed stipulation:

**FRANKFORD** **If you make honours, one thing let me crave**,
**Honour the King and Queen; except the knave.** (8.165-66)

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[83] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 72; Holme, *The Academy of Armoury*, Vol. 2, Bk III, 73.
[84] Ibid, 72.
[85] Ibid, 55.
[86] 'A side scores an additional 4 for having been dealt all four top trumps, or 2 if dealt any three of them', Parlett, *Oxford Guide*, 214.

He will not allow the term ‘honour’ to be attached to the knave (Wendoll) at this table, and by this request he makes clear that the people round the table are, in effect, cards. It is generally assumed that the prefix ‘vide’ suggests vying (staking a bet) and here, through metonymy, vying for Anne.[87] As Scobie states, Ruff puns on the characteristic neckwear of women’s clothing of the time. Ruff was also another slang term for vagina, due in part to the fact that a heated ‘poking stick’ was used to form the folds in a ruff.[88] That ‘Ruff and Honours’ gives up multiple significations can be similarly heard in a warning to women in Cotton’s *Compleat Gamester*:

> Ladies, don’t trust your secrets in that hand,
> Who can’t their own (to their great grief) command.
> For this I will assure you, if you do,
> In time you’l lose your *Ruff* and *Honour* too.[89]

This quatrain ‘explains’ the final panel of his Frontispiece illustration, in which two women, seated at either end of a table, are playing with male partners, and male onlookers. It seems that card-play was an opportunity for women to ‘make [men] lose at once their game and hearts’.[90]

**Figure 10: Detail (final panel) of the Frontispiece to Charles Cotton, *The Compleat Gamester* (London, 1674). RB 120898, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California. Full frontispiece Fig. 18 (inside back cover).**

The Frankfords’ group follow convention to decide the dealer:

**WENDOLL** **Well, as you please for that. Lift who shall deal.** (8.167)

[87] ‘Vide’ might also be the Latin imperative, Cranwell referring the party back to Anne’s first suggestion, as in *vide ante/supra* for ‘see before/above’. This would match the servants’ discussion of dances and their final choice of an early suggestion.
[88] Williams, *Dictionary of Sexual Language*, III, 1177-8.
[89] Cotton, *Compleat* Gamester, xxi.
[90] Ibid, xxi.

Willughby states: 'In all games the first thing is to lift for dealing' and 'they that have the least card deal'.[91] Anne confirms that whoever draws the 'least' card is dealer, and asks Wendoll what he uncovers:

**ANNE** **The least in sight. What are you, Master Wendoll?**
**WENDOLL** **[*Cutting the cards*] I am a knave.** (8.168)

Drawing the knave, Wendoll's answer to Anne's question amounts to an admission of guilt, which Nick affirms in his aside:

**NICK** **[*Aside*] I'll swear it.** (8.170)

Anne cuts the deck next, announcing:

**ANNE** **I a queen.** (8.171)

Frankford retorts (most probably aside):

**FRANKFORD** **[*Aside*] A quean thou should'st say. [*To them*] Well, the cards are mine.**
**They are the grossest pair that e'er I felt.** (8.171-73)

A 'paire' was the less usual term for a deck or pack.[92] A pair was also, as today, two cards of the same value. Both meanings register here: the pack feels unclean to the touch and Anne and Wendoll, are the gross pair, in moral terms. Rebecca Ann Bach considers this exchange in the context of Laura Gowing's argument that in early seventeenth-century London there was little or no language for men's sexual misconduct (as opposed to that of women); no male equivalent of whore. Bach suggests that 'the evidence from this play among others suggest that Renaissance England had such words, and that "knave" was among them'.[93] From the point of view of the game, however, and to continue the player-as-card metaphor, we should note that Frankford is not the 'King' he would expect to be in this house of cards, and this is reflected in the fact that he does not draw the King; he must turn up the 'least' because he announces that he has got the deal.[94]

In the role of dealer, Frankford has to shuffle.[95] Anne says she will cut and here she appears to make a deliberate, rather than inadvertent, contribution to the game of

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[91] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 132. Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, differs slightly by stating that 'At French-Ruff you must lift for the deal, most or least carries it according to the agreement of the gamesters', 58.
[92] Parlett, *Oxford* Guide, 45. A pack is referred to as a 'pair' in Jonson's *Christmas His Masque*, l. 127, David Lindley ed., *Court Masques* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 109-116 (112).
[93] Rebecca Ann Bach, *Shakespeare and Renaissance Literature before Heterosexuality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 74.
[94] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, is incorrect to say that 'the fact that he wins the right to deal after Wendoll and Anne draw a Knave and Queen, respectively, indicates that Frankford draws something of higher value', 82.
[95] Willughby confirms this: 'The dealer is to shuffle the cards', Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 134. Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, is incorrect in suggesting that Wendoll shuffles, 82-3.

double-speak, for she regrets she ever 'dealt', using card terminology not for her role in the card game but the sexual game:

**ANNE** **Shuffle, I'll cut. [*Aside*] Would I had never dealt.** (8.174)
**[FRANKFORD *deals the cards*]**

Bloom is at pains to point out the importance of understanding the game of Ruff and its methodology, writing that '*as the game proceeds* and Wendoll's good luck builds, the characters refer more repeatedly to the conclusion that Wendoll is cheating' (my emphasis).[96] But the game never begins; that is the point. The following exchange is crucial to understanding the way that games imitate the dramatic action, almost taking a role in the plot. Frankford misdeals.

**FRANKFORD** **I have lost my dealing.** (8.175)

'Loosing of Dealing is when more or lesse are dealt to the plaiers then the game requires', Willughby explains.[97] Frankford has dealt one card too many to Wendoll – a queen, of course, with obvious irony – and Frankford has to pass the deal to Wendoll, just as he has lost Anne to him.

**WENDOLL** **Sir, the fault's in me.**
**This queen I have more than my own, you see.**
**Give me the stock.**
**[WENDOLL *deals*]** (8.176-78)

Cotton records that 'if you play at *forsat* (that is the rigour of the play) he that deals wrong loseth […] his deal'.[98] Frankford plays by strict rules at cards and fatally strict rules in life, as the adulterous Anne will soon discover. He refers to his marriage now as a 'deal' he has lost:

**FRANKFORD** **My mind's not on my game.**
**[*Aside*] Many a deal I have lost, the more's your shame.**
**[*To him*] You have served me a bad trick, Master Wendoll.** (8.178-80)

'Trick' here is both a bad hand of cards and a bad turn. Wendoll tells Frankford:

**WENDOLL** **Sir, you must take your lot. To end this strife,**
**I know I have dealt better with your wife.** (8.181-82)

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[96] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 83. Other critics misread the scene too. Roussel Sargent, 'Theme and Structure in Middleton's '*A Game at Chess*' writes, 'Their discussion of which card game to play, followed by the game, with a running commentary on its fortunes expresses the domestic situation and the husband's feelings about it', 772.

[97] Kidnie, ed., *Woman Killed with Kindness*, glosses 'misdealt'. Kathleen McLuskie and David Bevington, eds, *Plays on Women* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) gloss as '(1) misdealt the cards; (2) lost in the deal regarding my wife'.

[98] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 58. The *OED* cites this example from Cotton in its definition of forsat, *n.* Edmund Hoyle's later famous rules for Whist [1742] state similarly: 'A dealer who misdeals loses the deal', *Hoyle's Games Modernized*, ed. Lawrence Dawson (London: Routledge, c. 1941), 10.

He has 'dealt' better with Anne – in kisses as well as cards of course. Frankford's response to this dramatic irony is terse:

**FRANKFORD** **Thou hast dealt falsely then.** (8.183)

The game has still not begun. Before Ruff can commence, the player who has the ace of trumps (or the dealer if the ace is in those four) takes in the 'head', the remaining four cards after each of the four players has been dealt twelve cards. As Willughby explains, 'Taking in the head is called Rubbing, and whoever has the Ace of Trumps rubs those 4 cards', and discards '4 of the worst cards they have'.[99] Anne asks:

**ANNE** **What's trumps?** (8.184)

The uppermost card of the head is turned up for trumps. Wendoll announces:

**WENDOLL** **Hearts. Partner, I rub.** (8.185)

Wendoll has the Ace of Hearts, a metaphor for Anne, and has the advantage of choosing the twelve best cards from those he originally had and the four in the head. Rub has obvious sexual connotations. Having the Ace of Hearts and being able to pick the best cards from the head does not necessarily mean he will win. Ruff (like its successor, Whist) is a game one can win with mediocre cards if one concentrates on what cards are played out. The key is 'to study your partner's hand as much as your own' – there are ways to communicate the strengths and weaknesses of one's hand by certain leads and discards – and play to the strongest suit.[100] Much skill is in the subterfuge. Frankford, however, no longer has the 'heart' to try as he does not have the Ace of Hearts (Anne), or any other trumps. Despairing, he voices rub as its near homonym 'rob' and decides to 'give o'er the set', saying:

**FRANKFORD** **[*Aside*] Thou robb'st me of my soul, of her chaste love;**
**In thy false dealing, thou has robbed my heart.**
**Booty you play; I like a loser stand,**
**Having no heart, or here, or in my hand.**
**[*To them*] I will give o'er the set; I am not well.**
**Come, who will hold my cards?** (8.186-91)

Bloom believes this 'cover-up preserves at least the illusion of Frankford's friendship with Wendoll, avoiding the kind of rupture of male homosocial community that we witness in the falcon wager scene' and that:

> Instead of denouncing Wendoll on the basis of dishonesty during a game, Frankford waits and catches Wendoll out on the charge of adultery, which

[99] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games,* 146. Both Scobie, ed., *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and Kathleen McLuskie and David Bevington eds, *Plays on Women* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) gloss this is as 'to take all the cards of one suit', citing the *OED*, which has obviously been updated since these editions as it now lists Willughby's reference and extends the definition above with 'Also: (in the game of ruff) to take the four cards left after the deal'.
[100] Parlett, *Oxford Guide*, 219.

> affects Frankford's relationship with Anne far more gravely than his with Wendoll.[101]

Rather than speculating on whether Wendoll cheats (because the game does not even begin), I believe we should concentrate on Frankford's rigid following of the rules, both at cards and in his governance of the household. Surely the point is that he abruptly cancels the game, just as he is soon to cancel his marriage, or, as Thomas Moisan states, 'annul his wife's very identity'?[102] He orders the servants to 'Take hence this table' (8.197) in the same manner that he will soon remove any reminder of Anne from his house.

First, Frankford needs to have first-hand proof of his friend's treachery and his wife's guilt and he shows himself perfectly capable of a gamester's subterfuge, feigning a 'fit' (8.210), taking wax impressions 'To have by them new keys' (8.221), and arranging for a letter calling him urgently away to York to be brought to him one supper time. In a new partnership game, this time paired with the faithful Nick, who gets a smith to cut the keys, brings in the letter and rides out with him, Frankford is clearly playing a strong hand. He uses the word 'play', telling Nick: 'And when they think they may securely *play*, / They are nearest to danger' (8.223-24, my italics). He bids Wendoll: 'in my absence use / The very ripest pleasure of my house' (11.63-4) and he kisses Anne, saying: 'Goodnight, sweet Nan' (11.85). The terminology of his aside again reveals his gaming mind-set: 'Dissembling lips, you suit not with my heart' (11.86). In Ruff the rule is to follow suit and not to do so 'when you have it in your hand, is very fowl play', Cotton writes.[103] Willughby is emphatic about the rule and the consequences of breaking it: 'Not playing one of the same suite is called Renouncing, & whoever is catcht renouncing falsly must forfeit as much as is plaid for & deserves to bee turned out of all companies for a wrangler & foule plaier'.[104] In the wider partnership game of marriage, Anne does not 'follow suit' and remain faithful to Frankford, but cedes to Wendoll. She is soon to pay the penalty and be 'turned out'. Wendoll seizes patriarchal control, declaring, 'I am husband now in Master Frankford's place' (11.89) and wastes no time in being 'profuse in Frankford's richest treasure' (11.116). Wendoll and Anne may think they have the best trumps, but they cannot see Frankford's hand, and perhaps forget that they agreed to play for honours. At cards one does not know the value of those held by one's opponent/s. As Cardano describes it in 1564, 'play with cards takes place from

[101] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 94.
[102] Thomas Moisan, 'Framing with Kindness: The Transgressive Theatre of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*' in *Essays on Transgressive Readings: Reading over the Lines*, ed. Georgia Johnston (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 171-184 (176).
[103] Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 55.
[104] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 133.

ambush, for they are hidden'.[105] Frankford and Nick are about to ambush the lovers, returning under cover of darkness using duplicate keys. With further prominence of hand imagery Frankford hopes he can 'keep this white and virgin hand / From any violent outrage or red murder'(13.32-3) and ambushes the lovers in his bedroom. He finds them 'lying / Close in each other's arms, and fast asleep' (13.43-4) and cries simply, 'O, O!' (13.41). Frankford now has his proof that Wendoll has led Anne in a dance of 'Shaking of the Sheets'.

Following on from shock and anger (he is stayed by a maid from using his rapier), questions form next in Frankford's head: 'Was it for want / Thou playedst the strumpet?' (13.108-9), he asks; and 'Did I not lodge thee in my bosom? / Wear thee here in my heart?' (13.114-5). Strumpet, a curiously close homonym of 'trump', and 'heart' recall the game of Ruff and its trump suit. The Honours of this wider game are now to be reckoned. In Heywood's sources, all stories of adultery, the cuckold's chief aim is to safeguard his honour.[106] Likewise with Frankford, who feels 'tainted' (13.87), his house cast with a 'blemish' (13.119). Anne, too, thinks belatedly of her honour and, referring to 'such a husband, such sweet children' (13.134) cries, 'O to redeem my honour / I would have this hand cut off, these breasts seared' (13.135-36). For Anne, here, the hand figures the marital bond and the breasts the maternal bond, and although it initially appears as if she is enfeebling herself, breast removal was an Amazonian custom, a symbolic rejection of both maternity and procreation.[107] She has had an epiphany of sorts and is already taking control of her own fate, as with her later self-starvation. But of course the hand is more than just a symbol of her marriage. It was Aristotle who first defined it as the 'instrument for instruments'. As such, as Katherine Rowe explains, the hand 'defines a relation between intention and act' and Anne has already acted wrongly.[108] The third character to use the gaming term, 'hazard' she states: 'to whip this scandal out, I would hazard / The rich and dear redemption of my soul' (13.138-39). But, as in cards, in her adulterous game she cannot call back what she has played. It is too late. Adams presents a persuasive argument that she must 'learn that mundane honour is a trifling thing in comparison with the salvation of her

[105] Cardano *Liber*, in Ore, *Cardano the Gambling Scholar*, 206.
[106] The main plot is indebted to four stories of adultery, three of which were first published in 1566 in William Painter's popular *Palace of Pleasure*, Kidnie, ed. *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, 37.
[107] For a reading of Anne as Amazon and Heywood's interest in these women, see Christopher Frey and Leanore Lieblein, '"My breasts sear'd": The Self-Starved Female Body and *A Woman Killed with Kindness*', *Early Theatre*, 7.1 (2004), 45-66. The Amazons' self-mutilating practice was to burn off a single breast 'to facilitate more efficient use of the bow and arrow', 53.
[108] Katherine A. Rowe, 'Dismembering and Forgetting in *Titus Andronicus*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 45/3 (1994), 279-303 (282).

soul'.[109] As we know, at cards Frankford plays 'at forsat', adhering rigidly to the rules. Likewise he cannot forgive his erring wife and he passes his 'sentence' (13.132). As in Ruff, where the penalty for not following suit is to be 'turned out of all companies for a rangler & foule plaier', Anne is to be turned out and provided for in a manor seven miles away but is never to see him or the two children again. 'We will henceforth be', says Frankford, 'As we had never seen, ne'er more shall see'. (13.180-81). With a clear echo of card game imagery, he remarks that: 'It was thy hand cut two hearts out of one' (13.186). The sudden cancellation of the game, just as the hands have been dealt, and the immediate removal of the card-table, anticipates the plot action – the sudden ending of the Frankfords' marriage and removal of all trace of Anne. Frankford asks Cranwell to help him ensure that nothing 'that ever was called hers' is left 'by which [he] might remember her'. Listing items of her personal attire, he says: 'I would not have a bodkin or a cuff, / A bracelet, necklace or a …' (15.7-8) – and here what would complete the rhyme with cuff is 'ruff'. But instead he says 'rebato wire' which, as Scobie glosses, was a 'collar made of wire to support a ruff in the dress of the period'; it is simply another way of saying ruff. Double-entendre, what is *unsaid* (as here) or not completed (like the game of Ruff) are all vitally instructive in this play. Nothing happens or is said openly – as in card-play.

I have barely mentioned the sub-plot, but, as Sturgess says, 'the two plots, with their symmetrically organised trios of main characters, invite a continuous effort of cross-reference'.[110] Freda Townsend and Peter Ure demonstrate the deliberate paralleling of the twin themes of honour and virtue and the contrasts between the 'chaste Susan and unchaste Anne, between the honourable Sir Charles and the dishonourable Wendoll',[111] and that kindness dooms not one but two women. In her work on queer theory, Bach notes that 'the play resolves two contests between men – Wendoll versus Frankford and Acton versus Mountford – with settlements over women's bodies'.[112] I feel a little more is needed to make all the intellectual connections, because both plots contain games in which they 'play for honours'. Johan Huizinga explains that 'virtue, honour, nobility and glory fall […] within the field of competition, which is that of play' and that as far back as Aristotle 'honour is called

[109] Adams, *English Domestic or, Homiletic Tragedy*, 150.
[110] Sturgess, *Three Elizabethan Domestic Tragedies*, 42.
[111] Freda L. Townsend, 'The Artistry of Thomas Heywood's Double Plots', *Philological Quarterly*, 25.2 (1946), 97-119 (102). See also Peter Ure, 'Marriage and Domestic Drama in Heywood and Ford', *English Studies*, 32 (1951), 200-16.
[112] Bach, 'The Homosocial Imaginary of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, *Textual Practice* 12/3 (1988), 503-524 (512).

the "prize of virtue"'.[113] Echoes of the same language and imagery of card play, such as dealing, hand, heart, honour and hazard, are all present in the Mountford/Acton plot. 'Hand', in particular, features at all stages. Hands are the means first to seal the hawking wagers as Sir Charles Mountford offers his 'hand' (1.101) agreeing 'another hundred pound' (1.99) and Wendoll and Cranwell 'clap […] hands' (1.106) on their separate wager; then the means to wield rapiers, duelling in the name of honour. Later, after Mountford has purchased his acquittal, but at the cost of most of his inheritance, he is deceived by false friend Shafton's offer of 'A hand, a hand' (5.21) and apparent gift of five hundred pounds. Shafton (his name perhaps a pun on shaft or arrow) aims for 'gain and pleasure' (5.53) and, in an aside, he gloats: 'With my full hand I'll grip him to the heart' (5.51), a very powerful image at this moment of treachery and comparable to Wendoll's betrayal of Frankford when, in full awareness of God's 'all-judging hand' (6.23), he asks himself: 'Hast thou the power straight with thy gory hands / To rip thy image from his bleeding heart?' (6.45-6).

In a scene immediately juxtaposed with that of Frankford's discovery of Anne and Wendoll in bed, there is a series of very striking parallelisms. Mountford plays for honours in his feud with Acton. 'Thy honour and my soul are equal in my regard' (14.61), he asserts to Susan as he asks her to prostitute herself to Acton to discharge the debt to their enemy because, he claims:

> His kindness like a burden hath surcharged me,
> And under his good deeds I stooping go,
> Not with an upright soul. (14.63-5)

The prospect of the destruction of her honour is described by Susan as a physical mutilation remarkably similar to the punishment we recall Anne has wished for at 13.136, her 'hand cut off', her 'breasts seared':

> Will Charles
> Have me cut off my hands, and send them Acton?
> Rip up my breast, and with my bleeding heart
> Present him as a token. (14.56-9)

But here, with the hand representing agency, the imagery of Susan offering to cut off her own hands (as Shakespeare's Titus does looking at Lavinia's stumps), and sending them to Acton, together with her heart, ripped from her chest, illustrates her powerlessness, or, as Rowe says of Lavinia's plight 'the powerful ability of someone else's hand', and grotesquely parodies betrothal handfasting.[114] She finally agrees to Charles's request only because she intends to safeguard her honour by taking her own life. Charles understands what she is, and is not,

[113] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 64. He cites Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 4, 1123 D35.
[114] Rowe, 'Dismembering and Forgetting', 296.

prepared to do, and the dangerous game he plays. He is the final player to use the word 'hazard':

> Her honour she will hazard, though not lose.
> To bring me out of debt, her rigorous hand
> Will pierce her heart. (14.89-91)

Nevertheless he presses on and offers Susan to Acton as a 'pawn' or pledge (14.106). When presented to the amazed knight, Susan, by way of explanation, refers to herself 'As forfeit to your hand' (14.116). This makes the game explicit. A forfeit is 'an article (usually something carried on the person) which a player gives up by way of penalty for some mistake'.[115] She is being added to Acton's 'hand' as her brother's penalty. Like Frankford, Charles is also playing 'at forsat', honouring the rules of the game, however stringent (and, for Susan, dire). Luckily Acton, acknowledging the game involved in the pledge of honour, stating 'Since you have not spared / To engage your reputation to the world' (14.135-36), effectively trumps Mountford with hearts. He accepts Susan as a 'gift / In satisfaction of all former wrongs', (14.141-42), but as his wife, not his whore, promising: 'This jewel I will wear here in my heart' (14.143), recalling Frankford's plangent question to Anne: 'Did I not […] / Wear thee here in my heart?' (13.114-15). Acton, whose initial intentions towards Susan were not so honourable, has collected the highest number of honour cards in this game; he has been won over to a life of virtue and has beaten Mountford. With these four direct textual parallels alone there is clear connection to the main plot and to the central game metaphor.

The plots converge in the final scene when Acton, with his new bride, and Charles, the two men 'now atoned' (17.4), visit Anne, who is on her deathbed having starved herself. Laura Bromley summarizes neatly: 'Both plots test a man's honour, his loyalty to an explicit code of behaviour'.[116] Frankford has been wrestling with the contradictions of following the rules of the game, i.e. duly disciplining his wife, and his Christian duty to exercise compassion and forgiveness. But word has reached him of Anne's desire to see him before she dies.[117] As Moisan says, the deathbed scene 'antiphonally reprises the opening moments of the play' and as such it also reprises notable hand and heart imagery.[118] Anne asks if he will 'take a spotted strumpet by the hand' (17.78) as she reaches out to him in contrition. Taking her offered hand, he answers 'That hand once held my heart in faster bonds / Than now 'tis gripped by me' (17.79-80). With the image of a Heart card thrown on to the table

[115] *OED*, *n*.3.
[116] Laura Bromley, 'Domestic Conduct in *A Woman Killed with Kindness', SEL*, 26/2 (1986), 259-76 (261).
[117] See also Grivelet, *Le Drame Domestique*, 230.
[118] Moisan, 'Framing with Kindness', 175.

she declares ‘on my heart’s knees / My prostrate soul lies thrown down at your feet’ (17.90-1). He restores to her ‘those lost names’ (17.116) of wife and mother, before declaring her ‘honest in heart’ (17.120) and remarrying her with a kiss, moments before she dies. His utterance, ‘O she’s dead, / And a cold grave must be our nuptial bed’, recalls the *danse macabre*, ‘The Shaking of the Sheets’, mentioned on their first wedding day. The final stanza of the ballad reads:

> Therefore take time while it is lent,
> Prepare with me your selves to dance,
> Forget me not, your lives lament,
> I come oftentimes by sudden chance
> Be ready therefore, watch and pray,
> That when my Minstrel pipe doth play,
> You may to Heaven dance the way.

Adams has remarked that ‘domestic tragedy was […] the dramatic equivalent of the homiletic tract and the broadside ballad’, and here we can see some truth in his remark.[119] Whereas, in the immediate aftermath of the bedroom discovery Anne is still playing a game and prepared to ‘hazard / The rich and dear redemption of [her] soul’, now finally she has made the necessary steps of true repentance: confession, abandonment of the rewards of sin, and penance done, as she had realized she must when she spoke directly to God:

> But when my tears have washed my black soul white,
> Sweet Saviour, to Thy hands I yield my sprite. (16.106-7)

No longer playing a secret hand at cards she is now in her Saviour’s hands. Had Frankford killed her earlier she would have been, Adams considers, ‘doomed to hell’. Perhaps his ‘kindness’ has allowed her to ‘prepare to dance’ ‘The Shaking of the Sheets’ and ‘be ready’ to attain heaven. Using the metaphor as Latimer does in his *Sermons on the Card*, we might say that ‘the game that we will play at shall be called the triumph’ and that this card, Anne, has learnt ‘Christ’s rule’ for everlasting life.

With the further echoes of hand and heart imagery in this scene, memory of the earlier scene at the card table is triggered and we can see how cards provide an overarching metaphor. The key to appreciating Heywood’s use of cards as a dramatic device lies in understanding the rules of Ruff, and its abrupt end. Like the antimasque of Middleton and Rowley’s *The Changeling*, which is rehearsed but never performed, the game nevertheless plays a very specific role and a contest effectively plays out.

[119] Adams, *English Domestic or, Homiletic Tragedy*, 185.

## ‘Rivalship’ and ‘friendship’ in *Your Five Gallants*

The key to deciphering one of Middleton’s lesser-known comedies, *Your Five Gallants*, also lies in a card game that does not take place. Instead a character is named after a game. Primero is one of the eponymous five gallants who, together, personify the chief vices prevalent in Jacobean London. Primero was also the name of a popular contemporary card game with five types of hand. Its characteristics of poker-like bluffing and frequent draws and discards provide the central metaphor for the social interaction and mischief that takes place. The play does also feature a dice game, but it is on interpreting the action as a game of Primero that I will focus.

Among the earliest card games in Europe, known as *prime* (in France) and *primera* (Italy/Spain), Primero was played everywhere from royal salons to taverns and soldiers’ camps.[120] Walker’s 1552 tract states that ‘some matched themselves at a *new* game called ‘primero’’ (my emphasis), which suggests that the game was introduced into England in the mid-sixteenth century.[121] It was popular at the Tudor court and Elizabeth I is known to have played ‘at primero with the lord treasurer’.[122] Outside the court its widespread appeal is clear from its immortalisation in poems and plays. Some suggest that proficiency at the game was considered an accoutrement of a gentleman, such as the scurrilous Carlo Buffone’s advice to the ‘tame rook’ Sogliardo in Jonson’s *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599) that in order to appear an ‘accomplished gentleman’ he should live in the city amongst gallants, sell his land to buy several trunks of apparel and ‘learn to play at Primero and Passage’ (1.2.41-50*)*.[123] Primero became so well-known that, as explained in Chapter 1, its term for placing the final bet, ‘set up rest’, became an independent metaphor.

Editors tend to gloss Primero simply as a card game fashionable in the period. An exception is Gordon McMullan’s edition of *Henry VIII* which, in addition to noting Primero’s similarity to modern poker, includes a longer note recording that Cardano considered it ‘the

[120] Ore, *Cardano the Gambling Scholar*, 113-4.
[121] Walker, *Manifest Detection*, in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 32.
[122] Letter from Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sydney (28 December 1599), George Scharf, *Archaeologia: or Miscellaneous tracts relating to antiquity 1770-1992*, 51/2 (Jan 1888), 347-350 (349).
[123] Ben Jonson, *Every Man Out of His Humour*, ed. Helen Ostovich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

noblest of all card games'.[124] The note mentions the painting below, 'attributed to Zuccaro, which shows Lord Burleigh playing primero' and includes Parlett's modern reconstruction.[125]

**Figure 11: *Four Elizabethan Noblemen playing Primero* by an artist in the circle of the Master of The Countess of Warwick, 1560-62. Oil on panel, The Derby Collection. Image reproduced courtesy of The Right Hon. The Earl of Derby, 2018.**

In the painting the card faces we can see contrast with the plain backed cards. But notice the prominence and theatricality of the gentlemen's hands. (Note too, the counters, indicating the heavy bets.)

Although we cannot be sure of the rules of Primero, which are not recorded in the gaming literature of the period (e.g. Cotgrave, Cotton and Willughby), possibly because it appears to have fallen out of fashion as rapidly as it had blossomed, it is important to grasp the basic format and terminology of the game to appreciate the reason Middleton named his bawd-gallant 'Primero'. For this we have reconstructions such as that of Parlett, who draws

[124] Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, ed. Gordon McMullan (London: Thomson Learning, 2000), 437.
[125] The oil painting, by an artist in the circle of the Master of the Countess of Warwick, and in the Derby Collection, is *Four Elizabethan Noblemen Playing Primero*, traditionally identified as Sir Francis Walsingham, William Cecil (Lord Burghley), Lord Hunsdon and Sir Walter Raleigh. Reproduced courtesy of the Right Hon. The Earl of Derby, 2019.

on descriptions in contemporary texts, in particular on Cardano, and as we examine *Your Five Gallants* I will make these connections.[126]

It is surprising that neither C. Lee Colgrove, in her critical edition, nor Ralph Alan Cohen consider *why* the bawd-gallant is named after a card game.[127] Yet distinct emphasis is given to his name, with the pawnbroker addressing him as 'Master Primero' four times in the first scene as well as asking to be taught 'the trick that got you so much at primero' (1.1.144-45).[128] The names of Middleton's characters are always important, even when generic. He might have named the bawd-gallant Pimp or Apple-squire (cony-catching cant for a male bawd), maintaining an obvious link between the name and the vice, as he does with Frip, the pawnbroker, who, in contrast, is not referred to by name at all in this long opening scene, and with Goldstone, the card-shark, Pursenet, the pickpocket and Tailby, the lecher.[129] All these other gallants are addressed by name in due course, but none with such emphasis. Naming the brothel-owner Primero directly signals both the game-like attitude that the bawd and his clients have towards the courtesans and that he is part of a game. The game of Primero has five hand types, including a 'primero', any one of which can win, just as each of these five gallants has, in theory, an equal chance with the heiress.[130] No previous studies have made the connection between the plot and its five gallants and Primero and its five hand types, even at this basic level.

*Your Five Gallants* has little by way of a conventional plot. Rather, in a series of vignettes, and catering to the vogue for cony-catching pamphlets, it dramatizes the various exploits of the five genial rogues who compete as suitors to a wealthy orphan but find themselves exposed and outwitted by the true gentleman, Fitzgrave, who plays a superior 'game' and wins her hand in marriage. Metatheatricality, allied to contemporary haunts

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[126] Narrative descriptions are found also in John Florio's *Second Frutes (1591)*, ed. R.C. Simonini (Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Facsimile & Reprints, 1953), 67-73 and Minsheu's *Pleasant and Delightfull Dialogues*, 26-7.
[127] C. Lee Colegrove *A critical edition of Thomas Middleton's Your Five Gallants* (London: Garland, 1979); Cohen, ed., *Your Five Gallants* in *Collected Works*, 594-636. All quotations are taken from the latter. Note Cohen's gloss at 1.1.111sd is not entirely correct.
[128] Middleton, *Your Five Gallants*, ed. Cohen, 1.1.114, 132, 197, 212.
[129] Frippery means 'old clothes, or cast off garments', *OED*, *n* 1; 'a showily-dressed person' *n 2*b; and 'empty display' *n* 2d – all of which are appropriate.
[130] The hands or winning combinations are, from lowest to highest: 1. *Numerus* 'when two or three cards are of the same suit'; 2. *Primero* 'when all the cards are of different suits'; 3. *Supremus* a score of fifty-five 'when three cards of the same suit are seven, six and one, which make up 55'; 4. *Fluxus* 'which consists of four cards of the same suit and surpasses primero and supremus'; 5. *Chorus* 'The fifth type of hand is like primero but has all its cards of the same denomination, as four sixes or sevens, or four kings […]. This hand surpasses all the preceding ones'. The total of fifty-five above is arrived at because in Primero 'the cards eight, nine and ten are removed; the king, the jack and the queen or knight are each worth 10. From the two to the five ten is added so that they are worth 12, 13, 14, 15; and the six and seven are tripled so that the six is worth 18 and the seven 21, while the ace is worth 16. So the greatest total (on three cards of the same suit) consists of the seven, the six and the ace […] 55 in all'. Quotations are from Cardano in Ore, *Cardano the Gambling Scholar*, 206-7.

including the gaming room at the fashionable Mitre tavern and the middle aisle of Paul's, connect the fictive and real, and establish the play's social milieu. The gallants are presented by The Prologue:

> Passing over the stage: the bawd-gallant, with three wenches gallantly attired; meets him the whore gallant, the pocket-gallant, the cheating-gallant; kiss these three wenches and depart in a little whisper and wanton action. Now for the other, the broker-gallant, he sits at home yet, I warrant you, at this time of day, summing up his pawns. *Hactenus quasi inductio*, a little glimpse giving. (Prologue 1-8)[131]

The voiced announcement brings the dumb show very much to life. Middleton thus sets the scene for what Cohen describes as 'a staged version of prose works like Thomas Dekker's *The Gull's Hornbook*, or the numerous writings of Robert Greene (whose motto Middleton glances at 1.1.205-6)'.[132] The dramatist is metaphorically laying his cards on the table: the 'glimpse giving' mimics, in miniature, the action that will ensue.

As the prologue announces, the first scene opens with the broker 'summing up his pawns' and introduces clothing and the circularity of goods and services as motifs which will be omnipresent. The terminology of competition and risk is prominent from the outset. The broker is cautious about the provenance of the clothing he accepts to be pawned because of the plague in parts of the city and he turns down the first garment he is offered. Even when a trunk of apparel is brought in from St Martin's in the Field, which gets a clean bill of health in the register of deaths he studies, he drives a hard bargain and states: 'twenty nobles is all and the utmost that I will hazard upon't' (1.1.102-3). His use of 'hazard' illustrates the broker's risk. The fellow who has brought 'a gentlewoman's whole suit' (1.1.69) acknowledges the two-way contract and shared risk of pawning, stating 'She must be content with't. The less borrowed, the better paid' (1.1.104-5).[133] As Peter Stallybrass says, the 'middlemen' who bring items to Frip are men:

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[131] Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) note this occasion of 'Passing over the stage' as a standard stage direction describing the action of 'crossing the stage from one door to another', 158. Here it is not, however, a stage direction, but a scripted announcement by the '*Presenter or prologue*' (Prol. 1sd)

[132] Cohen, ed., *Your Five Gallants*, in *Collected Works*, 594.

[133] This 'whole suit' comprises a 'fair satin gown; new taffeta petticoat' (1.1.75-6), 'A fine white beaver, pearl band, three falls' (1.1.81), *Your Five Gallants*, ed. Cohen. Peter Stallybrass, 'Properties in Clothes: The Materials of the Renaissance Theatre' in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) notes that *Henslowe's Diary* records that 'pledges were more often women's than of men's apparel', 177-201 (183).

> but this is surely only for theatrical effect in a play that emphasizes the "handling" of women by men. In reality, the day-to-day circulation of household goods was, as Natasha Korda has argued, the work of women.[134]

No sooner is the deal made when Master Primero arrives. Greeting him, the broker says he has a 'suit' for Primero. The bawd-gallant, who is after a month's hire of apparel for his 'pretty fat-eyed wench' (1.1.168) replies in a sartorial pun, 'so have I to you' (1.1.141). When the broker proffers, 'Grant mine and I'll grant yours' (1.1.142), Primero agrees in a gamester's manner, saying: 'A match' (1.1.143). The broker's suit is to become 'perfect in that trick that got you so much at primero' (1.1.144-45). Cheating is a code the gallants live by and Primero's 'blessed invention' (1.1.153) is a secret under-the-table 'twitch' (1.1.146), the sales of which have made him wealthy. Sworn to secrecy, the broker agrees a bargain rate of just 'twelve pence a day' (1.1.196) for a month's hire of the suit he has just taken in and concludes the deal with the following rationale:

> Your house has been a sweet house to me, both for pleasure and profit; I'll give you your due. '*Omne tulit punctum* – ', you have always kept fine punks in your house, that's for pleasure, '– *qui miscuit utile dulci*', and I have had sweet pawns from 'em, that's for profit, now. (1.1.204-8)

The Latin he uses (and abuses) is the reference to Greene that Cohen mentions. Known for his cony-catching tracts, Greene adopted a phrase from Horace's *Ars Poetica* as his motto, signing himself: 'Robert Greene. *In artibus magister* (Master of Art) *omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci*' (he who mingles profit with pleasure wins every point). Indeed, as Cohen proposes, *Your Five Gallants* performs much the same purpose as those tracts which warn of the dangers of vices, whilst codifying them as 'laws' and providing entertaining accounts in a virtual 'how to' guide to their execution. The broker's deliberate and alliterative juxtaposition of '*punctum*' and 'punk' illustrates the attitude that these courtesans (punks) are just 'points' to be scored in a profitable game. Primero has earlier stated that he regards women as 'the profitablest fools' (1.1.134) because 'upon one woman forty may consume their patrimonies' (1.1.130-31). The broker gets so engrossed in detailing all the wiles that Primero's Novice must perfect that Primero has to remind him of the main game that they both neglect, that of 'the wooing business' (1.1.267). That afternoon there is to be 'a general meeting / At the deceased knight's house' (1.1.269-70), and a contest it is shown to be by Primero's remark, 'There's rivalship enough', to which the broker agrees: 'No doubt in that' (1.1.271). In Primero's words the game is to 'win place' in the woman's heart with 'a brave outside and an

[134] Stallybrass, 'Properties in Clothes', 182. See also Natasha Korda, 'Household Property/Stage Property: Henslowe as Pawnbroker', *Theatre Journal* 48/2 (1996), 185-195 on the significant role of women in the economic network that supported Elizabethan stage production.

impudent face' (1.1.274-75). The ensuing actions of the gallants mirror the game Primero with its poker-like bids, bets and bluffing, and its possibilities for 'transfer of hands, sidebets, and coalitions among the players'.[135]

Pawnbroker Frip had been a lowly serving man before he 'ventured by water' (1.1.297-98) and his soliloquy (1.1.279-314) on his rise in fortune emphasises that investment, however modest, requires risk as well as luck. His true love affair is with luxury apparel rather than with the knight's daughter but, as he throws off his cloak, revealing garments bright with pawned diamonds, rubies and sapphires, he uses gamester's vernacular declaring, 'Now gallants, I am for you; ay, and perhaps before you!' (1.1.283), throwing his metaphorical bid into the wooing game. In Primero, once the first cards have been dealt, players have to 'vie', placing a stake and stating how high a hand they have; and they may bluff by overstating it. What a player should not do, as Parlett explains, is to underbid his hand.[136] Frip believes that 'impudence gains more respect than virtue / And coin than blood' (1.1.328-29) and is prepared to bluff in his wooing.

The heiress, Katherine, not referred to by name except in stage directions, features only in the next scene (1.2) and the final one (5.2). Although she accepts a chain of pearl from Fitzgrave and gives him a jewel in return she invites the five gallants to attend, establishing a contest by explaining that they are all worthy of her affection but she 'can choose but one' (1.2.54). She defines the contest's precise parameters by stating that she will make her choice in exactly 'the month unto this night' (1.2.59). Fitzgrave is suspicious of the gallants and decides to wind himself into their trust to see 'whether their lives from touch of blame sit free' (1.2.97). They do not, of course, and their misdemeanours have already begun because Pursenet's boy has stolen the chain of pearl that Fitzgrave gave to Katherine. Critical commentary on *Your Five Gallants* focuses on this chain of pearl, which makes its way round the entire group (and eventually back to Katherine) in a farcical carousel of thieving and gifting, but does not make the connection between the similarity of its journey and that of a card picked up and discarded and then drawn by another. Indeed, Middleton's play can be difficult to appreciate until one sees it as a game of cards, or a series of moves in a game of Primero. In the month's respite that Katherine requests and through a series of exploits and scams, the gallants demonstrate the enterprise and skill, daring and bluffing that Primero requires.

[135] Ore, *Cardano the Gambling Scholar*, 118.
[136] Parlett, *Oxford Guide*, 92.

The action of Act 2 takes place in Primero's brothel (disguised as a music school) and the gaming room of the Mitre tavern, with two 'Interims' set in Tailby's lodgings. The women play the wooing game too. They are Primero's Novice, First Courtesan, Second Courtesan (both unnamed), and Mistress Newcut. New Cut was another card game, as we know from Heywood's play, and the double-entendre is clear: this lusty wife, the only woman clearly named, is 'cutting' again while her husband is at sea. She comes to the brothel seeking pleasure but it is a risk – she uses the word 'venture' (2.1.3); she does not wish to be seen. Primero places her by her 'old spy-hole' (2.1.21) so that she can eye up the clientele. Amongst them she recognises her cousin Bungler and puts a price on her concealment, exclaiming 'I would not for the value of three recreations he had seen me here' (2.1.130-31). Now, as Cohen comments, 'Primero acts as a sort of ringmaster while the gallants and their whores move in pairs by turns to centre stage'.[137] Cohen does not make the connection between this dramaturgy and the format of Primero at which, we know from Cardano, 'the cards are dealt around twice, two at a time and not singly'.[138] This feature appears mirrored in the staging, as if the *dramatis personae* are dealt in pairs, and we discover their natures as a card player discovers the value of his cards as he turns them over. Frip pursues and gives jewels to the Novice he met earlier; Pursenet gives the chain of pearl that his boy stole to the First Courtesan; and Goldstone feigns a love interest in the Second Courtesan and forcibly takes her ring as a token, which he presently pawns to Frip for 'five pound in gold', (2.1.265-66), proposing that they all meet later for supper at the Mitre. The scene's main action centres on Tailby, the whore-gallant, whose entrance appears to follow sexual satisfaction – certainly the First Courtesan appears to suspect as much. She nevertheless professes love and gives him the chain of pearl Pursenet gave her. As he kisses her goodbye he is seen by the Second Courtesan who accuses him of inconstancy and gives him a jewel. Tailby swears on it, stating 'By this jewel, then no creature can be perfect / In my love but thy dear self' (2.1.327-28). She finishes his line with the Primero term described earlier, 'I rest' (2.1.328), suggesting that this is her final bid for his affection, and departs. The Novice is next to fall for Tailby's charms and she gives him a ring and they exit together. Tailby's luck has not yet run out as Mistress Newcut also selects him for her assignation.

In the meantime, Fitzgrave (now disguised as a scholar, 'Bowser', and having successfully infiltrated the group) has discovered that his pocket has been picked, and that the jewel Katherine gave him has been taken. He bemoans that he has 'lost a jewel / To me more

[137] Cohen, ed., *Your Five Gallants*, 595.
[138] Cardano in Ore, *Cardano the Gambling Scholar*, 207.

precious than their souls to them' (2.2.3-4). Katherine and the jewel have become one, his stake in the game, much as Erastus found with Perseda and the Rhodian maid's carcanet. Resolving to find the 'secret mischiefs out' (2.2.7) he discovers that Katherine's servant is likewise searching for the chain of pearl. The casual discarding of gifts and girls and the complicated passage of the chain of pearl, rings and jewels as they move from one hand to another mimic the exchange of cards in the fast and furious game of Primero.

After supping at the Mitre inn, Primero and his courtesans depart and the gallants commit themselves 'unto the fortune of the dice' (2.4.7) and the disposability of women is made explicit when the men sit round a dicing table and Frip, personifying his coins declares:

> Here's Mistress Rose-noble
> Has lost her maidenhead – cracked in the ring.
> She's good enough for gamesters and to pass
> From man to man, for gold presents at dice
> Your harlot: in one hour won and lost thrice;
> Every many has a fling at her. (2.4.125-29)

Goldstone, the cheating gallant, aided by his serving man, Fulk, has arranged various scams, one of which involves switching the vintner's prized goblets for counterfeits. The bawd, Primero, is notably absent from the game-within-the-game that Goldstone, Tailby and Pursenet play with Bowser/Fitzgrave, Bungler and Fulk, with Frip at hand to supply betting money for pawns. This shows Middleton's attention to detail, for this is a dice game, and it would be mixing metaphors to involve a character named after a card game. This scene is long so let it suffice to summarize briefly the now predictable reversal of fortune. Tailby starts the evening with four conquests or punks, the chain of pearl, a jewel and a ring, but the dice game has been rigged by Goldstone, whose man Fulk acts as the barnacle.[139] Fulk wins at every throw with the 'pair of false dice' (2.4.36) Goldstone has ordered, perhaps a 'barred cater-trey' as Pursenet claims he is haunted with 'two treys and a quatre' (2.4.335-36).[140] For the cheating-gallant, Master Goldstone, cheating becomes in effect a new game, or sub-game. As Roger Caillois states, 'the cheat is still inside the universe of play', for although he 'violates the rules of the game, he at least pretends to respect them' and 'is dependent upon others obeying the rules'.[141] Tailby, having been in his element at the brothel, loses heavily

[139] In cony-catching law the 'barnacle' is the player brought into the game when the cony is hooked, and marks the point at which the 'sport' begins. See Greene, *Notable Discovery* in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 128-130 and 136.
[140] Walker describes the barred cater-trey, one of fourteen sets of false dice, as 'a well-favoured dice that seemeth good and square; yet is the forehead longer on the cater and trey than any other way', *Manifest Detection* in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 39.
[141] Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 45.

and has to pawn his rapier, dagger, hangers, beaver hat and finally his doublet and britches.[142] Come morning, however, he is resupplied with replacement items (and funds) by his many female admirers.

Acts 3 and 4 continue in like manner with a stream of thefts, scams and disguises lifted from the cony-catching tracts, such as Pursenet's stock device of a feigned swoon (4.4.37sd) in Paul's so that a rich gentleman, Piamont, is forced to take his hand out of his pocket to come to his assistance, enabling the pocket-gallant's boy to retrieve 'forty pound in gold' (4.4.40) from the said gentleman's pocket. R.C. Bald identifies Goldstone's theft of a 'bell-salt' (4.5.108) from Mistress Newcut's dining table as a direct borrowing from 'A notable exploit performed by a lift' *in Greene's Ghost Haunting Conicatchers* (1602).[143] It is in one of the earlier vignettes, a highway robbery in Coombe Park during which Pursenet steals from Tailby and finds that his loot contains the chain of pearl he gave his mistress and a letter in her hand to Tailby, that the thief has an epiphany:

> Why this is the right sequence of the world: a lord maintains her, she maintains a knight, he maintains a whore, she maintains a captain. So, in a like manner, the pocket keeps my boy, he keeps me, I keep her, she keeps him; it runs like quicksilver from one to another. 'Sfoot, I perceive I have been the chief upholder of this gallant all this while. (3.1.135-41).

This vividly describes the circularity of the patronage system from the King down; a constant cycle of service, reward and gratitude. As Craig Muldrew explains:

> although society was divided by hierarchical gradations of status, wealth and patriarchy, it was still bound together by contractually negotiated credit relationships made all over the society scale […] across the boundaries of hierarchy.[144]

The chain of pearl that travels round the group is the obvious symbol of this circularity. I suggest too that Primero, at which players sit round in a circle picking up cards and passing them on, likewise reflects this 'chopping and changing'.[145]

Fighting and insult-slinging break out amongst the gallants, largely over the chain of pearl (which Pursenet accidently drops, Goldstone finds but returns to avoid arrest, and

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[142] There are references to gamesters betting their clothes in other plays, for example in Heywood's *Wise-woman of Hogsdon* , ed. Merchant (1.1.81-3): Haringfield cautions his fellow gamesters: 'Let's not, like deboshed fellows, play our clothes, / Belts, rapiers, nor our needful ornaments. / 'Tis childish, not becoming gentlemen'.

[143] R.C. Bald, 'The Sources of Middleton's City Comedies', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 33.3 (1934), 373-387 (378). He also states that the device by which Piamont was robbed was a very old one (variations can be found in Greene's *Second* and *Third Part of Cony-catching*).

[144] Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 97.

[145] Contemporary terms for bargaining and exchange (see Wheeler in Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, 139-140).

Pursenet pawns to Frip) until they realize that they are all 'natural brothers' (4.1.169) and Goldstone proposes 'Here be five on's; let's but glue together. / Why, now the world shall not come between us.' (4.7.187-88). Talk of wenches and wealth reminds them of 'the knight's daughter, / Our chiefest business and least thought upon' (4.7.195-96). Towards the end of Primero, when a player might be left with a low hand but still have some chance of winning with a fortunate draw, Øystein Ore states that a player could 'offer an agreement, a *fare a salvare*, to salvage some of his stakes, on the principle that the accumulated pot should be divided in proportions'.[146] It was considered rather poor form and Aretino is reported to have compared such pusillanimous primero players to fleeing soldiers or booty hunters.[147] The cowardly Goldstone instigates just such a *fare a salvare* when he proposes that the fortunate winner of Katherine 'Keep house and be a countenance to the rest' (4.7.207). He gives examples:

> Put case yourself, after some robbery done,
> Were pursued hardly; why there were your shelter.
> You know your sanctuary. Nay, say you were taken;
> His letter to the justice will strike't dead. (4.7.210-13)

Goldstone now sets his rest, his large final bet, with his idea: 'What if we five presented our full shapes / In a strange, gallant and conceited masque?' (4.7.222-23). Once someone has set their rest in Primero the others can only match or fold, followed by a show of hands. Middleton makes the moment of unmasking the equivalent of Primero's final show of hands. The gallants unwittingly commission their rival, Bowser/Fitzgrave, to be the masque's poet, requiring of him 'a little of thy brain for a device to present us firm, which we shall never be able to do ourselves' (4.7.254-56). Not realizing that he is a player in the wooing game they mistakenly consider him 'no danger in the operation' (4.7.231). But in his disguise Fitzgrave has 'found 'em all' out (4.3.42) and has declared he will ensure that 'to the world their base arts be known' (4.3.91). Primero's courtesans and Mistress Newcut are also at each other's throats, trying to 'out-tongue' (5.1.31) each other in insults. Bowser/Fitzgrave reveals to them that 'a knight's daughter […] makes her election among [the gallants] this night' (5.1.44-5) and advises them to 'join / And play the grounds of friendship 'mongst yourselves' (5.1.53). They agree, forming another 'coalition' in this final phase of the game. Vowing to 'mar the match' (5.1.63), yet 'see all, hear all' (5.1.58), they act as '*shield-boys*' (5.2.19sd) in the masque. Bowser/Fitzgrave arranges for a painter to emblazon shields with designs and *impresе* which succinctly emblematise the *un*trustworthiness of each of the gallants who are

[146] Ore, *Cardano the Gambling Scholar*, 117.
[147] Ibid, 118.

fooled by the false, yet plausible translations of the Latin that Bowser/Fitzgrave gives them. When Katherine seeks confirmation, 'Are you all as the speech and shields display you? Goldstone answers for them all: 'We shall prove so' (5.2.24-5).

Just as the final showdown in Primero is the show of the card faces and the hand/point score of each player, so in a court masque the whole invention is geared to the moment of revelation when the masquers remove their visors and become their literal selves. These masquers have already revealed their natures by bowing to the *imprese* they did not have the Latin to 'read' correctly. Instead it is the torch-bearers, Fitzgrave, Piamont, Bungler and two gentleman-gallants, who unmask, surprising the masquers. In an age of unlit streets, torch-bearing was a routine service carried out by household servants or by a page for his superior.[148] As Anne Daye explains, in masques, in a more extended role, the torch-bearers, costumed to match the masquers, 'amplified the masquers' theme, emphasized their status'.[149] Unlike the eloping Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*, who realizes that torch-bearing is 'an office of discovery' (2.6.44-5) whereas she desires her shame to be obscured, Middleton's unsuspecting gallants see only their glory increased.[150] The illumination that the gentlemen torch-bearers provide is highly ironic: they expose the masquers as villains. This is the moment of 'ambush', a feature of card games that Cardano signals. Through the masque the metaphorical game is won by Fitzgrave, the true gentleman, as Katherine agrees to be his, just as in Primero the pot is won by the player who has the best hand when it comes to the final show of cards. Fitzgrave has proved to be the experienced player in this vying game in which it pays to be unpredictable. He has also won the social game of birth and merit; traditional hierarchy has been re-established. For a while the game suspends hierarchy, with a chance for audacity and ambition to succeed. But surely the die was already cast, dictated by what Caillois terms 'the very *alea* of heredity'? Katherine has already exchanged love tokens with Fitzgrave, her social equal.

Fitzgrave proceeds to match four of the gallants with the courtesans, and Goldstone's advice to his fellow rogue-gallants is that it is probably their 'best course to marry' since the courtesans will be a source of income: 'We'll make them get our livings' (5.2.78-9). Mistress Newcut has earlier voiced her worry about this very thing, stating of Goldstone, unwittingly to the disguised man himself, that 'he will pawn his punks for suppers' (4.5.32). But is this really a searing indictment of the use of women and an allusion to 'cross-biting', considered

[148] Anne Daye, 'Torchbearers in the English Masque', *Early Music*, 26/2 (May 1998), 247-62 (247).
[149] Ibid, 249.
[150] Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* ed. John Drakakis (London: Bloomsbury, 2010).

by Greene to be the worst of all vices? [151] No, Middleton's rogues are gallants, as the word 'gallant' hyphenated to each vice and the sartorial emphasis on satin and taffeta makes clear. And the women are no more faithful than the men and ultimately agree to marriage: 'for when we have husbands', Mistress Newcut says, 'we are under covert-baron and may lie with whom we list' (5.2.84-5). 'A match' (5.2.87), they declare. A game requires multiple decision-makers and these women are also players and play the marriage game for its financial and social advantages. The only punishments meted out are to 'the boy and that infectious bawd' (5.2.73), Primero, who are sent for whipping. We now see that Primero is outside the game, for he *is* the game (rather than the hand type) and therefore the nucleus of error. Middleton is playing a game with his gallant spectators whilst playing a game with a game. Primero is reflected in the dramaturgy, its characteristics are reflected in the action and the game-like attitude of both sides to the wooing game; and it is another symbol, along with the chain of pearl, of the circular interdependency of social strata.

Cards, like dice, have their own distinct signalling powers over and above the generic signal of error. Instead of dicing's dramatic reversals of fortune, cards signal secrecy, ambush and imperfect information due to the two-faced nature of cards themselves. Through their 'faces', cards become miniature portraits, and because of the imagery provided by the Hearts suits dramatists use card games in plots relating to matters of the heart – from romance to infidelity and broken hearts. My close analysis shows how the card games featured in plays are doing considerable and central work that is not immediately transparent. As different as these plays are from one another, whilst the elements of secrecy and surprise are key to all, so each plot follows the rules and methodology of its featured card game. Each game has its own nuanced signification and is a dramatist's deliberate choice, integral to the theme.

Gleek, with its specific theme of three, provides a template for the plot of *Tu Quoque* with its triangular relationships and final trio of weddings, but for the courtship game in *Your Five Gallants* Middleton adopts the game Primero. With its five hand-types, propensity for frequent draws and discards, possibilities for coalitions amongst players and with a final show of hands, as in poker, the game not only provides a metaphoric spine for the five eponymous gallants' bid for the hand of the heiress of his play, with all the points and punks scored along the way, but also appears to influence the staging. It is an interesting early example of Middleton's use of game as metaphorical vehicle. The early comedy, *Gammer Gurton's Needle,* and the domestic tragedy, *A Woman Killed with Kindness,* both feature the

[151] A cross-biter was a rogue who 'either keepeth a whore as his friend, or marries one to be his maintainer', Greene, *Notable Discovery* in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld,* 123.

same trick-taking game we now know as Whist, but completely different aspects of the game are highlighted. In the low comedy, where it is called Trump, trick-taking and the subversive feature of trumps, whereby a low card can beat one of much higher value, illustrate Diccon-the-Bedlam's ability to trick just about everyone. In the domestic tragedy, where it takes the superior name, Ruff, the emphasis is on the partnership aspect and strict adherence to rules. The adulterous Mistress Frankford forfeits the 'set', her marriage and children, for not following suit as the rules of the game and the rules of marriage overlap. In this tragedy two key elements of card play, the heart and the hand, the latter the Aristotelian 'instrument for instruments', or the tool of agency connecting intention and act, become very dominant motifs.

We now move on to games which require a game board, and therefore an additional layer of signification.

# Four | TABLES

There were a number of different variations under the generic term 'Tables', even within countries, with fifteen Tables games in Spain alone.[1] Willughby discusses four variants – Dublets, Ticktack, Irish and Back Gammon – and is unequivocal that 'Of all games at Tables, Irish is counted the best'.[2] H.J.R. Murray records a further three mentioned in English works of the sixteenth century, namely Queen's game, Fails and Lurch. All have the basic patterns in common, as Murray states, 'the men moving along a given track and being borne from the home table, the piled men immune to capture and the single man or *blot* vulnerable and to be re-entered after capture'.[3] As is clear from the material quoted from Willughby in Chapter 1, Tables, with its cosmological symbolism, divinatory roots, and its one-to-one contest combining strategy and chance, is a race game which simulates the human game or cycle of life, its challenges and the capriciousness of fate. With the boards being microcosms of our world, it follows that the playing pieces, flat circular disks but even from Roman times called 'tablemen' and later simply 'men', were representations of people. On the four-part Tables board each player has an 'outer' table and an 'inner' table with the latter known as the 'home' table as far back as the medieval Latin treatises where it is termed the '*domus*'.[4] Willughby discusses the term 'Playing at Home' and writes of bringing men 'homewards', and these terms support the analogy to domesticity.[5] Other terminology used in the game and the imagery conjured by the board's points offer opportunities for sexual imagery that are rarely left fallow. Particularly frequent use is made of the term 'bearing', the point towards the end of the game when a player removes or 'bears off' men from the board. Various alternative meanings are implied, depending on context, from getting rid of a man, to bearing children or, indeed, the sexual act itself when a woman 'bears' a man. Whilst less transparent to

[1]Murray, *Board-Games*, 118. Musser Golladay, 'Historical, Artistic and Metaphysical Dimensions', suggests that *Todas tablas* (All Tables) is the medieval Tables variant in the Alfonso MS which most strongly resembles modern Backgammon in terms of its play, the number of dice and the opening arrangement, 470-5.
[2] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 126.
[3] Murray, *Board-Games*, 120. For detailed descriptions of the differences see Cotton, *Compleat Gamester*, 154-163 or Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games,* 123-6. In Backgammon and Irish the three main differences from Ticktack are that the men start from pre-defined positions staggered across the boards. Also that they start in the antagonist's home table working their way round and bearing off from a player's own home table. Thirdly a blot that is hit must be re-entered, since in Ticktack hitting a blot was one of five ways to win the game. Doublets is played with one table, rather than two.
[4] *Bonus Socius* 'The Good Companion' (before 1300) and *Civis Bononiae* (1400-50), both on problems of Chess, Tables and Merels. See Murray, *Board-Games*, 118.
[5] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 117, 123.

today's reader the symbolism and metaphoric possibilities of Tables were current in the early modern period and adopted by dramatists. The game is employed in plays not just for domestic scene-setting and simple innuendo, but to connect with the central theme and set off wider resonances. With the Tables board reimagined as the female body over which 'men' travel, this game, with two players travelling in opposite directions, develops into a metaphor of the 'game' between the sexes, even when, as in Porter's *Two Angry Women of Abington*, it is played by two women. In *Blurt, Master Constable* (1602) and *The Roaring Girl* (1611) there are examples of brief and seemingly opaque textual references to Tables although in neither play is a game acted out. Examination of such passing references helps our critical understanding when we note the illumination it throws on the underlying contests and sexual games occurring in each play-world.

**Figure 12: Circle of Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533), *The Backgammon-players*; oil on panel. Rijksbureau voor kunsthistorische Documentatie, Den Haag, entry 0000062042. ©Auktionshaus im Kinsky GmbH, Vienna.**

## Boards and Bodies – *The Roaring Girl* and *Blurt, Master Constable*

With its heroine and eponymous roaring girl based on the transgressive contemporary 'cut-purse', Mary Frith, notorious for dressing in the habit of a man, and with its mix of new comedy and city comedy formulas, cross-dressing and canting, Middleton and Dekker's *Roaring Girl* has attracted a varied body of criticism. Analysing its themes, Paul Mulholland finds two predominant, but arguably commonplace, 'patterns of imagery' in the 'undercurrent of sexual reference: animal and commercial'; and, as Coppélia Kahn notes, the play is well mined for discussion of the fashioning of gender and women's place in early modern society.[6] Although the many tests and trials and the theme of combat have been remarked upon, the gaming metaphors have been overlooked, except for minor glosses, but focusing on their usage shows how they adumbrate the central gender and class issues at the heart of the play's thematic.

In scene 9, where the ruses operated by the gallants in the sub-plot are exposed, the wives of sempster Openwork and apothecary Gallipot are discussing their admirers, Goshawk and Laxton, one whose name indicates his predatory nature and the other, playing on 'lacks stone', his impotence.[7] They complain that married women end up shouldering all the blame.[8] The scene follows directly on from where Moll, dressed as a man and acting as an 'instrument' ''Twixt lovers' hearts' (4.205) simultaneously secures the meeting of Sebastian Wengrave and Mary Fitzallard (disguised as a page), right under Sir Alexander Wengrave's disapproving nose, and successfully avoids the trap the aristocrat and Trapdoor set for her. Goshawk arrives with the alleged aim of taking Mistress Openwork to Brentford to spy on her husband's 'foreign wenching' (3.316). The Openworks, however, have jointly rehearsed a plan and when Master Openwork arrives, his wife, dissembling artfully, taunts her husband with innuendo and then openly accuses him of infidelity until he draws his sword, threatening to kill the 'Judas' (9.184) who has informed on him. Goshawk is forced to confess that it was he who told Mistress Openwork and is made to promise not to 'deal upon men's wives' (9.239) in future.

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[6] Paul A. Mulholland, ed., *Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker: The Roaring Girl* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 23; Coppélia Kahn, ed., *The Roaring Girl* in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: University Press, 2007), 721-778 (725).
[7] Stone was slang for 'testicle', *OED*, *n.* 11.a.
[8] Line references follow Kahn, ed., *The Roaring Girl*. Kahn divides the play into eleven scenes rather than the five acts of other editions.

Master Gallipot now enters, beset by Greenwit disguised as a sumner. Laxton, '*muffled, aloof off*' (9.242sd), hopes to milk more money from Gallipot, who has been led to believe that Prudence Gallipot was Laxton's 'precontracted wife' (9.297). Laxton has already been given forty-five pounds in compensation but now raises the stakes, requesting the sum be made up to a hundred pounds. Mistress Gallipot is so incensed she admits to her devoted husband that she was flattered by Laxton's advances and invented the engagement story. As Laxton begins to give his version of events it becomes clearer that both he and Gallipot consider it a game; either a game between Laxton and Mistress Gallipot, or between the two men, or both, but one which nevertheless suggests sexual congress. Gallipot tells Laxton, 'Play out your game at Irish, sir', asking 'who wins?' (9.325). 'Irish' is glossed simply as 'a board game similar to backgammon played with dice and counters'.[9] Without registering the symbolism and analogies that Tables affords we cannot fully appreciate the import of the metaphor. The quartered board has been shown to represent the four-limbed human body. This becomes more specifically the female body, with the game of Tables translating as the sexual game. The analogy will become clearer in my discussion of *Blurt, Master Constable*, but for now it is enough to explain that the 'points', the two dice, and the counters called 'men', provide all the male parts for the sexual imagery. The game thus comes ready-encoded for metaphoric use. Mistress Gallipot's friend, Mistress Openwork, playing on the term 'bearing', interjects, 'The trial is when she comes to bearing' (9.326). She knows that Mistress Gallipot is anxious to get rid of this parasitic, 'lame gelding' (9.49), or, metaphorically, to bear him off her person. In some of the plays I study 'bearing' is used in a more sexually explicit context, which is not, I think, intended here.[10] Laxton explains that he simply could not resist the challenge when Mistress Gallipot had earlier declared that 'No man by all his wit, by any wile / Never so fine spun' could seduce her (9.322-23). He says he 'scorned one woman, thus, should brave all men', and could not bear to be outdone by a 'she-citizen' (9.327-28) – not just a woman but a *citizen.* To him it is both a social status game and an assertion of his masculinity.

At the end of any game there is a winner and a loser. The Tables metaphor sets off wider resonances and we can read the Openwork/Goshawk rivalry, too, as a strategic game of capture. Although henpecked, Master Openwork is the better player in his game with Goshawk. Anticipating others' decisions is a key strategy in games and much earlier he correctly determines Goshawk's character and likely strategy. He makes Goshawk believe he

[9] Both Mulholland and Kahn use this wording.
[10] Glosses suggest a play on child-bearing (Mulholland and Kahn).

has a whore, even enlisting his help, thus starting his own rumour. But, as his aside reveals, he does this 'to try [Goshawk's] honesty' (3.322-23), and in his game of trap he succeeds in catching this bird of prey. Mistress Gallipot would appear to be the winner in her game of Tables, bearing Laxton off her game board, but this is a patriarchal society and the men (citizens and gallants) are shown to be the ultimate winners. Master Gallipot both believes and forgives his blackmailer, Laxton, declaring:

> Then, sir, I am beholden – not to you, wife –
> But Master Laxton, to your want of doing ill,
> Which it seems you have not. (9.348-50)

Mistress Gallipot is told: 'wife, brag no more / Of holding out: who most brags is most whore' (9.353). The women were right all along. They do get blamed, 'frumped at and libelled upon' (9.70-71). With its board dominated by phallic imagery, Tables/Irish underlines male dominance and women's subordination.

Mistress Gallipot's fate contrasts strongly with the wins by the heroine of the play, Mad Moll, a figure of 'masculine womanhood' (3.369), 'both man and woman' (3.216), who as, Jean Howard states, wears male dress 'to signal her freedom from the traditional positions assigned a woman in her culture'.[11] Moreover, Moll remedies various social injustices in a series of 'games'. She agrees to meet the womanising Laxton in Gray's Inn Fields but sets a trap. He is unaware that by asking her to 'appoint the place', and giving her 'ten angels in fair gold' (3.298-99) he is mirroring the verbal codes for initiating a duel with a wager. As Johan Huizinga explains, the duel is a rule-bound 'play-form' and 'symbolical', for 'it is the shedding of blood [or the risking of bloodshed] and not the killing that matters', and 'the spot where the duel is fought bears all the marks of a play-ground'.[12] Moll's proffered hand ('here's my hand I'll meet you sir'), his own rejoinder, 'A match' (3.302, 308) and the confirmation of the hour, 'three' (3.311), conclude the duel's standard preliminaries. When they duly meet, Moll surprises the gallant by taking off her cloak, matching his ten angels in gold, and saying 'Win 'em and wear 'em' (5.68). In Walker's tract, *A Manifest Detection,* the self-same phrase is used as a gambler lays down his money.[13] As Matt Carter suggests, 'her chastising speech indicates that she is engaging in an honour duel in her own defense' for being thought 'whorish' (5.89).[14] Accusing Laxton of being one of those 'that thinks each

[11] Jean E. Howard, 'Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39/4 (1988), 418-440 (436).
[12] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 95.
[13] 'Win it and wear it', Walker, *Manifest Detection*, in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 35.
[14] Matt Carter, '"Untruss a Point" – Interiority, Sword Combat, and Gender in *The Roaring Girl*', *Early Theatre*, 21/1 (2018), 87-106 (99).

woman [his] fond flexible whore' (5.73) her victory is meant to 'defy all men' (5.92). Moll not only carries a rapier (contrary to sumptuary law) as a symbolic phallus, but she knows how to use it; she knows the ritualistic language of the duel and the rules of 'fair play', and Laxton has to admit that 'she's wounded me *gallantly*' (5.126; my italics).[15] She wins in the specifically male arena of the duel and, as Jennifer Low states, 'shows him that a woman may manifest as much power to harm men as men themselves have'.[16] The duel, highlighting Laxton's error of judgement, and Moll's moral and physical triumph is central to the play's understanding of gender. We will encounter the game-like element of duelling again later in this chapter.

The atmosphere of collusion and contest between the sexes carries through to the main conflict of the plot between Moll (on behalf of Sebastian) and Sir Alexander Wengrave, whose avarice and social ambition stand in the way of Sebastian's wish to marry Mary Fitzallard. This contest involves Moll acting as a decoy in a strategic game of pretence, and finally pretending to be young Wengrave's bride. Sir Alexander has called her a 'monster with two trinkets' (4.83) and a 'codpiece daughter' (4.100) but she gets him to give his blessing to the marriage of the young pair, with a substantial endowment of land. Furthermore, she extracts an apology for his assumptions about her, and a promise that he will 'never more / Condemn by common voice' (11.247-48). Whilst the citizens' wives are taught submission, Moll interrogates the traditional place of women and triumphs over the power of patriarchy. As Howard says, Middleton and Dekker present a 'decriminalized' Moll, neither thief nor whore, but her portrayal as a cross-dressed woman 'partakes of discursive traditions of social protest'.[17] The duel and game of Irish highlight these tensions, the rules and procedures of games suggesting also the strictures of society, with the androgynous Moll floating free from any social demarcation. Moll herself describes her combative way with men – through a gaming metaphor. After dismissing her manservant, Trapdoor, she admits: 'away slid I my man like a shovel-board shilling' (10.18-19); a quick and slippery slide from favour for this 'firework' (10.13) placed in her employ by Wengrave. Frederic Grunfeld notes the use of the same game of 'finger billiards' in *2 Henry IV* when

[15] Willughby did not fully complete his entry for 'Duelling, Wrestling &c.' but it is clear from his sketched entry and its inclusion in a book of games, together with his comment that 'Seconds either fight themselves, or onely stand by and see faire play' that duelling was considered a 'game' or a 'plaie', Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 226.
[16] Jennifer Low, 'Violence in the city', in *Thomas Middleton in Context*, ed. Suzanne Gossett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 98-105 (105).
[17] Howard, 'Crossdressing, The Theatre and Gender Struggle', 438.

Falstaff urges Bardolf to throw Pistol downstairs 'like a shove-groat shilling' (2.4.192-93).[18] Players at Shovelboard must glide, in turns, 'shillings, halfecrownes or round brasse or silver pieces made of purpose' along 'a very smooth table' and the piece nearest the table's far end wins.[19] In both plays a man becomes a gaming piece propelled by a mere finger, emphasising his insignificance.

Either dramatist could be responsible for the duel scenes (there are two) and the 'Irish' metaphor, for, as Paul Mulholland states of the collaboration, 'most scenes reveal evidence of both dramatists'.[20] Duelling codes are, however, satirized in *A Fair Quarrel* (1616), one of Middleton's collaborations with William Rowley, which might suggest Middleton's hand here. It has been shown that rogue literature, a Dekker speciality, is behind several scenes. The ruse in which Greenwit shape-shifts as a sumner, playing the husband off against the wife in the scene with the citizens' wives, is a device taken from such pamphlets, although the earlier phase of the Gallipot action corresponds to a similar episode in Middleton's *Father Hubburd's Tales*, as A.H. Bullen and Mulholland have pointed out.[21]

Dekker is, however, now considered to be the sole author of *Blurt, Master Constable*, a play in which a woman's body is conflated with a Tables board.[22] This play has had little critical attention and no analysis of its gaming imagery. There are references to dicing, the card game Noddy, tennis and bowling. All are used in ways that are perfectly in keeping with the play's satirical view of society, the finger-pointing made game-like in the portrayal by the Children of Paul's of lusty old men, bumbling constables, insult-throwing noble siblings and whores. It is pure burlesque with intertextual references to popular plays. The reference to Tables might easily be missed as again no such game is actually played. A Venetian gentlewoman, Violetta, falls in love with her brother's French prisoner, Fontinell, enraging her suitor, Camillo. When Fontinell's escape from a dungeon prison is arranged, Violetta and the Frenchman are secretly married by a friar. Fontinell is, however, lured to a brothel run by a coarse 'Madonna', Imperia, and falls for the latter's charms.[23] Violetta is forced to go to the

[18] Frederic V. Grunfeld, *Games of the World* (New York: Plenary Publications, 1975), under the heading 'Shove Ha'penny'; Shakespeare *King Henry IV Part 2*, ed. James C. Bulman (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).
[19] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games,* 212; *OED*, n. 1.a: 'a game in which a coin or other disk is driven by a blow with the hand along a highly polished board, floor, or table'.
[20] Mulholland, ed., *Roaring Girl*, 8.
[21] The device can be found in Greene's *A Notable Discovery of Cosenage*. See Mulholland, ed., *Roaring Girl*, 14-15.
[22] Authorship of *Blurt, Master Constable* is now generally attributed to Dekker based on the linguistic profile of the text. See Macdonald P. Jackson, 'Early Modern Authorship: Canons and Chronologies' in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture: A Companion to the Collected Works*, eds Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 80-97 (85-6).
[23] The Violetta/Imperia/Fontinell triangle is open to contradictory interpretations.

establishment to retrieve her husband, asking the courtesan, 'good Sweetnes, have you not a propertie heere, improper to your house: my husband? (5.2.93-4).[24] She is soon imploring Imperia to let her see Fontinell, promising not to scold him and even suggesting some arrangement between the trio, saying 'give me leave to love him and Ile give him a kinde of leave to love thee' (5.2.115-16). This is too much for Simperina, Imperia's maid, who declares, 'Shee's an Asse, by the crowne of my Mayden-head, Ide scratch her eyes out, if my man stood in her Tables' (5.2.124-26). The experienced maid would not tolerate her beloved to be near the beautiful Madonna's 'Tables'. Here the nineteenth- and twentieth-century editors, Bullen and Thomas Berger respectively, both repeat Alexander Dyce's original gloss, 'a metaphor drawn from the game of tables'.[25] But more substantial explanation is required: the courtesan is metamorphosed into a game board covered with phallic looking 'points', with the game being the act of intercourse. As mentioned in Chapter 1, James Doan has written on the erotic connotations of the game and its occurrence in a particular form of Irish love poetry, *dánta grádha*. His study of this poetic form includes a poem found in the early sixteenth-century *Book of the Dean of Lismore*. One section he translates as follows:

> She settled my "man" down and shook out my two "dice"; the third man she held(?) until the points were filled.
>
> One of her "boards" came to be completely filled, and my "man" quenched; but the points of the *táipleasc* [backgammon] were empty, and myself "on high".[26]

The sexual innuendo is pointed (pun intended).

References to games in dramatic texts are carefully chosen codes, recognisable to contemporary spectators, to import meaning. Simperina's allusion to Imperia as the board on which a game of Tables is played also illustrates the game-like attitude of the brothel's courtesans in their manoeuvres with their male clients. Dicing takes place and Fontinell is invited to play a suggestive card game, with sex also described by one courtesan in bowling terms. In Tables, chance and strategy combine and although Simperina criticises Violetta's strategy, Imperia concedes. She allows Violetta to use her bed to trick Fontinell so that '(in supposed follie) he may end / Determin'd sinne' (5.2.128-29) and, after a further plot twist, Violetta wins back her husband. The gentlewoman and the Frenchman have been playing a game from their very first encounter in the opening scene. Watching Fontinell dance, Violetta

[24] Line references follow *A Critical Old-Spelling edition of Thomas Dekker's Blurt, Master Constable,* ed. Thomas Leland Berger (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1979).
[25] See *The Works of Thomas Middleton*, ed. A.H. Bullen (London: 1885), 90, n.1. The full gloss in Berger's critical edition reads: 'on her side; the metaphor is drawn from tables or backgammon', 189.
[26] Doan, 'The Erotics of Backgammon', 32.

recognises his ‘wanton eye’ (1.1.202) but in an aside reveals that she will not let him out of her fingers until she has his ‘verie heart’ (1.1.197), saying ‘Monsieur, you and Ile deale’ (1.1.199-200). For his part the Frenchman, despite recognising Violetta’s ‘heart of flint’ (1.1.162) compares his loss in battle to his love’s triumph, telling her page, ‘I have won where first I lost the field’ (2.1.4), and he commits himself to the metaphorical game with ‘Via for fate, Fortune, loe this is all’ (2.1.42).

Mary Bly connects *Blurt, Master Constable* and the next play I discuss, *Two Angry Women of Abington*, not for their gaming metaphors but for their singularity in portraying virginal heroines who express their sexual desire in puns.[27] Both plays include strikingly parodic echoes of *Romeo and Juliet* (1594) and Bly considers that ‘Juliet’s erotic fluency had a marked influence on the shaping of comic heroines’ following in its wake.[28] She cites Walter Redfern’s comment that puns, like euphemisms, play a ‘hide-and-seek game with the listener/reader’.[29] Metaphors of game and the riddles they can engender provide a similar mental game.

## The twenty-four hours of *The Two Angry Women of Abington*

As indicated by the title and supported by textual references to neighbouring Milton and a local rabbit warren, Porter’s play is firmly located in the rural town of Abingdon.[30] The plot, which takes place between lunchtime and dawn of the following day, is very simple and revolves around quarrels between two families. In brief, two warring wives vent their quarrel during a game of Tables. The husbands attempt to mend the breach between the families through a marriage between the son of one and the daughter of the other. The young couple, Frank Goursey and Mall Barnes, are introduced, woo and agree to marry in a swift balcony courtship, a game in itself, conducted as it is in bawdy riddles and rhyming couplets. The wives learn of and attempt to prevent the match and a night-time chase ensues through local

[27] Mary Bly, ‘The Legacy of Juliet’s Desire in Comedies of the early 1600s’, *Shakespeare and Sexuality*, ed. Catherine M.S. Alexander and Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 52-71.
[28] Ibid, 52. There are balcony scenes in both and a ballroom scene and secret marriage by a friar in *Blurt, Master Constable*, as well as several textual borrowings, first noted by C.M. Gayley. *The Two Angry Women of Abington*, the only surviving play by Henry Porter, is not entered in the Stationers’ Register. It was first printed in 1599 and is thought to date from about 1598. See Marianne Brish Evett, ed., *Henry Porter’s “The Two Angry Women of Abington”: A Critical Edition* (New York: Garland, 1980), 11-20.
[29] Walter D. Redfern, *Puns* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 91, cited in Bly, ‘Legacy of Juliet’s desire’, 53.
[30] Abingdon, now in Oxfordshire, was in Berkshire in the period. The rabbit warren may have been in nearby Culham.

fields and woods, hampered by darkness, ditches and mistaken identities. The husbands feign a quarrel of their own and fight, finally bringing the women to see the danger of irrational anger and the play ends in harmony, marriage and traditional feasting.

Lisa Martinez Lajous sites her study of this play in a chapter on female gamesters and sees it as providing a didactic example of what opponents of gaming found troubling, namely 'excessive betting, propensity for brawls, and resulting social disharmony' but doing so in an 'ironic transposition of the cultural norm', which is, of course, unruly *male* gamesters.[31] In my view the moralising elements of the play are compromised. Firstly, although Master Barnes chides his wife, 'Go to – be ruled, be ruled!' (1.1.180), his chief concern is what the 'neighbouring country vulgar' (1.1.176) will say. Secondly the sheer number of proverbs used (around one hundred and fifty according to Marianne Brish Evett's count), the majority by the servant, Nicholas Proverbs, who speaks entirely in strings of proverbs, undermines the moralising weight of the adage through parody. It is another example of the excess we will find in the play and is for comedic purposes. My interest lies in the game of Tables in the first scene, which sets up the emotional agenda and the theme of competition and anger which is then sustained as a major motif. Porter has enormous fun with the game and its terminology, which provides myriad sexual metaphors, fully utilised. Much of this is not fully appreciated by commentators, though the 1987 edition by Michael Jardine and John Simons highlights the bawdy language. In addition to regarding the Tables board as a female body, we need to consider the board's wider symbolism. Willughby's treatise explains its representation of the year, the twelve points of each board symbolising the months and Zodiac signs, but the twenty-four points are also thought to symbolize the hours of a day.[32] Porter's play, which conforms to the classical unities of time, takes place in the period of one day, and, moreover, it is one of a set of 'nocturnal' plays (along with e.g. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [1595] and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* [1597]) and involves a frantic and funny night-time sequence, the attempt by the two eponymous angry women to prevent the marriage of their offspring.[33] The choice of a race game that symbolizes the twenty-four hours of a day can

[31] Lajous, 'Playing for Profit', 177.
[32] Fu'ad Ishaq Khuri, *Tents and Pyramids: Games and Ideology in Arab Culture from Backgammon to Autocratic Rule* (London: Saqi, 1990), 17, cited in Musser Golladay, 'Historical, Artistic and Metaphysical Dimensions', 1125. See also Grunfeld, *Games of the World*, 150.
[33] W.J. Lawrence, 'Shakespeare from a New Angle', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 8/31 (1919), 442-455 defines the 'nocturnal' play as a comedy 'presenting an unbroken sequence of more or less complicated night scenes' in which 'the humorous embroilment almost wholly arose out of sundry mistakes committed in the dark', 447. See Brish Evett, ed., *Two Angry Women*, 47-51.

therefore be appreciated and explains why the whole play appears to resemble a circular race game.

In the opening lines we learn that the two patriarchs have a close, homosocial relationship, typical of the period; a 'jewel of high-reckoned worth' valued so preciously that Barnes considers it 'the cousin-german unto wedded love' (1.1.6, 18).[34] It will be seen that the homosocial relationship is the winning strategy in the game between the sexes in this play. It is, however, the propriety of the relationship between Master Barnes and Mistress Goursey that starts the quarrel. Following lunch *chez* Barnes, Mistress Goursey's offer to repay her host's kindness prompts Mistress Barnes to suggest that her husband is likely to be too bold a guest, intimating that he may sit and chat 'all day till night, / And all night too, if he might have his will' (1.1.43-4). Indeed Barnes indicates previous visits in his comment: 'She hath made me much good cheer passing that way' (1.1.46). Mistress Barnes offers similar hospitality to Goursey should he come their way 'A-hunting or such ordinary sports' (1.1.50). The metaphor of hunting for sexual quest and conquest was commonplace and the innuendo is not in doubt. She is, however, soon offered a much more ingenious way of making her insinuations – through the expressive properties of the game of Tables.

These denizens of Abingdon and Milton, whilst not aristocracy, are reasonably wealthy. The men have business interests in town, Barnes owns an orchard, and possibly also a bowling green, and stocks a good cellar. Both employ several servants who make eager use of their superiors' largesse. It is from the servants that we are informed that the sons 'spend all their fathers' good at gaming' (1.1.68-9). Barnes has no need to go to a tavern to play; he has his own set of 'Tables' and it is a game with which both men and, as it transpires, both women, are familiar, even if the latter claim to play only 'a little' (1.1.75).[35] A game is proposed between the two men, and the servant, Nicholas, is asked to 'fetch the tables' (1.1.59). With the tables set up, Goursey proposes that in their stead 'our wives shall try the *quarrel* 'twixt us two' (1.1.78; my italics). Referring to their friendly game as a 'quarrel' creates a clear semantic link between game and argument and indicates the dramatist's use of the game as a device to illuminate the plot's theme in which 'tongues are weapons' and words 'blows of war' (1.1.209). The sons, Phillip Barnes and Frank Goursey, go off to play bowls and Goursey's manservant, Coomes, declares that whilst they 'trowl the bowls upon the green' he will 'trowl the bowls in the buttery' (1.1.69-70), making their game analogous

[34] All line references are from *Henry Porter: The Two Angry Women of Abington*, eds Michael Jardine and John Simons (Nottingham: Nottingham Drama Texts, 1987). This edition gives acts and scenes but has through-line numbering.
[35] The last prohibition of Tables in England were the Elizabethan Canons of 1571. Murray, *Board-Games*, 119.

to his own, namely drinking. Multiplication of gaming metaphors reinforces the atmosphere of game-play; they are interpolated to hint that from the masters of the household to the servants there is misbehaviour and excess. The excess is made clear when the wives discuss stakes. Mistress Goursey extravagantly proposes 'A pound a game' (1.1.93). When her shocked husband tries to suggest that a shilling would be plenty she is not to be persuaded, insisting: 'No, we'll be ill housewives once: / You have been oft ill husbands – let's alone.' (1.1.97-8). It is clear that the men are no strangers to ill husbandry and betting. Nor are they unaware of the condemnation of gaming, Barnes quipping 'Master Goursey, who says that gaming's bad / When such good angels walk 'twixt every cast?' (1.1.107-8). Goursey continues the coinage pun replying, 'This is not noble sport, but royal play' (1.1.109), which obliquely alludes to the example set by the Elizabethan court, known to be rife with betting. Spectators would be alert to the signals intended by this particular game. The more serious misbehaviour is alleged adultery, implied by Mistress Barnes who is quick to suggest that Mistress Goursey will 'play me false' (11.82). The same use of 'playing false' to imply adultery occurs in *The Merchant of Venice,* when Portia ridicules the Neopolitan Prince, one of her suitors, who talks constantly of his horse, declaring, 'I am much afeard my lady his mother played false with a smith' (1.2.40-2).[36]

The Tables board has twenty-four points and is divided into four tables, two outer and two inner. Two players start with fifteen men each – one set black, the other white – moving in opposite directions from a set starting position. A player's object is to move his/her men around the board towards the inner or 'home' table from where they can be borne off. Along the way a man can be captured or 'hit' by the opponent, in which case it is moved to the central bar before being required to re-start from the first point. To begin the game both players roll one die and the player rolling the highest number moves first. Once Mistress Goursey has won the throw the dramatist draws attention to the two-person game, played verbally through a witty dialogue between the women, by moving into rhyming couplets. Twice he rhymes 'right place' with 'ace', playing with the contemporary homophone, 'ace' and 'arse', to connect cheating at the game with adultery:

MRS BARNES Where stands your man?
MRS GOURSEY In his right place.
MRS BARNES Good faith, I think ye play me foul an ace. (1.1.113-15)

MRS GOURSEY Why, had ye kept your man in his right place,
I should not then have hit him with an ace. (1.1.158-59)

[36] Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* ed. John Drakakis (London: Bloomsbury, 2010).

Following the first of these, Barnes interjects: 'No, wife, she plays ye true' (1.1.116), which can be read both as a denial of Mistress Goursey's cheating and as a confirmation of Mistress Barnes's suspicions. The men are asked to leave the women and 'go walk' (1.1.118). The rhyming couplets continue, mirroring the alternate moves of play:

MRS GOURSEY Where stands your man now?
MRS BARNES Does he not stand right?
MRS GOURSEY It stands between the points.
MRS BARNES And that's my spite.
But yet methinks the dice runs much uneven,
That I throw but deuce-ace and you eleven.
MRS GOURSEY And yet you see that I cast down the hill.
MRS BARNES Aye, beshrew thee, 'tis not with my will.
MRS GOURSEY Do ye beshrew me?
MRS BARNES No, I beshrew the dice
That turn you up more at once than me at twice.
MRS GOURSEY Well, you shall see them turn for you anon.
MRS BARNES But I care not for them when your game is done.
MRS GOURSEY My game? What game?
MRS BARNES Your game, your game at tables.
MRS GOURSEY Well, mistress, well – I have read Aesop's fables
And know your moral's meaning well enough.
MRS BARNES Lo, you'll be angry now! Here's good stuff.
(1.1.121-33)

The layers of meaning and insinuation are multiple in virtually all the terms used. The man Mistress Goursey refers to is of course both the tableman and Barnes. The tableman is out of position on the board so that she cannot tell which point is occupied but the double-entendre is clear – Barnes, she suggests, 'stands' or is 'erect' between the 'points' that fasten his garments. It may also be inferred that he is not standing upon points of law and decorum. Mistress Barnes is having bad luck, throwing low dice such as 'deuce-ace' (1.1.124), whereas Mistress Goursey throws eleven and can move speedily round the tables.[37] Mistress Goursey's statement, 'Yet you see that I cast down the hill', has been misunderstood by editors. Brish Evett glosses 'down the hill' as 'down-hills […] a slang term for dice loaded so that they always threw low numbers'.[38] Its use in a long list of false dice is recorded in John Wilson's *The Cheats* (1663).[39] This is not, however, what is happening to Mistress Goursey,

[37] Deuce-ace is glossed in the *OED* (*n [1], compounds)* as 'two and one […] hence, a poor throw, bad luck, mean estate, the lower class'. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, ed. H.R. Woudhuysen (London: Methuen, 1998), an exchange between Moth and Armado confirms 'It doth amount to one more than two / Which the base vulgar do call three' (1.2.47-8).
[38] Brish Evett, ed., *Two Angry Women*, 99.
[39] *Green's Dictionary of Slang*, Vol. 1, ed. Jonathon Green (London: Chambers, 2010). John Wilson, *The Cheats* (4.1.47-50) ed. Milton C. Nahm (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1935): 'taught you the vse of vp hills, downe hills, and petarrs, the wax the graud, the Slipt, the goad the ffullam, the flatt the Bristle, the Barr'.

who throws *high* numbers. The word 'cast' here does not apply to the dice but to her eyes which she 'casts'[40] or turns 'down the hill' after Mr Barnes (who is offstage for a walk with Goursey), and the 'dice' Mistress Barnes distrusts (1.1.123 and 127) are her husband's testes. She is not keen to have them returned when Mistress Goursey has finished her 'game' with them. The points and dice on the board have assumed metaphoric meanings beyond the literal.

The husbands re-enter to enquire who has won and, like the game, the use of rhyming couplets is suspended. Barnes unwittingly fuels the argument by suggesting to Goursey, 'Your wife's the fairest for't' (1.1.137). Mistress Barnes addresses her opponent, 'Good gamester' (1.1.140), which Jardine and Simons, understanding her bawdy innuendo, gloss as 'prostitute'.[41] Barnes, again unwittingly, furthers the punning when he suggests that the women play out the game to its final stages, when the tablemen are borne off. He says, ''tis all but in the bearing' (1.1.141). As the game resumes, the rhyming couplets return with Mistress Barnes's accusation that her opponent 'bear[s] one man too many', and Mistress Goursey's retort that it is 'Better to do so than bear not any' (1.1.144-45). Jardine and Simons cite Partridge's delicate gloss for 'bear' as 'the woman's share in the primary sexual act'.[42] Mistress Goursey appears to be admitting adultery and makes her admission clearer in the following exchange, again through the game's terminology. In the race to get men onto the home table, from where they can be borne off, a player may be forced to leave a single man on a point. This is called a 'blot' and is exposed to the adversary, who generally endeavours to 'hit' it with one of his own. All these terms – blot, hit and home – are now mined by Porter:

| | |
|---|---|
| MRS GOURSEY | Look ye, mistress, now I hit ye. |
| MRS BARNES | Why, aye – you never use to miss a blot, |
| | Especially when it stands so fair to hit. |
| MRS GOURSEY | How mean ye, Mistress Barnes? |
| MRS BARNES | That Mistress Goursey's in the hitting vein. |
| MRS GOURSEY | I hot your man. |
| MRS BARNES | Aye, aye; my man, my man! But had I known, |
| | I would have had my man stood nearer home. |
| MRS GOURSEY | Why, had ye kept your man in his right place. |
| | I should not then have hit him with an ace. (1.1.150-59) |

Mistress Barnes implies that Mistress Goursey is in the habit of making advances on men when not accompanied by their wives, just as a player can hit his opponent's tableman if it

[40] *OED, v.7:* cast: a throwing or turning of the eye in any direction; a glance, a look.
[41] Jardine and Simons, eds, *Two Angry Women of Abington*, 7.
[42] Ibid, note re line 141.

stands alone on a point. The home table becomes conflated with the domestic home as Mistress Barnes suggests that she would have kept her man (her husband) 'nearer home', where it is likely that her presence and that of the servants would have prevented anything inappropriate, just as two tablemen on a point together are protected from capture. The use of the past participle 'hot', uncommon in the period, both suggests 'got' and affords the dramatist a secondary pun implying lustfulness, as Jardine and Simons suggest. 'Hot' is used by both Chaucer and Shakespeare as an adjective meaning lustful or sexually aroused.[43] The use of so many of the game's terms in the women's dialogue shows how thoroughly Tables had entered the contemporary vernacular and reinforces Doan's impression that the erotic connotations arrived with the game. With the repeated occurrence of the end-rhymes 'right place' and 'ace', the latter bluntly defined by Gordon Williams as 'vulva', and Mistress Barnes's retort quoted above, 'Your game, your game at tables', it is clear that this game signifies sexual congress.[44] As she swears at both the dice and, obliquely, at Mistress Goursey in her curse: 'A plague upon the bones' (1.1.160), the Tables game ends.

The game has set up the themes of excess and anger in pairs of characters. 'Anger' or 'angry', and synonyms thereof, such as quarrel, frenzy, fury, rage and wrath occur in forty-one instances.[45] As Gina Bloom says, the conflicts of the backgammon board spill out into other social relationships and are, 'no longer contained within the game's ludic border'.[46] The error of such anger is reinforced by further gaming metaphors, of varying subtlety, occurring throughout the play. One such, and building on the Tables metaphor, comes in the following scene when the 'springals' (1.1.68), Phillip and Frank, are returning from bowling. More inappropriately large bets have been placed, Frank apparently having beginner's luck, and winning 'ten good crowns' (1.2.247) from Phillip. Frank is far from a novice in matters of love, however. We have already learned from Coomes that the sons waste their fathers' money on gaming and now we learn from Frank's boy of the young Goursey's licentiousness in an extended horse/whores analogy with 'saturated sexual punning' throughout.[47] The boy's jests cause Frank's anger to rise. Phillip's role in the play is one of peacemaker and he tells Frank he cannot get angry with his boy when it was he himself who pushed the boy to elaborate on his initial jest. He nevertheless addresses his friend as 'My good horse-master' (1.2.325), to be read, surely, as 'whore-master'. Creeping into the boy's description of

[43] See *OED*, adj. A II.8.c.
[44] Gordon Williams defines 'ace' as 'vulva' and cites Porter's use, *Dictionary of Sexual Language*, Vol. 1, 4.
[45] Anger (x 12), angry (x 7), quarrel/ling (x 10), frenzy (x 1), fury (x 1), rage (x 8), inrag'd (x 1) and wrath (x 1).
[46] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 120. Bloom's concentration in her analysis of this play is on characters' pursuit of 'scopic dominance in order to obtain patriarchal power', 121-2.
[47] Jardine and Simons, eds, *Two Angry Women*, gloss at 1.2.329.

Frank's favourite 'horse', is, I believe, an almost hidden reference to another Tables variant – Tick-tack:

> This palfray standeth on no ground,
> When as my master's on her back,
> If he once do say but 'Tick',
> And if he prick her, you shall see
> Her gallop amain, she is so free; (1.2.283-87)

Charles Mills Gayley and subsequent editors gloss 'Tick' as the sound a rider makes to urge his horse forward (made as the tongue hits the roof of one's mouth).[48] Dyce's 1841 edition queries whether it should read 'Tacke'. This is interesting because 'tack' would indeed complete the end-rhyme with 'back', the rest of the boy's speech being in rhyming tetrameter couplets. 'Tick' would seem to do double duty; it not only creates an *internal* rhyme with the next line's 'prick', reinforcing the bawdy, but it also 'offers' Tick-tack. Tick-tack (or Touch and Take) was a Tables variant and is thought to correspond to the French game *trictrac*. Willughby states that 'The name Ticktack comes from touching & playing, it beeing the law of this game that the man that is touched must bee plaied'.[49] Willughby and Cotton provide extensive descriptions of the variant and its particularly complicated scoring. Neither mentions the means of keeping the score but Murray states that 'The points are marked along the middle of the board and the *trous* [twelve points make one *trou*] by pegs in holes on the outer edges of the board'.[50] Both the tactile sounding name and the application of pegs and holes (as with the Noddy board described in my chapter on cards) lend themselves to sexual analogy and help explain how the Tables variants were synonymous with sexual encounter. In Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604) Tick-tack is likewise used to imply sexual congress and, in this darker play, it is a much more dangerous game. Claudio gets his beloved, Juliet, pregnant and falls foul of a reinstated law which it seems will cost him his life. In a desperate strategy Claudio puts his own sister's honour at stake, asking Lucio to go to Isabella and ask her to plead with Antonio on his behalf, stating:

> There is a prone and speechless dialect,
> Such as *move men*; beside, she hath prosperous art
> When she will *play* with reason and discourse,
> And well she can persuade. (1.2. 173-76, my italics)

Isabella is to be entered in the game as, simultaneously, a player and the stake (her body is to be the stake). Lucio agrees to go to her, hoping she is successful, saying:

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[48] Charles Mills Gayley, *Representative English Comedies from the Beginnings to Shakespeare,* Vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1903).
[49] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games,* 117. Cotton says it is so called 'from *touch*, and *take*', *Compleat Gamester*, 77.
[50] Murray, *Board-Games*, 126.

> I pray she may; as well for the encouragement of the like, which else would stand under grievous imposition, as for the enjoying of thy life, who I would be sorry should be thus foolishly lost at a game of tick-tack. (1.2.177-81)[51]

In both *Measure for Measure* and *Two Angry Women* a game of Tables is analogous to the sexual game, with the stakes considerably higher in the Shakespearean play. Even if 'tick' is not intended to suggest 'Tick-tack', in Porter the rhyming couplets result in a subliminal echo of the earlier Tables match.

It is evidently customary when Barnes and Goursey get together for the servants to carouse together, making free with their master's cellar. Coomes's comments on the young masters' bowling game involves a coarser bawdy as befitting this roarer of a servant, making full use of the terminology of bowling, such as rub, bias, mark.[52] The drunken servant's competitive and antagonistic character surfaces as he first offers his services to Phillip 'if you have any quarrel in hand' (1.2.357-58) and then picks a fight with Frank, who is angered by his continual swearing. Coomes is prepared to 'venture a quarter's wages' (1.2.394). A fight does almost occur when he wildly exaggerates Frank's count of whores. Again Phillip steps in to keep the peace.

In the second act Barnes attempts to bring his wife to reason, telling her that Mistress Goursey is of 'good report' (2.1.522). Instead she now openly accuses him of infidelity answering:

> She is not, nor I know not; but I know
> That thou dost love her, therefore thinkst her so.
> Thou bearst with her because she bears with thee. (2.1.523-25)

Here 'bears' clearly echoes the terms of the Tables game and the earlier sexual suggestion made by the women. He reins in his anger, realising that it will only increase hers, and, through soliloquy, arrives at the idea of a marriage between his daughter, Mall, and Frank Goursey as a 'means / To make their mothers friends' (2.1.559-60). When Barnes broaches the subject of marriage with his daughter, Mall, she responds in a long speech during which she reveals that she is 'angry' (2.1.604); not with anyone, but with spinsterhood for she longs for marriage and the sexual satisfaction and authority it promises. She is, in her mother's words, a 'lusty-guts' (2.1.672), and Gayley feels there is 'no coarser-minded girl in

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[51] Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. J.W. Lever (London: Methuen, 1965). Lever's gloss here cites the *OED*: 'an old variety of backgammon played on a board with holes along the edge, in which pegs were placed for scoring', adding 'with an equivocation'. Brian Gibbons, ed. *Shakespeare: Measure for Measure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) at gloss for tick-tack (1.2.171) adds 'Lucio makes this procedure a bawdy synonym for sexual intercourse. In modern slang "score" can mean "have sexual intercourse"'.

[52] Rub (masturbate), bias (by arse, possibly boy arse), mark (pudenda). See the commentary in Jardine and Simons, eds, *Two Angry Women*, 12-13.

Elizabethan comedy' although he admires Porter's acute portrayal of her animalism.[53] To my mind she is redeemed by her honesty and razor-sharp wit, expressing her desire in puns. Her wish, 'Therefore, come, husband, maidenhead, adieu!' (2.1.671), is reminiscent of the epithalamium of Shakespeare's Juliet as others have noted, and it is soon to be followed by a burlesqued balcony scene. Her brother, Phillip, on being apprised of the plan and taking his cue from his father's hope that Mall and Frank will prove a 'match' (2.1.781) quips:

> How, a match? I'll warrant ye, a match,
> My sister's fair; Frank Goursey, he is rich;
> His dowry, too, will be sufficient.
> Frank's young, and youth is apt to love;
> And, by my troth, my sister's maidenhead
> Stands like a game at tennis: if the ball
> Hit into the hole or hazard, fare well all. (2.1.784-90)

In the period Tennis was an indoor racquet game in which hard balls rebound from the four walls and there are various 'hazards', including a small hole or 'grille' in one corner. Phillip's analogy is intentionally coarse, implying Mall's wanton nature, and is wholly in keeping with early modern sexual innuendo and its preoccupation with holes. Once again, the game metaphor has been carefully chosen. It not only illuminates the precarious nature of Mall's chastity which we are later told 'hangs by so small a hair or spider's thread' (4.1.1530) but it looks forward to the clever repartee of the lovers' courtship and the night time 'chase' that ensues.[54] Most spectators would probably not have played tennis but they would know, perhaps from illustrations, of the characteristics of play. Mentions of tennis occur in many early modern plays, both for topical interest and as a metaphor for life.[55] As mentioned earlier, the 'quantity of a tennis ball' was a unit of measure in household advice and cook books. Tennis and tennis courts were also a regular feature in emblem books. Just as a Tables board could be a simile for a woman's body, so in Francis Quarles's emblematic poem the human body is described as a tennis court:

> Man is a Tenis-Court: His Flesh, the Wall:
> The Gamesters God, & Sathan. Th' heart's the Ball.[56]

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[53] Gayley, *Representative English Comedies,* 521.
[54] Distinctive features of tennis were the hazards and the chases, both of which have been lost in the development of lawn tennis.
[55] For instance in John Webster's two most famous plays: In *The White Devil* Ludovico plans to poison the handle of Brachiano's tennis racket so that while 'bandying at tennis / He might have sworn himself to hell, and struck / His soul into the hazard!' (5.1.70-72); in *The Duchess of Malfi* Bosola uses tennis simply as a metaphor, claiming to the dying Antonio 'We are merely the stars' tennis-balls, struck and bandied / Which way please them' (5.4.53-54). Line references from *John Webster: The Duchess of Malfi and Other Plays*, ed. René Weis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
[56] Francis Quarles 'Man is a Tenis-Court' in *Divine Fancies: Digested into Epigrammes, Meditations and Observations* (London, printed by M.F. for Iohn Marriot, 1633), Book 3, No. 37, R4$^{r}$.

The emblem's verse continues with the analogy making full use of the opportunities afforded by tennis terminology: hazard, chase, line, rebound and so forth. Like the angry women's Tables game the poem works on real and allegorical levels. The mounting game-based metaphors and symbols in *Two Angry Women* are self-reflexive and remind the audience both of their experience of such games and how life can be so likened. Again, with talk of a new match or contest, and of the angry women, the game motif continues as we are subtly reminded of the earlier Tables game.

The 'pleasure aiming' (3.3.1087) Frank is initially horrified at the prospect of marriage. He calls it 'hell', 'an earthly day of doom', and a 'lion's den' (3.3.1132, 1136, 1142). He is persuaded by his father, who passes on the same advice his own father gave him – that he can 'wanton it' outside the home, Goursey admitting 'as I have done' (3.3.1113, 1117). If Barnes is of a similar inclination, it is likely that Mistress Barnes's suspicions of her husband's 'ill-husbandry' are not unfounded. Accompanying Frank, who is readying himself to woo, and approaching the stage representation of the Barnes's house, Phillip says, 'Yonder's the window, with the candle in't; / Belike she's putting on her night attire –' (4.1.1428-29). He calls up to Mall, who is presumably on the upper stage, and the siblings exchange friendly insults. As soon as Frank joins in and Mall senses his quick wit, riddles and rhymes between these two 'players' begin, recalling the rhyming couplets of the Tables game. Their courtship is, in effect, a new two-person game through an exchange of sexual innuendo:

MALL O, well put in sir,
FRANK Up, you would say.
MALL Well climbed, gentleman.
I pray, sir, tell me, do you cart the Queen of Love?
FRANK Not cart her, but couch her in your eye,
And a fit place for gentle love to lie.
MALL Aye, but methinks you speak without the book
To place a four-wheeled wagon in my look.
Where will you have room to have the coach-man sit?
FRANK Nay, that were but small manners and not fit:
His duty is before you bare to stand,
Having a lusty whipstock in his hand. (4.1.1448-59)

Mall's reference to Frank speaking 'without the book' is, as Bly says, 'a mocking rewriting of Juliet's "You kiss by the book" (*RJ* 1.5.109)'.[57] The swift window courtship parodies *Romeo and Juliet*'s balcony romance and the 'painted beauty' (4.1.1398) of Petrarchan blazon, exemplified when Phillip calls up to his sister, 'Come down from your cloister,

[57] Bly, 'Legacy of Juliet's desire', 59.

votary, chaste nun, / Come down, and kiss Frank Goursey's mother's son' (4.1.1487). Tom Rutter believes that such intertextuality shows that Admiral's Men dramatists such as Porter 'not only knew Shakespeare's work, they expected their audience to as well'.[58] With spectators already involved in this intertextual game-play which confuses romance and bawdy, they are quickly returned to gaming table imagery when Mall wittily suggests that Frank has another attempt at his jest, inviting him to make 'another cast' (4.1.1495):

MALL Nun? Votary? stale maidenhead? seventeen and upward?
Here be names! what, nothing else?
FRANK Yes, or a fair built steeple without bells.
MALL Steeple, good people? nay, another cast.
FRANK Aye, or a well-made ship without a mast.
MALL Fie, not so big, sir, by one part of four.
FRANK Why then: ye are a boat without an oar. (4.1.1492-98)

Bells, masts and oars have the same erotic connotations as dice and points did in the Tables game, as puns on male sex organs, and although Frank successfully wins her in this wooing game, Mall dictates her terms:

MALL Francis, my love's lease I do let to thee,
Date of my life and thine. What sayst thou to me?
The entering fine or income thou must pay
Are kisses and embraces every day,
And quarterly I must receive my rent. (4.1.1538-42)

Mall asks her brother to bear witness and he responds, 'Do ye deliver this as your deed?' (4.1.1547). One assumes Mall and Frank kiss, and imitating a marriage vow Mall replies, 'I do, I do' (4.1.1548).

The two angry women have remained implacable and above all they both oppose the match. When Mistress Barnes now appears and objects, Mall uses more gaming terminology, as she begs, 'Mother, good mother, hear me! O good God, / Now we are even, what, would you make us odd?' (4.1.1585-6).[59] Mistress Goursey, for her part, begs, 'Francis, by fair means let me win thee from her' and bribes him with a 'store of angels' (4.1.1667, 1669), all these metaphors adding to the theme of winning and losing, and risk versus reward. Amid further explosions of anger the lovers make their escape, heading for Oxford for the marriage to be solemnised. When their disappearances are discovered, nocturnal races involving

[58] Rutter, *Shakespeare and the Admiral's Men*, 162. Rutter considers that 'we should read the echoes of (for example) *Romeo and Juliet* in *The Two Angry Women* not simply as imitations, but as allusions designed to be recognised as such', 198.
[59] 'Even and odd' is a dice game mentioned by Walker in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, 41. F.N. David, *Games, Gods and Gambling*, states that 'the game of odds and evens is one which has been used for divination purposes from the first recordings of history and is still used today among the African tribes', 15. Two Finger Morra also comes to mind. In the game one player calls either 'evens' or 'odds'. Both players then stick out one or two fingers at the same time. If both players' fingers match, the player who has called 'evens' wins.

multiple cases of mistaken identity begin. 'What a race this peevish girl hath led me!' (5.5.2547), Mistress Barnes will complain in the final scene. This is the culmination of the race image created at the start of the play by Tables, a race in contrary directions. Tables is, in essence, the controlling motif for the whole play.

All of Act 5 takes place outside – we are to imagine the 'coney burrow below' (5.1.1952), and the darkness. The play will have been acted in daylight and, as R.B. Graves remarks:

> The contrasts of darkness and light on the English Renaissance stage were first and foremost functions of the imagery in the spoken words and, hence, worked their effects most prominently in the imaginations of the spectators.[60]

There are some twenty instances of the words 'dark', 'darkling' and 'darkness', thirty repetitions of 'night' as well as several textual references to torches and lights. Aligning with the central gaming motif there are also further gaming terms to suggest the blindness in which the characters stumble around, such as Hodge's bawdy announcement: 'give me leave to play at blind man buffe with my mistress' (4.1.1828-29) and Mall's intention to play 'all hid' and 'bo-peep' (5.1.1876-77) with her mother. The theme of anger and competition is also sustained by Phillip describing the starless black sky as 'angry', preventing any stars spoiling her 'sable metamorphosy' (5.1.1948, 1950). As with the two-person game of Tables, these races in the dark are made by pairs of characters although these change as they lose one another in the darkness and confusion. To begin with Mistress Barnes chases Mall, Mistress Goursey (accompanied by Coomes) looks for Frank, the lovers try to find each other whilst avoiding their mothers, Phillip tries to find Frank, and the fathers try to find Mall and Frank to get them safely off to Oxford. The respective servants add to the confusion with Hodge first assuming the 'sword and buckler voice' (5.3.2114) of Dick Coomes to fool Mistress Barnes and then speaking in Mistress Goursey's voice to trick Coomes. Supplying still further occasions for mistaken identity, Sir Ralph Smith and his man Will are also looking for each other. All get increasingly angry as they mistake hollers, become cold, run through briars, fall into ditches and fail to find their quarry.

Goursey declares: 'I am very angry with my wife' but he and Barnes, playing a strategic move in the unwritten game, have agreed a 'policy' (5.3.2307, 2313). Goursey dissembles a sudden belief in Mistress Barnes's allegations of sexual impropriety on the basis that 'Where's smoke, there's fire' (5.5.2640), and announces to her that he fears 'Your

[60] R.B. Graves, *Lighting the Shakespearean Stage, 1567-1642* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999, 217 (ProQuest Ebook Central).

husband and my wife doth wrong us both' (5.5.2644). This insult to his honour requires Barnes to answer the lie. In contrast to the women he remains verbally courteous, responding: 'How? Think ye so? Nay, Master Goursey, then / You run in debt to my opinion' (5.5.2645-46). There are no stage directions for a fight but Phillip is soon obliged to call, 'Coomes, Will, and Hodge, come all and help us part them' (5.5.2657). Brish Evett conjectures that they fight 'with swords drawn'.[61] Indeed Hodge urges, 'Master, hear, and make an end – you may kill one another in jest and be hanged in earnest' (5.5.2665-66). Mistress Barnes appears genuinely fearful, saying, 'O Lord, what haste you make to hurt yourselves: / Good, Phillip, use some good persuasions / To make them friends' (5.5.2669-71). The Tables game between the two women provides the motif for anger, excess and the chase, and is the fulcrum for all the quarrels and this fight, or duel, between the two patriarchs. Today we might consider the duel to be the epitome of excess, but in the period, as Markku Peltonen explains, the only efficient way for a gentleman to erase an affront to his honour was 'to issue a challenge to a duel', demonstrate his courage and thus 'restore his tarnished reputation'.[62] It was the requirement for personal bravery that 'enabled the courtesy theorists and many other writers to defend duelling'.[63] Peltonen cites John Reynolds's statement that duels were, 'reciprocall and singular demonstrations of courtesie and honour'.[64] Although, ironically, Porter himself died in a quarrel with a fellow dramatist, the fight in his play is pretence, another game, the exchange of blows pure theatre and play.[65] Barnes and Goursey love each other and are feigning rage in a final attempt to bring their wives to reason.[66] The husbands' hazardous game upstages the women's earlier game and ongoing verbal blows and, as Jenny Adams finds in her discussion of male-male Chess games in medieval literature, the women become spectators as the men assert their hegemony.[67] There was a certain tension and anxiety in the early modern period in the idea of the companionate marriage and the ambiguity to which it

[61] Brish Evett, ed., *Two Angry Women*, 66. Gayley, *Representative English Comedies*, refers to 'simulating mortal combat', 529.
[62] Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness and Honour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 44. The duel of honour came to England at the end of the sixteenth century as 'an integral part of the Italian Renaissance theory of courtesy', 18.
[63] Ibid, 44. Castiglione, *Book of the Courtier,* notes that the courtier should not be 'quick to enter into a fight, except in so far as his honor demands it of him' but that where honour is at stake he must 'always show readiness and daring', 28.
[64] John Reynolds, *The triumphs of God's Revenge against the crying, and execrable sinne of murther* (London 1621-4), cited in Peltonen, *The Duel*, 58.
[65] Little is known of Porter's life but he died on 7 June 1599, fatally wounded in the left breast by John Day. See Brish Evett, ed., *Two Angry Women*, 8-9.
[66] Gayley, *Representative English Comedies*, states that in 1597/8 the men's ruse was novel and was later much copied as a device for 'curing shrewishness', 529.
[67] Jenny Adams, 'Pieces of Power: Medieval Chess and Male Homosocial Desire, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 103/2 (April 2004), 197-214 (203).

gave rise between the wife's subordinate role and her status as joint governor, which is possibly being played out here.[68] The wives have already been cautioned, with Barnes reprimanding his, 'Do not be / Subject to such misgovernment' (5.5.2631-32). They are now made to see that their quarrel has put the lives of the patriarchs in danger; in danger of death by the sword or the hangman. Phillip appeals to the mothers and finally Mistress Barnes capitulates:

> O husband, stay.
> Stay, Master Goursey: though your wife doth hate me,
> And bears unto me malice infinite
> And endless, yet I will respect your safeties;
> I would not have you perish by our means.
> I must confess that only suspect,
> And no proof else, hath fed my hate to her. (5.5.2723-29)

In my reading I find, as Adams does of Chess in her period, that the duel 'helps to map male homosocial bonds and the social power they encompass'.[69] The relationship between Barnes and Goursey, as we are told in the play's first lines, is a 'jewel', and through their joint 'policy' they contain the threat to their authority and bring about the resolution to the women's quarrel. Phillip makes the women join hands and they kiss and become friends once more.

Meanwhile the aristocrat, Sir Ralph, has found not a deer but Mall. She has been despairing more explicitly than Juliet Capulet of ever having her marriage consummated:

> How many maids this night lies in their beds,
> And dream that they have lost their maidenheads?
> Such dreams, such slumbers I had, too, enjoyed,
> If waking malice had not them destroyed;
> A starved man with double death doth die
> To have the meat might save him in his eye,
> And may not have it: so am I tormented,
> To starve for joy – I see, yet am prevented. (5.4.2441-47)

Sir Ralph's initial exchanges are lecherous but, contrary to opinion, Mall proves herself 'nimble as a doe' (5.4.2492) in wit and perfectly capable of protecting herself from any 'fall' in maiden honour, just as she has managed to stay upright and not fall over in the dark. Once they learn each other's names she regards him as a mediator to end the mothers' feud. This role is curiously underdeveloped as the reconciliation has already happened. Nevertheless he reunites Mall with Frank and proves a witness to the 'sweet contract' (5.5.2853) between the two young lovers and, in a conventional ending, bids them all to dine. The Tables game has

[68] Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 25.
[69] Adams, 'Pieces of Power', 204.

been a metaphor for the day and night in the Barnes and Goursey households represented in this play and its game between the sexes. Now both play and game have reached their end and the traditional power structure has been re-established. It was the duty of the patriarch to govern the home and although Barnes and Goursey are initially ineffectual in governing their wives, order is restored through the cunning device of their mock duel and Sir Ralph's authority, aided by Phillip's voice of reason. But the witty Mall, who longs for her marriage fruits, has shown herself fully capable of guarding her honour, making her own bargain and setting her marital terms and it is to her that the play's final words are given.

Having discussed how a Tables game opens a play and informs a comedic race, I turn now to the tragedy, *Arden of Faversham*, where the game occurs at the play's climax. Again the game can be seen as omnipresent, representing Alice Arden's premeditated and treasonous race to kill her husband.

## 'Fortune my Foe' in *Arden of Faversham*

*Arden of Faversham* is of particular interest because, according to the official historical account in the early Town Books of Faversham and the detailed narrative in Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577 and 1587), on 15 February 1551 Thomas Arden was murdered in his home during a game of Tables, and, forty years later, the play is based on these accounts.[70] In Holinshed's report, Arden is suffocated with a towel by the hired assassin, 'blacke Will', and struck on the head by his wife's lover, 'Mosbie', with 'a pressing iron of fourteene pounds

[70] *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham*, ed. M.L. Wine (London: Methuen, 1973) is used for all line references. Wine's appendices include relevant extracts from Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, Second Edition, 1587, Vol. III, 1062-1066 (Appendix II, 148-159) and *The Wardmote Book of Faversham*, ff. 59-60 (Appendix III, 160-163). The account of the Faversham murder is also present in the first edition (1577) of Holinshed's survey but without the later marginal glosses. Wine refers to '*The Wardmote Book of Faversham',* but I should clarify that the account is in the Second Town Book of Faversham which comprises the Town Accounts, Wardmote minutes and other records for the period 1436-1581. This, together with the First Town Book, relating to the legal status of the borough, has been transcribed: See *The Early Town Books of Faversham c.1251-1581*, eds Duncan Harrington and Patricia Hyde (Folkestone: History Research, 2018). For ease I use the transcription in Wine's edition and refer simply to *The Wardmote Book*. As Wine notes, the play was entered in the Stationers' Register on 3 April 1592 as 'The tragedie of Arden of Feuersham & blackwill', xix. There are some discrepancies in the names of the protagonists in the sources: *The Wardmote Book* uses the spellings 'Ardern' and 'Morsby', and Blackwyll's 'coadiutor' is 'George losebagg' with the painter named as William Blackborne. Holinshed changes these to 'Arden', 'Mosbie' and 'Shakebag', with the painter unnamed. The play largely follows Holinshed using 'Arden', 'Mosby' and 'Shakebag' but names the painter 'Clarke' and combines Morsby's sister (Cislye ponder) and Alice's maid (Elsabeth Stafford) into Arden's servingmaid 'Susan'. Alyce Ardern is referred to as 'mistress Arden' in Holinshed with one exception in reported speech as 'Mistrese Ales'.

weight'.[71] Groaning in the throes of death, he then receives a gash in the face from blacke Will. Later, after paying blacke Will, 'mistresse Arden' administered 'seuen or eight p[r]icks into the brest' with a knife.[72] *The Wardmote Book* states that it was 'Morsby' who both struck 'Ardern' on the head with the tailor's iron and cut his throat and there is no mention of Mistress Arden's superfluous 'pricks'. *The Wardmote Book* gives no indication of previous attempts on Ardern's life whereas Holinshed lists no fewer than six. What is clear, however, is that the murderous team led by Mistress Arden – blacke Will and his accomplice Shakebag, Mosbie, Greene (a man with a grudge having lost his land to Arden), Michaell, and Mosbie's sister, at whose house the historical murder was plotted, and who paid blacke Will the balance of his fee afterwards – were able to bet on Arden's proposing 'a game at the tables in the meane season' in the interval before supper was to be served.[73] The game was clearly a regular occurrence in the Arden household and it provided the opportunity for the premeditated and 'stage-managed' murder. The play uses the fuller pattern of events detailed in Holinshed, but makes certain significant changes and additions. It seems reasonable to assume that Holinshed's detailed description of the murder and the central role of the game of Tables in the crime is one of the factors that caught the dramatist's (or dramatists') attention.[74] The six prior attempts on Arden's life are somewhat drily related in the chronicle but M.L. Wine suggests that marginal glosses 'highlight dramatic possibilities inherent in the narrative'.[75] An early margin note, 'A pair of silver dice work much mischief' and a later one, 'The match made to murther Arden', just at the point Greene first concludes the deal with blacke Will, may well have been the catalysts for the evident extension of the game and contest motif.[76]

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that pairs of 'silver dice' are mentioned twice in Holinshed's report, close to the very beginning and the very end.[77] *Arden of Faversham* is similarly framed by imagery of two dice: the 'pair of silver dice' (1.123) used in Alice and Mosby's amorous game of adultery and, at 14.231, the two aces Mosby rolls in the game of

[71] Holinshed in Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, 155.
[72] Ibid, 155.
[73] Ibid, 154.
[74] Although there are divergent views on *Arden of Faversham*'s authorship, the current consensus is that it is probably a collaborative play and on the basis of sophisticated stylometric studies of rare words and image clusters Shakespeare's hand can be detected in one particular scene. MacDonald P. Jackson, 'Shakespeare and the Quarrel Scene in *Arden of Faversham*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 57/3 (2006), 249-293 finds 'no other complete work that contains even the two words "copesmate" and "sland'rous" (or "slanderous")', apart from *The Rape of Lucrece*, written a year or two after *Arden*'s publication, 270.
[75] Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, xl.
[76] Holinshed, in Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, 151.
[77] Ibid, 148, 159.

Tables immediately before he murders Arden.[78] There has been strangely little commentary on this recurring motif of two dice and on the gaming terminology and imagery that abound throughout the play. Eugene Hill lists what he considers the 'three frames of reference' prevailing in critical discussions of Arden: 'attribution scholarship', 'generic considerations' and work that invokes 'current views of the sociology of literature'.[79] He considers that these miss the parodic tone and 'travesty of contemporary high tragedy' that prevails.[80] Hill does not mention the play's imagery, where my interest lies. Commentators such as Max Bluestone and Sarah Youngblood highlight the hunting, animal and religious metaphors.[81] John Henry Adams describes as 'agentive objects' the painting, the crucifix and Alice's prayer-book, all three 'invested with unusual power'.[82] Only Jean-Claude Mailhol and Bloom substantially address the gaming imagery and the game scene.[83] Mailhol considers that the metaphor of game haunts the play and notes how the image of Alice's pair of silver dice returns in the fateful game where the stake is her husband's death.[84] Bloom concentrates largely on the physical staging in an early modern amphitheatre of such games normally played in a parlour or tavern and the difficulty of visual access to the game board by spectators. She argues that '*Arden* draws a parallel between murder – the literal killing of persons as well as the figurative killing that takes place in a capture board game such as backgammon – and theatre spectatorship'.[85] While she rightly suggests that audiences who knew these games would more deeply engage in the drama, in my opinion it was not necessary for their internal workings to be seen. Playgoing was not just spectacle, but an aural experience and many writers, as Andrew Gurr states, 'strongly preferred their audiences to listen to their words rather than view the actors'.[86] Even though stage directions indicate the presence of a game board or pack of cards, and the provision of such adds to the drama, the *progress* of a game is created by the dialogue, just as darkness, as in my earlier citation of

[78] I will use the play's spellings in Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham* for all names henceforth.
[79] Eugene D. Hill, 'Parody and History in "*Arden of Feversham*" (1592)', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 56/4 (1993), 359-382.
[80] Ibid, 368.
[81] See Max Bluestone, 'The Imagery of Tragic Melodrama in *Arden of Feversham*', *Drama Survey*, 5/2 (1966), 171-181 in which he considers how the language transforms humans to animals and how the hyperbole and its inversion, *meiosis*, raise the play from melodrama to what he terms 'tragic melodrama'. Sarah Youngblood in 'Theme and Imagery in Arden of Faversham', *SEL*, 3/2 (Spring 1963), 207-218, considers that the violation of moral order is most pervasively represented by the inversion or perversion of religious terms.
[82] John Henry Adams, 'Agentive Objects and Protestant Idolatry in *Arden of Faversham*', *SEL*, 57/2, 232-251 (238).
[83] Mailhol, 'L'Esthétique du Jeu Cruel', 100-107; Bloom, in 'Games'; 'Spatial Mastery' and *Gaming the Stage*.
[84] Mailhol, 'L'Esthétique du Jeu Cruel', 98, 101.
[85] Bloom, 'Spatial Mastery', 7.
[86] Gurr, *Playgoing*, 2.

Graves, is conjured primarily by spoken words, with perhaps a simple stage property, such as a lantern, to indicate night.[87]

In my reading, Arden and Franklin become metamorphosed into pieces in a metaphorical game of Tables – they become 'tablemen', Arden avoiding 'hits' (murder attempts) if he is with Franklin, a non-historical character added by the dramatist/s, just as in Tables if there are two or more men on a point it is 'covered' and the adversary may not land on that point. Tables is a game in which the luck of the dice plays a major role and luck is something with which Arden appears to be amply endowed, Black Will concluding after the fourth failed attempt on his life, 'Arden, thou has wondrous holy luck' (9.133), and after the sixth, 'doubtless he is preserved by miracle' (14.28-9). Although Mailhol describes Arden as 'ballotté comme le dé' (tossed like a die), like Bloom I find that 'the drama turns Arden into something akin to a backgammon "blot", also known in one early game treatise as *homo vagans*, a wandering man'.[88] Alice and Mosby's break-ups and make-ups, embellishments present only in the drama, similarly resemble the setbacks and advances of the game. With the tablemen's progress along the track and his returns to the start largely determined by dice, the format of the game thus adumbrates the action of the play and offers a representation of the on-off human relationships. Moreover, on close examination it can be seen that the divinatory aspect of Tables described earlier is invoked by Alice, giving us an insight into the contemporary views of providence and fate. Such a reading intersects with the varied critical discourses on the domestic space and domestic rebellion.[89]

In *Two Angry Women* the game is imitated by rhyming couplets, whereas in *Arden* we find repeated pairing of characters and words. Gaming imagery begins early in the long first scene when Alice asks Adam Fowle, landlord of the Flower-de-Luce tavern, to carry a pair of silver dice to Mosby:

> Bear him from me these pair of silver dice
> With which we played for kisses many a time,
> And when I lost I won, and so did he –
> Such winning and such losing Jove send me! (1.123-26)

The silver dice sent to Mosby derive from Holinshed but the background information now supplied that they have been used by Alice and her lover in sexual play is significant. In all

[87] Graves, *Lighting the Shakespearean Stage*, 217.
[88] Mailhol, 'L'Esthétique du Jeu Cruel', 100; Bloom, 'Spatial Mastery', 14 and *Gaming the Stage*, 109. The treatise in question is MS British Museum, Kings 13 A.xviii – see Murray, *Board-Games*, 120.
[89] Such as Catherine Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England: The Material Life of the Household* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013) and Frances E. Dolan, 'The Subordinate('s) Plot: Petty Treason and the Forms of Domestic Rebellion', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 43/3 (1992), 317-340.

games one has to decide who moves first, in cards by cutting the deck and in board games by throwing a die or dice.[90] The sending of the dice as a love token to encourage Mosby is here analogous to the dice throw before the commencement of a new game. Huizinga's work on man's natural instinct to play and preoccupation with winning and losing has shown that play is semantically linked to the erotic across languages, a clear example being the Sanskrit word for copulation, *kridaratnam*, which literally means the 'jewel of games'.[91] Dicing is normally a zero-sum game with a winner and a loser, but in Alice's adulterous dicing with Mosby the winner's reward is sexual favour, so when one wins the other effectively wins too.[92] She wills 'Jove' to send her once again 'Such winning and such losing' considering it heaven-sent.[93] This same desire to 'lose' a game is expressed by Juliet in her epithalamium when she asks 'civil night' to 'learn me how to lose a winning match, / Played for a pair of stainless maidenheads' (3.2.12-13). In Shakespeare's play Romeo has won his bride as they have been secretly married but Juliet looks forward to 'losing' or surrendering to Romeo on her wedding night, thus paradoxically winning. Alice's choice of dice is an early signal of her eventual ruin. Moreover, the dice game that used just two dice in the period was Hazard, described earlier in the thesis, which is an apt emblem of their dangerous relationship.

Alice sees everyone as obstacles in her path to happiness – from her jealous husband, to her prying neighbours. She says she abhors Arden and vows, 'If I live, that block shall be removed' (1.137). The word 'block' here is tantalisingly close to the Table's term, 'blot', and indeed she wants to remove him as if he were a tableman in her way. Her wish that he be thrown from his horse into the ocean is merely fanciful because she has already contracted Michael, the couple's manservant, to her murderous intent. When Michael vows 'I'll see he shall not live above a week' (1.146), she promises him Mosby's sister Susan as his reward, and suddenly a subsidiary game and stake is signalled. Susan is being courted by Clarke, a painter, and Michael, ready to kill his own elder brother to have somewhere to live with Susan and be 'worth more than twenty painters' (1.171), claims 'Who would not *venture* upon house and land / When he may have it for a right-down blow?' (1.174-75, my italics).

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[90] Willughby confirms that this was also the case in the seventeenth century, writing 'In all games the first thing is to throw for the dice. Each gamester, taking a die, throws it in one of the tables, and hee that throw the biggest cast has the dice and begins the game', Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 113.
[91] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens,* 43.
[92] Zero-sum was a theorem established by the pioneer of game theory, John von Neumann. Briefly, the most one player can guarantee winning is equal to the least the other player can guarantee losing: one person's gain is the other's loss and the payoffs to the two players add up to zero.
[93] The same allusion to the sexual act as a game with no losers is seen in John Ford's *The Lady's Trial,* ed. Lisa Hopkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011). Adurni's song to encourage Spinella to yield ends: 'In the game are felt no pains, / For in all the loser gains' (2.4.15-16).

His rival, or opponent, Clarke, enters the game for Susan using precisely the same word as his competitor, telling Alice: 'You'll venture life and die with him you love. / The like will I do for my Susan's sake' (1.271-72). The use of 'venture', a gaming term with the suggestion of stakes and one which indicates the willingness to risk loss in the hope of gain, by rivals Clarke and Michael creates a new two-person race for Susan's hand in marriage.[94]

Mosby at this juncture is against murdering Arden. He wants nothing to do with Alice. She has to resort to a psychological game, insulting him by calling him a 'base peasant' (1.198), only good enough to be Arden's servant. As Wine states, at various points throughout the play 'she recognizes the genuine shabbiness' of her lover, his low birth and his danger to her, predicting early that he will be her 'overthrow' (1.216).[95] This acts as a spur to the social climber to improve his gamesmanship and it is Mosby who contacts the cunning man, Clarke, for his knowledge of poisons. The poisoned porridge plan fails not only because Arden tastes something amiss, but because Franklin is there to protect him, supplying an antidote. Franklin is the dramatist/s' addition and is not only Arden's friend, but his protector; on the same point of the metaphorical Tables board and preventing Arden from being a solitary blot. Arden unwittingly echoes Alice amidst his accusations against Mosby for attempting to steal his wife, calling him a 'base-minded peasant' (1.323). He confiscates the sword Mosby wears, only permitted, under sumptuary law, to be worn by a gentleman; and he taunts his inferior, saying, 'Now use your bodkin, / Your Spanish needle, and your pressing iron' (1.312-3). Through the ironic mention of a pressing iron, the weapon which will eventually deal him a fateful blow, poignant use is made of the skeletal information in Holinshed. Arden's taunts stimulate a new emotion in Mosby – revenge, but, called base by both Alice and Arden, he is not yet a worthy opponent in the game. The most tense and satisfying games are those between players of matched ability. A temporary truce is declared, Arden, playing the bigger man, declaring:

> Mosby, with these thy protestations
> The deadly hatred of my heart is appeased,
> And thou and I'll be friends if this prove true. (1.338-40)

Alice, however, has found another potential player in Greene, who is already motivated by revenge, having lost his lands to Arden. She entices him into the game by claiming to be abused by Arden 'with hard words, and blows to mend the match' (1.495) and thus able to

[94] M.M. Mahood, *Shakespeare's Wordplay* (London: Routledge, 1957) points out the shift of meaning between 'a risk of danger or loss' and a 'commercial enterprise' in the use of venture as a noun in *The Merchant of Venice*, 45. He does not mention its meaning of to 'stake' (*OED, v.* I.a).
[95] Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, lxxii.

sympathize with Greene's suffering from the loss of his living. Greene vows to 'pay him home, whatever hap to me […] For I had rather die than lose my land' (1.515, 518). At this Alice promises that 'the lands whereof my husband is possessed / Shall be intitled as they were before' (1.524-25). Shaking on the deal and the 'stakes' Alice proposes, he gestures: 'Then here's my hand, I'll have him so dispatched' (1.528). With further deliberate pairing the word hand is echoed by Alice, but in clear gaming terminology: 'And whosoever doth attempt the deed / A happy hand I wish'. (1.533-34). Following Alice's advice, Greene enlists Black Will to do the deed, paying him twenty angels. Black Will is now the player and keen to 'handsel the match' (2.110-11) over a gallon of sack when they meet in Rochester.

Leaving Alice in Faversham, Arden and Franklin journey to London, the metaphoric 'outer tables' of the game board where the game starts. Here Greene identifies Arden to the paid assassin, Black Will, and his accomplice, Shakebag. Their target is, however, protected by being in the company of Franklin and Michael who are effectively 'binding up the Tables', or occupying all the free points in this frustrating game.[96] Hoping to get Arden alone, they lie in wait but it is Black Will who finds himself the solitary 'blot' and suffers a 'hit' when an apprentice '*lets he down his [shop] window, and it breaks Black Will's head*' (3.51 sd). It is Black Will who has to start again. The dramatist/s invent this blow to Black Will's head, creating the comedic element often included in a tragedy but which is arguably analogous to the hitting and re-entering of a tableman. An entry from Willughby records that 'Taking a Point upon A Mans Head is where B can take a point where there is a single man of As'.[97] The Prentice warns Black Will that he will be beaten and 'sent to the counter' (3.61). George Shakebag is mentioned by Holinshed, so the playwright has not made up his name, but Holinshed differs from *The Wardmote Book*'s 'George losebagg'. Shakebag is curiously apt for it was a term used in cockfighting, 'a cock kept in a bag prior to the contest so that it can be brought out to fight another sight unseen'.[98] Merely humorous to us, the name would have had gaming significance to a contemporary audience and the mounting gaming metaphors reinforce the motif of challenge.

Staying at Franklin's house in London, Arden is still safe and unaware of Black Will's second foiled attempt. Michael, who has left the doors purposely unlocked for the assassins, loses his nerve and wakes Arden, who locks them firmly. Pivotal and parallel scenes, one in London and one in Faversham, both of the dramatist/s' invention, signal changes in the game.

[96] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*: 'Binding up the Tables is when B or A have taken all their first sixe points', 124.
[97] Ibid, 123.
[98] Ibid, 304. *OED, n.* 1 also records a similar reference in Holme's *Academy of Armory*, II.252/1.

The night he should have been murdered in his bed Arden dreams he is watching a deer but is himself caught in the net as the forester cries 'Thou art the game we seek' (6.19). Animals frequently replace man in metaphors: for example, 'a bird in the hand', 'a snake in the grass', and 'a fox in a henhouse'. All allude to humans caught in life's snares or involved in life's strategies. Furthermore, 'Hunting A Deere in My Lords Parke' was a children's game of chase and capture, similar to Barley-break, so whether the image of the deer and the net alludes to hunting or to touch and chase games it underscores the theme of capture in Tables.[99] Arden is simultaneously the game (the 'match'), the player and the tableman, which Alice through her vicarious play seeks to hit. To imagine a person as a tableman is foreign for us today but we have seen in *Blurt*, and in Doan's translations of Irish *dánta grádha*, that this is so. An eight-line epigram that appeared twice in a manuscript collection of Stuart verse, c. 1630s, confirms the period's metaphoric application of Tables:

> Love is a game at Tables where the dye
> Of maids affection doth by fancy fly
> Yf once wee take them faulty in a blot
> 'Tis ten to one yf that wee enter not
> But being a gamester you many boldy venture
> And yf you see the point lye open enter
> Mark them well, else by false-playing [then]
> Do what you can they will be bearing men.[100]

The poet's use of the terminology of Tables – 'blot', 'point', and 'bearing' – is innuendo laden, relating life and sexual relations to a game. The woman is the playing board and the man is the tableman.

Arden's dream is at a pivotal moment because the ultimate aim in Tables is to 'bear off' all of one's men from the board before one's opponent can do so, but, as Willughby states, 'none of the men must bee begun to bee borne till they are brought home into the first six points'.[101] As explained, a player's bearing table is described as the 'home' table. Arden and Franklin are now returning home to Faversham (or, as Willughby might say, effectively moving the game 'homewards') to the 'beguiling home' (6.14) which Arden so prophetically sees as a net, a trap, in his dream. Mosby's soliloquy (8.1-43), only separated textually from Arden's dream by a short scene in which Michael apprises Black Will of his master's

[99] See Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 189.
[100] Huntington Library, MS HM 116, 77, cited in Marcy L. North 'Twice the Effort: Tracing the Practices of Stuart Verse Collectors through Their Redundant Entries', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 77/3 (2014), 257-285 (263). This witty poem features on the same page as a riddle attributed to Sir Walter Raleigh which compares part of an archer's stiff and hard-to-draw bow, including the 'notch' to the poem's addressee, the unfortunately named Lady Bendbow.
[101] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 124.

imminent journey with its opportunity for a 'stratagem' (7.19) on Rainham Down, parallels Arden's dream with his talk of disturbed nights. It signals that he is now the opponent in this two-player game; he has been acting the 'husband's part' (1.638) whilst Arden has been away; he has 'climbed the top bough of the tree' (8.15), raising himself from a 'botcher' who mends old clothes. His social rise is in direct opposition to his moral decline and although he realises that his 'golden time was when [he] had no gold' (8.11), he is now so bewitched by the idea of wealth that he 'cannot go back / But needs must on although to danger's gate' (8.21-2). He is ready now to play the game, to dispose of Arden. Indeed, like Macbeth, who argues, 'To be thus is nothing, but to be safely thus' (*Macbeth* 3.1.47), Mosby wants to eliminate any possible hindrances.[102] He soliloquises:

> Such bees as Greene must never live to sting.
> Then is there Michael and the painter too,
> Chief actors to Arden's overthrow,
> Who, when they shall see me sit in Arden's seat
> They will insult upon me for my meed,
> Or fright me by detecting of his end.
> I'll none of that, for I can cast a bone
> To make these curs pluck out each other's throat,
> And then am I sole ruler of mine own. (8.28-36)

The metatheatrical description of Greene, Michael and the painter as 'chief actors to Arden's overthrow' (8.30) reminds us that this is a play. However the play, as many spectators would know, is the dramatization of an infamous real-life murder, and this is therefore a reminder of the bi-directional metaphoricity of the world as a stage and the stage as life. The twin concept, life as a game, operates with a similar duality, with games a microcosm of life. In Mosby's new-found empowerment even Alice is not to be trusted and is an obstacle in his way. He reasons that if she has supplanted Arden with him she may in turn 'extirpen [him] to plant another' (8.41). I suggest that in this famous quarrel scene, recently attributed to Shakespeare, she resigns her position as the games master, trying to end her relationship with Mosby.[103] Again, echoing language is used as one player is exchanged for another. Alice claims she was 'bewitched' and 'enchanted' (8.78-9) but Mosby counters that it was he that was 'bewitched' and 'enchanted' (8.93-4). Alice does suddenly capitulate and the quarrel is ended but this time her taunts (she calls him 'a mean artificer' [8.77]) are more than equalled by Mosby who calls her a 'wanton giglot', 'unhallowed', a 'raven', and 'counterfeit' (8.87, 94, 97, 101). He states clearly that he is 'too good to be [her] favourite' (8.105) and this

[102] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Kenneth Muir (London: Methuen, 1962).
[103] On attribution see Jackson, 'Shakespeare and the Quarrel Scene', 249-293.

superiority empowers him. From this point it is indeed a 'new-made match' (8.150), though not in the meaning Alice intends – the game is now between Mosby and Arden. It is Mosby who masterminds the eventual murder at Tables.

In this the play deviates dramatically from Holinshed's account. Holinshed states that 'Arden's wife visiteth, succoureth, emboldeneth and directeth black Will Etc: how to accomplish his bloudie purpose' and at a meeting at Mosbie's sister's house they 'deuised to haue killed him in maner as afterwards he was' with Mistress Arden clearly in charge.[104] Mosbie is violently against the cowardly means of the murder plan, leaving the meeting in a fury. Mistress Arden has to importune him again, this time 'vpon hir knees'.[105] In *Arden* Alice's role is deftly downplayed. Earlier her oscillations between seduction and rejection of Mosby, mirrored by Arden's between being prohibitive and permissive of his rival, have been analogous to the retreat and advance of a game of Tables as the pair play out their marital game. Now the contest is between the two men, her husband and her lover. Mosby enquires of Black Will and Shakebag: 'will you two / Perform the complot that I have laid?' (14.91-2) and he details Greene to:

> Single Franklin forth
> And hold him with a long tale of strange news,
> That he may not come home till supper time. (14.95-7)

The previous attempts to 'hit' have failed as Arden was in company, protected either by Franklin, or, in the case of the journey across Rainham Down, by the fortuitous arrival of Lord Cheiny. Mosby needs Greene to remove protective tableman Franklin from the board; then he will fetch Arden home where 'like friends' – equal competitors now – they will 'play a game or two at tables' (14.98-99). Alice asks: 'But what of all this? How shall he be slain?' (14.100). She has no knowledge of the plot. Mosby explains that during the game Black Will and Shakebag 'will be locked within the countinghouse' (14.101) but will rush forth on the watchword 'Now I take you' (14.104). Black Will describes to Alice how she must stage-manage the game:

> Place Mosby, being a stranger, in a chair,
> And let your husband sit upon a stool,
> That I may come behind him cunningly
> And with a towel pull him to the ground,
> Then stab him till his flesh be as a sieve. (14.118-22)

[104] Holinshed in Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, 153-4. As stated in an earlier note, in the historical account Mosby had a sister (unnamed).
[105] Ibid, 154.

And when all this has been described to her she declares it 'A fine device!' (14.126), and confidently raises the game's stakes, offering 'twenty pound' and 'forty more' (14.126-7) when he is dead.

With everyone primed and the murderers in place, Alice's soliloquy immediately prior to Arden's arrival and the game's commencement is enlightening. Unlike any other speech in the play it resonates with classical references to gods. She likens Arden to Tisiphone, ironically the avenger of murder; and, longing for Mosby, she imagines Diana, Roman goddess of hunting and the moon, flinging her mortal paramour Endymion aside for Mosby:

> I shall no more be closed in Arden's arms
> That like the snakes of black Tisiphone
> Sting me with their embracings. Mosby's arms
> Shall compass me; and, were I made a star,
> I would have none other spheres but those.
> Here is no nectar but in Mosby's lips!
> Had chaste Diana kissed him, she like me
> Would grow lovesick, and from her wat'ry bower
> Fling down Endymion and snatch him up. (14.143-51)

This speech shows how completely oblivious Alice is to her depravity, as Martin White's gloss notes.[106] I believe, however, that it has a deeper significance; the textual and metaphorical embracing of gods and mortals, heaven and the underworld is juxtaposed with the language and images of astronomy, such as 'compass', 'star', and 'spheres', and these words come just three short lines before Alice tells Michael to 'Fetch in the tables' (14.157). There is surely a consonance here with the contemporary understanding of the divinatory significance of Tables and its cosmological correspondence to the calendar and the planets. As Wine notes, the speech anticipates the final moments of the play and Alice's remorse, because 'Tisiphone's snakes awakened remorse by stinging the conscience'.[107]

When Mosby brings Arden home, without Franklin, it is Alice who suggests the Tables game, stating that supper will be ready once 'you have played a game at tables' (14.222). Just as the conspirators of Holinshed's report were able to bank on Arden proposing, 'Then let vs go and plaie a game at the tables in the meane season'[108], so too our Mosby has been able to plot his strategy knowing that Arden will readily entertain the idea of a game. The tables and seats have been set up as Black Will instructed, with Mosby on a chair and Arden on a stool with his back to the countinghouse. This seating, which enables

[106] Martin White, ed., *Arden of Faversham* (London: Methuen Drama, 2007).
[107] Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, gloss for 14.144.
[108] Holinshed in Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, 154.

Black Will to surprise Arden from behind, is of course symbolic of Mosby's usurpation of Arden's position as head of the household. As Oswald Jacoby and John Crawford state in *The Backgammon Book*, 'You have an opponent, and your plan of campaign must be to improve your position at the expense of his'.[109] They arrange to play 'Three games for a French crown' (14.224). The stage direction, '*Then they play at the tables*' (14.225sd) allows for an undefined period of game-play which in production would be limited by time and audience considerations. Black Will is waiting keenly for his cue, 'Now I can take you'. Bloom states that the murderers 'anxiously wonder if Mosby will ever manage to take one of Arden's men and speak the code phrase', Black Will complaining, 'Can he not take him yet? What a spite is that?' (14.226).[110] The impatience of the characters is designed to generate tension amongst the playgoers. Although most would be familiar with the method of play in which hits are frequent, it matters not that they cannot see the board; they need only listen. Arden and Mosby's game is scripted; it is created by the dialogue. We need to pay attention to the words, not the game board we cannot possibly see. As Gurr observes, 'verbal tropes and quibbles are quicker of access when listening is a more natural habit than reading', as it was in the period.[111] Mosby needs an ace; he states, 'One ace, or else I lose the game' (14.230). We know from Arden's exclamation, 'Marry, sir, there's two for failing' (14.231), that instead he rolls two aces. Mosby's roll of not one, but two aces gives the audience coded information: two aces, or 'amsace', was the lowest possible throw at dice and symbolized worthlessness, bad luck or misfortune.[112] The contemporary audience would be alert to the numerological significance of this throw. Philosophising through numerology has passed out of use, but it was used by several poets of the period, most notably Spenser.[113] The significant numbers in this case are 'one' and 'two' and they are used in an almost identical way to the Pythagorean import of Spenser's Una and Duessa who represent, respectively, truth and falsehood. The duplicitous Mosby is unable to throw a single ace, a one, the number of perfect unity, truth and virtue. Instead he throws a double, two aces which, just like Duessa's name, signify doubleness, falsehood and deceit. Of course Arden is as oblivious to the irony

[109] Jacoby and Crawford, *The Backgammon Book*, 93.
[110] Bloom, 'Games', 207. See also *Gaming the Stage*, 113.
[111] Gurr, *Playgoing*, 13.
[112] *OED*, ambs-ace, *n.* [1]. See use in Shakespeare's *All's Well that Ends Well*, ed. G.K. Hunter (London: Routledge, 1994): 'I had rather be in this choice, than throw Ames-ace for my life' (2.3.78).
[113] Works such as Spenser's *Epithalamion* which has 365 lines (a year) and 24 stanzas (a day) apply formal numerology (significance attaches to the numerical patterns of non-grammatical elements); Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* has been minutely gleaned to reveal its substantive number symbolism. The kisses, for instance, are meant to be counted. Fowler, *Spenser and the Numbers of Time*, states: 'it is no exaggeration to say that one can hardly begin to appreciate the form of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, or grasp its philosophical content, until one has read it numerologically', 249-250.

of his comment 'There's two for failing' (14.231) as Alice was to the irony of her allusion to Tisiphone. As Wine says, at various moments in the play nearly all characters 'use language without being aware of its "poetic" overtones of a greater, more meaningful world of order'.[114] The number symbolism here is surely deliberate. No other details of the game are given apart from this roll of the dice and the detail does not derive from the source text. Whilst today we may be unconversant with such Neoplatonism, as Alastair Fowler states 'the intelligent Elizabethan was accustomed to look for a meaning in all manner of formally applied numbers'.[115] In code, therefore, it means Arden's luck has changed and, no longer protected by Franklin, tableman Arden can be 'taken' as his false friend Mosby utters the code phrase to summon Black Will. Two aces retain this image of treachery and betrayal today in the slang term used by modern craps players, 'snake eyes'.[116]

The frontispiece of the third and last (1633) quarto of *Arden* is embellished by a woodcut of this moment and its immediate aftermath, the murder. See figure below. There has been some scholarship on the incorporation of woodcut illustrations into the title pages of plays, and their value and possible uses in terms of 'promotional, memorial, representational, narrative and rhetorical functions'.[117] Diane Jakacki concludes her article on Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* arguing that woodcuts not only 'offered a compelling distillation of the play's action and themes that served as a powerful marketing tool, whether at the point of sale as the visible cover of the quarto or nailed to a post as a promotional one-sheet', but that analysis of them makes it possible 'to reveal hitherto unrecognized clues about early modern drama in print and on stage'.[118] Bloom suggests that *Arden*'s iconic woodcut, not on the title page but alongside the play's opening lines, shows that 'the state of gameplay fascinated early playgoers' and feels that it 'shows readers something that playgoers would never have seen', the game board.[119] But although it is a fascinating historical treasure the illustration is not as accurate as she suggests. Whilst the illustrated board has the correct numbers of points and tablemen, all the latter are shown as white – it is not possible to tell whose they are. All are still distributed across the four tables, so neither player has started bearing off to end the game. It shows Black Will pulling Arden off his stool, but it cannot show Mosby both making the throw and leaping up to deliver the fateful blow with the pressing iron. The

[114] Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, lxxx.
[115] Fowler, *Spenser and the Numbers of Time*, 238.
[116] *OED*, snake, *n*, C4.a, Special combs., snake eyes, *n*.
[117] Diane K. Jakacki, '"Canst paint a doleful cry?": Promotion and Performance in the *Spanish Tragedy* Title-Page Illustration', *Early Theatre*, 13/1 (2010), 13-36 (15).
[118] Ibid, 31, 33.
[119] Bloom, 'Games', 208 and *Gaming the Stage*, 113-4.

woodcut shows him calmly seated and another male figure (Shakebag?) is stabbing Arden and a further male figure brandishes another large dagger as he enters the parlour. The illustration shows two females each also holding a dagger although, as R.A. Foakes points out, the text suggests that only Alice was present in this part of the scene and she says to Shakebag or Mosby, 'give me the weapon' (14.237). Foakes states that the 'woodcut is crude, and possibly attempts to show more than one moment in the action'.[120] He is tempted to wonder whether 'the woodcut represented Mosby twice, sitting at the table and stabbing Arden, and Alice also in two places', but as the costumes of the respective figures are so contrasted he concludes that it is simply inaccurate. Jakacki finds a 'triptych mode of information conveyance' in the Hieronimo sequence, with the 'most important information […] presented at the centre'.[121] *Arden*'s woodcut has a similar triptych impression, with Mosby on the right throwing the dice, a man rushing through a door on the left and the murder in the centre; the effect creates the impression of movement.

**Figure 13: Frontispiece of *The Lamentable and Trve Tragedy of Master Arden of Feversham in Kent*. (London: Printed by Eliz. Allde, 1633). RB56201, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.**

I believe there is one aspect of the woodcut which has particular emblematic significance: the two dice showing two aces. One's eyes are drawn to the board and the two dice with solitary 'pips' (as the dots are known), staring back like 'little black eyes' (as

[120] R.A. Foakes, *Illustrations of the English Stage 1580-1642* (London: Scholar Press, 1985), 136.
[121] Jakacki, 'Promotion and Performance', 9.

Middleton's Lucifer refers to dice) – Mosby's 'snake eyes', an emblem of the sinfulness at the heart of the story of *Arden*. As Alexander Leggatt notes, Arden is not killed while 'pissing against a wall' (2.98), an activity at which Black Will has threatened to kill him, 'He is gaming; and gaming is one of the first ideas associated with the love of Mosby and Alice'.[122] 'We might say', Leggatt continues, 'that throughout the play Arden has been winning a game of chance without even knowing he was playing it; and now at last his "holy luck" runs out'.[123]

The code word given, the murderers act and Arden is finally killed – strangled, hit with an iron and stabbed, with Alice adding her own knife wound. He is murdered in his own home where, as the patriarch, he should have been supreme and safe from attack. But here again is an analogy to Tables. Even whilst a player is bearing off men from the home table, he can still be forced to leave a blot exposed. Likewise, without Franklin, Arden is unprotected and is hit and removed from the board, his parlour, and dragged offstage. Tables, as Bloom states, is a game which 'teaches the skill of mastering space in the face of aggressive opponents'.[124] But in this Arden has failed, just as the cuckold has failed to govern his household and maintain his position of patriarchal superiority in his marriage partnership. He has allowed Mosby to 'usurp [his] room' (4.29). The popular and oft-quoted advice book, *A Godlie Forme of Householde Gouernment* (1598), describes the household as a 'little commonwealth' and warns, 'the husband that is not beloued of his wife, holdeth his goods in danger, his house in suspition, his credite in ballance, and also sometime his life in perill'.[125] In her discussion of household space Catherine Richardson relates how the scene:

> uses a considerable number of props to construct notions of hospitality and leisure – stools, a chair, playing tables etc. – but the impropriety of the characters' actions, which work against every social and moral precept which governs the room, serve radically to undermine its meanings.[126]

To my mind, rather than constructing the notion of 'hospitality and leisure', the playing tables (gaming and the connection with dice, a key framing device in the play) play a central role in constructing the notion of disorder in this house in Faversham and what happens when rules are broken.

Though Alice has finally achieved what she has so long wanted she finds that the death of 'Sweet Arden' (14.329) begins to torment her. The supper guests arrive – first Adam

[122] Leggatt, 'Arden of Faversham', *Shakespeare Survey*, 36 (1983), 121-33 (130).
[123] Ibid, 130.
[124] Bloom, 'Games', 205; see also Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 100.
[125] John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A Godlie Forme of Householde Gouernment* (printed at London for Thomas Man, 1598), 13, 169.
[126] Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy*, 121.

Fowle and Bradshaw, then Greene and finally Franklin, who now re-enters the metaphorical game having been 'single[d] out' by Greene till supper, as Mosby instructed. We might say that Greene effectively 'hits' tableman Franklin and sends him back to the start. The evening continues with Alice's countenance of innocence punctuated by sudden qualms, dissembled or real, until Franklin goes in search of Arden and eventually finds him 'murdered in most piteous case' (14.378). The blooded towel and knife, the indelibly stained parlour floor, and the footprints in the snow, back and forth from the house to the ground behind the Abbey where he was found, show that Arden was murdered in his own parlour. Ironically, it is Alice's request to see the body which reveals her personal guilt. When she looks upon Arden's corpse it suddenly begins to bleed. In horror she admits: 'This blood condemns me, and in gushing forth / Speaks as it falls and asks me why I did it' (16.5-6). The phenomenon of spontaneous cruentation, not mentioned in either prose account of Arden's murder, occurs also in Shakespeare's *Richard III* (c. 1593) when, in the presence of Richard (then Duke of Gloucester) 'dead Henry's wounds / Open their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh' (1.2.55-6).[127] As Mary Floyd-Wilson writes, there were varying theories to explain this preternatural occurrence: 'for providentialists, God orchestrates the scene to ensure that "murder will out". For natural philosophers (who vary on the details) the bleeding is "action-at-a-distance" produced by invisible emission circulating among those present'.[128] The latter seems to be Lady Anne's explanation in Shakespeare's play. She states: 'For 'tis thy presence that exhales this blood / From cold and empty veins, where no blood dwells' (1.2.58-9). The sense of divine purpose in *Arden* is made more manifest by Reede's curse that Arden be 'butchered by [his] dearest friends, / Or else be brought for men to wonder at' (13.35-6), both of which come true for, murdered by his friend and his wife:

> Arden lay murdered in that plot of ground
> Which he by force and violence held from Reede;
> And in the grass his body's print was seen
> Two years and more after the deed was done. (Epilogue, 10-13)

Arden's bodily shape is 'visible' in the ground because, according to Holinshed, 'the grasse did not grow where his bodie had touched: but betweene his legs, betweene his armes, and about the hollownesse of his necke'.[129] Holinshed's report bears witness to the tenacity of the belief in such phenomena. Moreover, Floyd-Wilson believes the reason the story of

[127] Shakespeare, *King Richard III*, ed. Antony Hammond (London: Methuen 1981).
[128] Mary Floyd-Wilson, '*Arden of Faversham*: tragic action at a distance' in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy*, eds Emma Smith, Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., *Cambridge Companions Online*, 2014), 188-199 (189).
[129] Holinshed in Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, 159.

Arden's murder is related by Holinshed is because of this inexplicable 'wonder', which, she records, is 'classified in the *Chronicles*' index among thirty or so other "wonders", including a child speaking strange speeches and a fish shaped like a man'.[130] Whilst divine intervention is not necessarily implied in *Arden*, the playwright/s exploit the source text's focus on this wonder. And it would be perfectly in keeping with contemporary beliefs if the game of Tables that Arden and Mosby play indeed fulfils the divinatory purpose of board games and reveals God's will that he dies. As Pennick states, 'the underlying belief which ascribes the outcome of games of chance to the goddess Fortuna, now more secularized into Lady Luck, is that the fall of the dice is not random, but under the direct control of Luck personified'.[131] Holinshed's final gloss highlights Arden's sins against Read's widow, 'God heareth the teares of the oppressed and taketh vengeance: note an example in Arden'.[132]

Moral order is restored in *Arden's* trial scene; justice prevails. All the players (a term applicable to both actors and gamesters) have been at a dangerous game. The game of Tables does not finish with an orderly bearing-off and a winner. Frances Dolan does not discuss gaming, but she points out that 'all of the characters' frenzied aspirations come to nothing, as the conspirators accomplish only their own deaths'.[133] All those involved, with the exception of the 'cunning man' (1.228) Clarke, are burnt at the stake, hanged or otherwise killed.[134] Arden, although a victim of murder, is 'presented as responsible for his disordered household' and the outline of his body in the ground reminded townsmen and visitors of the perils of domestic, and by extension, national misgovernment.[135] My theory that games reveal discord and error connects with the discourses on the didactic nature of domestic dramas. Conduct books such as *Godlie Forme* illustrate the parallels between husband and king, home and kingdom and the collapsing of the gap between the domestic and political. Dolan explains that it follows that a wife's murder of her husband or a servant's murder of his master was 'a kind of treason', and 'analogous to any threat to or assault on the sovereign'.[136] Arden has earlier argued with Franklin that Alice is 'rooted in her wickedness' and that 'Good counsel is to her as rain to weeds' (4.9-11). But it was his responsibility as 'king' in

[130] Floyd-Wilson, '*Arden of Faversham*: tragic action', 191. It is the only aspect of the event that is elaborated on in John Webster's account of the murder in *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (London, 1677). See also Floyd-Wilson, 192.
[131] Pennick, *Games of the Gods*, 32.
[132] Holinshed in Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, 159.
[133] Dolan, 'Petty Treason', 334.
[134] As detailed in the text (18.28-32 and Epilogue 4-7) Mosby and his sister are sent to London to be executed in Smithfield, Alice is burnt at the stake in Canterbury, Michael and Bradshaw 'suffer death' in Faversham. Black Will is burnt in Flushing, Shakebag is murdered in Southwark and Green is hanged at Osbridge.
[135] Dolan, 'Petty Treason', 330.
[136] Ibid, 317.

his home to 'instruct and order her minde', to 'diligently and courteously apply himselfe to weede out by little and little the noysome weeds out of her minde, both by holesome and godly precepts, and by Christian conuersation'.[137]

The murder story was later widely disseminated through a ballad, *The complaint and lamentation of Mistress Arden* (1633) which is headed by the same aforementioned woodcut.[138] The speaker is Alice and, up until the final six stanzas which summarize the punishments meted out, the ballad is in the first person, making it confessional in tone. Alice's lines end: 'For God our secret dealings soone did spy, / And brought to light our shamefull villany'.[139] The ballad follows *Arden* closely, including the fatal Tables game. Under its title is the instruction 'To the tune of, *Fortune my Foe',* one of John Dowland's melancholy settings for the lute. In the period ballad tunes became widely known, both at court and in the country. Lutenist Nigel North explains that:

> each ballad began its life as a tune with an accompanying story. The original tunes kept their names but during the course of time new stories were often set to the original ballad tunes. The ballad 'Fortune my foe' started out as a "Lover's complaint" but soon became the tune to which condemned people sang their last words before going to their death at the gallows.[140]

A tune which has ranged from a lover's complaint to one sung at the gallows is highly appropriate, as is the tune's title, *Fortune my foe*, given Alice's gamble with destiny and her use of two dice in her game of seduction.

The Tables game of the historical report is privileged as the play's central motif, while matters such as the irony of Arden meeting his death on Saint Valentine's Day are not even mentioned. The game's race around the tables is represented dramatically in the text. In each scene there is reinforcement of the idea of life as a game. *Angry Women* makes extensive use of the terms used in the game of backgammon whereas in *Arden* form and content come together in the congruence of the method of play and the action of the play. The dramatist/s do not just follow Holinshed but add characters to create pairs of players, particularly Franklin whose homosocial relationship protects Arden, and the movement of the game – its advances punctuated by hits and returns to the first point – can be seen mirrored in

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[137] Dod and Cleaver, *Godlie Forme,* 102.
[138] T.S.R. Boase considers the ballad to be the origin of the woodcut. See 'Illustrations of Shakespeare's Plays in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* 10 (1947), 83-108 (85). The ballad was part of a collection entered in the Stationers' Register on 8 July 1633. Reprints of the ballad appeared throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is appended to M. L. Wine's edition of *Arden* from which this information is cited. See Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, 164-170.
[139] *The complaint and lamentation of Mistress Arden* (1633), ll. 167-8, in Wine, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, 169.
[140] Nigel North (lute), CD inlay notes for Naxos CD *J. Dowland: Lute Music Vol. 4 (North) - The Queen's Galliard*, Naxos catalogue no. 8.570284.

the mutability of human nature. Attention is drawn to the pairs of players by paired phrases and parallels. The dramatist/s also add detail not mentioned in the prose histories, such as Arden's cruentation and the two aces that end the game, to exploit the divinatory kinship of Tables, offering evidence of contemporary views of providence and fate, still anchored to ancient beliefs that the throw of the dice was not random, but 'controlled by and accessing the will of the gods'.[141] Tables is shown to be a providential design to uncover wrong and reveal the players' fortune. Like the ancient Pharaohs who played for their destiny against the gods, Arden and Alice play for their destiny. Their foe is Fortune. The goddess controls the dice. They lose.

As with dice and cards, comedy and tragedy are both well served by the metaphor of Tables. With the game's circular track representing a span of time, variously interpreted as the twelve months of the year or the twenty-four hours of the day, and the imagery of the board, its points and playing pieces representing the body and the phallus, and thus sexual congress, Tables provides the site for very different contests between the sexes. The same game, at the opening of *The Two Angry Women of Abington* and as the climax of *Arden of Faversham*, provides the structure for the women's race to stop their husbands' plan for the marriage of their respective offspring in the comedy, a race which takes place over the course of one day and night, and the longer race, with repeated setbacks but an ultimately successful, fatal ending, that Alice Arden and Mosby play in their adulterous game to be rid of Arden.

Error is exposed in both sets of characters by the very mention of game, and the combination of luck and strategy in Tables aligns perfectly with the plots. Textually, too, the dramatists illustrate or imitate the two-player game: through rhyming couplets and the use of the game's terminology in innuendo in *Two Angry Women* and through repeated pairings of characters and words in *Arden*. Order or justice return at the end of both plays, mirroring the packing away of the pieces, dice and board when the final bearing-off has taken place, but in the tragedy there is an additional implicit understanding of the divinatory origins of the game.

[141] Pennick, *Games of the Gods*, 32.

# Five | CHESS

In this final chapter we are in familiar territory. The literature of Chess is vast and the game has been so widely played, and for so long, that, as H.J.R. Murray states, 'its idioms and technicalities have passed into the ordinary language of everyday life'.[1] This osmosis is manifest in literature, and it is in the medieval romance literature of France – works such as the Charlemagne romances and a medieval chivalric poem *Roman de la Rose* – that Murray finds mentions of Chess beginning to take on a 'definite part in the development of the story'.[2] The Chess passage in the latter can be seen to have inspired the parallel in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* (1369) (ll. 617-741) in which, as Nora Corrigan states, 'The Black Knight […] is both a player and a piece in Fortune's game; his lost *fers* [now called a 'queen' and here Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster] at once a chess piece, a prize, and a mortal woman'.[3] This same slippage between player, piece and stake occurs in the plays I discuss, but, whilst echoes of the use by Jacobus and Caxton of Chess as an emblem of an ordered society remain, the early modern period makes very sophisticated use of the other characteristics of this battle in which strategy replaces luck as the key to victory.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the oldest known name for Chess is *chaturanga*, meaning four arms in Sanskrit (from *chatur*, 'four', and *anga*, 'arms, branches'), the game representing the four parts, or arms, of the Indian army.[4] Its military origins, with overthrow of the opposing monarch the main aim, have made Chess a universal symbol of conquest. One might imagine, therefore, that its players were exclusively men, which is not so, or that as a metaphor it implied only manly courage, but in this two-player game the metaphoric conquest might be political or sexual, brutal or amorous, and victory is achieved through strategic skill rather than luck or sheer aggression. As Sonja Musser Golladay explains, fours are always connected with earthly matters (for example the four elements, four seasons, four winds and four cardinal points) and the geometrical equivalent is the square with its four sides and the cross with its four limbs. 'The cross is, of course, both the *homo quadratus* and Christianity's symbol of the crucifix as well as the foundation of most Western Church

[1] Murray, *Chess*, 25.
[2] Ibid, 736.
[3] Nora Corrigan, 'The Knight's Earnest Game in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*', in Patterson, ed., *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, 147-168 (155); Murray, *Chess*, 751.
[4] Musser Golladay, 'Historical, Artistic and Metaphysical Dimensions', 75, 91. Up until India's invasion by the army of Alexander the Great in 326 BC, the Indian army was composed of four different branches of troops: elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry. In addition there were the king (the *rajah*), and his counsellor (the *mantra*). See Pennick, *Games of the Gods*, 186.

architecture', she writes.[5] The boards of the classic games are square (often with smaller squares subdividing the main one, as with the chess board). Consequently, as we find with Tables, the board also comes to represent the human body with its four limbs.[6] As already noted, early modern writers were finely attuned to numerology and so, too, to the symbolism of the chess board, based on the sacred geometry of squares and crosses, and its ability to represent territories or a human body, or both simultaneously.

This chapter considers four plays, including *The Tempest* and *A Game at Chess.* Gina Bloom considers these two plays by the King's Men, drawing on Walter Benjamin's and Berthold Brecht's descriptions of Chess's 'temporality', which she describes as 'recursive temporality', to argue that Chess 'mobilizes theatregoers to query the Jacobean state's view of dynastic marriage by engaging them in a more polytemporal experience of time'.[7] My view, elucidated in close readings, is that Chess provides a multi-faceted emblem of the respective themes, intricately woven into the fabric of these plays and two others, *The Spanish Curate*, also in the repertory of the King's Men but unconnected to dynastic marriage, and the play in which Middleton first uses the Chess metaphor, *Women Beware Women,* where the staged game is played by two women, neither of whom are the subject of the metaphor.

## 'Foul play' and 'Fair play' in *The Tempest*

A distinct, mid-scene stage direction as *The Tempest* nears its conclusion reads: '*Here Prospero discovers Ferdinand and Miranda, playing at chess*' (5.1.171sd).[8] This is Shakespeare's only game scene alluded to in stage directions and his only direct mention of Chess.[9] As Bryan Loughrey and Neil Taylor state, the predominant critical view is that Chess was the natural choice of recreation for the Neopolitan Prince and his betrothed owing to its 'traditional associations with the nobility and the conventions of courtly love'.[10] H.H. Furness

[5] Musser Golladay, 'Historical, Artistic and Metaphysical Dimensions', 1059.
[6] Note also the four ages of man, the four humours.
[7] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 146.
[8] References taken from *The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
[9] Loughrey and Taylor state there are possible allusions in a few other plays and in various instances of mate. Bryan Loughrey and Neil Taylor, 'Ferdinand and Miranda at Chess', *Shakespeare Survey* 35, 113-118 (113). Gina Bloom briefly discusses *King John*'s possible reference to Chess: 'Thy bastard shall be king / That thou mayst be a queen and check the world' (2.1.122-23), Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 169-171.
[10] Loughrey and Taylor, 'Ferdinand and Miranda', 114.

pointed out additionally that Naples was known at this time as the centre of chess-playing, thus providing a particular appropriateness to the representation of Ferdinand as a chess-player.[11] Although neither of these points, nor the superiority of Chess over games of chance, particularly dicing, is in doubt, its literary tradition, particularly the medieval romances such as *Huon of Bordeaux*, *Tristan*, and *Lancelot*, provides us with too many examples of Chess as a pretext for flirtation, seduction and sexual congress for us to accept its symbolism as a marker of nobility as either the sole or predominant reason for the game's placement here.[12] Miranda says, 'Sweet lord, you play me false' (5.1.172), and contradicts his denial with, 'Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle, / And I would call it fair play' (5.1.174-75). William Poole suggests it may be excessive to 'suspect that the wager here can *only* be Miranda's virginity', but the sexual overtones of Miranda's lines are clear.[13] I propose, contradicting the first clause of Stephen Orgel's categorical statement that 'Miranda is certainly accusing Ferdinand of cheating, and is declaring her perfect complicity in the act',[14] that her accusation refers not so much to any incorrect movement of the chessmen on the board on Ferdinand's part, but to his amorous attentions and the improper moves of his wandering hands at play off the board. I concur with Orgel, however, that she is in perfect complicity. Prospero has had to warn Ferdinand several times to stay his ardour, using the antonym of false: 'Look thou be *true*; do not give dalliance / Too much the rein' (4.1.51; my italics) and whilst Ferdinand may not intend to go as far as to 'break her virgin-knot' (4.1.15) before marriage, caresses and other demonstrations of desire are clearly welcomed by Miranda. This extra-curricular 'wrangling' is a game which Miranda would be happy to lose, just as Shakespeare's Juliet conflates game with sexual congress and yearns, 'And learn me how to lose a winning match, / Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods' (3.2.12-13).[15] There are countless references to 'false play' in the drama of the period which refer much less obliquely to illicit sexuality, such as Portia's suggestion that the mother of her horse-mad suitor in *The Merchant of Venice* 'played false with a smith', as mentioned in the previous chapter. References to this vein of false play often occur during an actual game to provide double-entendre, as in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* when Frankford, just warned that his house guest is cuckolding him, addresses the offender with: 'I must look to you, master

[11] H.H. Furness, ed., *The Tempest*, New Variorum edition (Philadelphia, 1892), 250-1.
[12] See Murray, *Chess*, 736-755.
[13] William Poole, 'False Play: Shakespeare and Chess', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 55/1 (2004), 50-70 (66).
[14] Orgel, ed., *The Tempest*, 30.
[15] Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Weiss.

Wendoll, for you will be playing false – nay, so will my wife too' (8.135-36).[16] Bloom is one to insist that cheating occurs and that the spectacle of cheating at Chess is 'a way of critiquing the Jacobean state, and particularly its narrative of dynastic marriage'.[17] I find the interpretation that Miranda means cheating at Chess too literal, especially as cheating is almost impossible because every move is visible to both players and tampering with pieces has no effect.[18] Playgoers would not be able to see actual chess pieces on a board no matter on what part of *The Tempest*'s stage chess-play is 'discovered'; they would, however, be able to see Ferdinand moving away from his chess-playing position across the board and making improper moves on Miranda herself, and enjoy the joke. The late eighteenth century engraving below, although it cannot be considered a theatrical representation, illustrates my point. The kingdoms at stake in the game become conflated with her bodily territories.

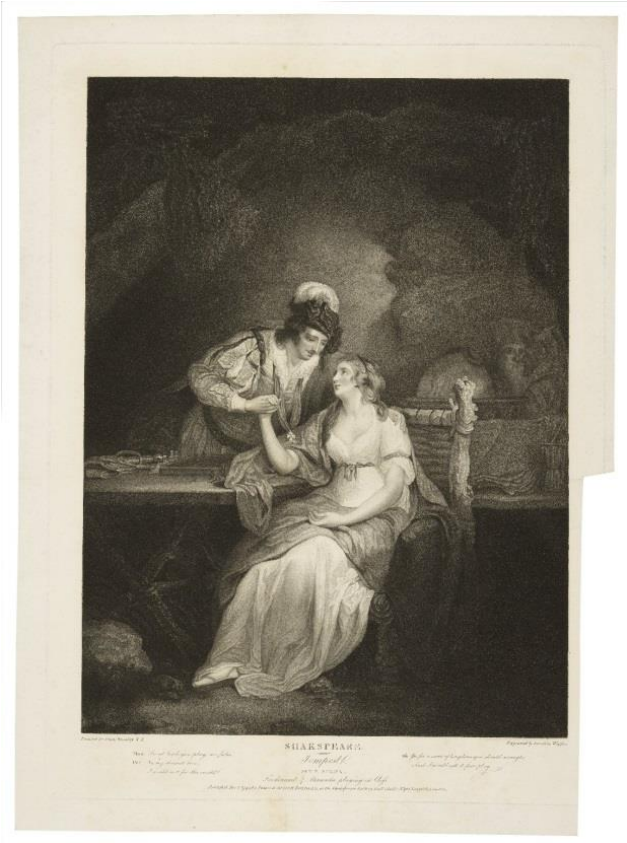


**Figure 14: *The Tempest,* Act V, scene 1, Ferdinand and Miranda playing at chess. Painted by Francis Wheatley; engraved by Caroline Watson, 1795. Image 29804, Folger Shakespeare Library.**

[16] Scobie, ed., *A Woman Killed with Kindness.*
[17] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage*, 146.
[18] I also find unconvincing R.F. Fleissner's argument for 'stalemate' in 'The Endgame in *The Tempest*', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 21/3 (Summer 1985), 331-5.

Moreover, Miranda wishes to surrender to Ferdinand, just as, in the thirteenth-century *Huon de Bordeaux*, King Ivoryn's daughter falls in love and although an expert chess-player, deliberately allows herself to be checkmated knowing that Duke Huon's prize for the tournament is to 'haue her one nyght in [his] bed'.[19] In the medieval tale the woman's desire is 'checked' because the chivalrous Christian, Huon, who wins the game, releases King Ivoryn from the wager. The punning on 'mate' or 'mating' and 'check' are offered, of course, by the term 'checkmate'.[20] Mate, in particular, is well used. Shakespeare's management of Chess as a metaphor in *The Tempest* is more subtle and extensive.

The above deals with the romantic game, or what Miranda calls 'fair play' (5.1.175), but Chess is a multi-faceted emblem and although it is only a brief scene, the Chess game operates on several planes and the political dimension is even more significant, as Loughrey and Taylor and others suggest. Margaret Jones-Davies has brilliantly surmised that the eight verse lines are a calligram of Chess, a board in words. She points out that from immediately below Shakespeare's original stage direction cited earlier 'the passage is made up of exactly sixty-four words divided into two equal parts of thirty-two words due to the caesura [at] line 175 (after 'fair play'): as many words as there are squares on a chess board'.[21] As Jones-Davies notes, the caesura also divides the calligram into two dimensions, the 'battles of love and politics', the sexually charged banter between the two lovers, and the confrontation between Alonso and Ferdinand:

MIRANDA Sweet Lord, you play me false.
FERDINAND No my dearest love,
I would not for the world.
MIRANDA Yes, for a score of Kingdoms, you should wrangle,
And I would call it fair play. [*32 words*]
ALONSO If this prove
A vision of the island, one dear son
Shall I twice lose.
SEBASTIAN A most high miracle!
FERDINAND Though the seas threaten, they are merciful.
I have cursed them without cause. [*32 words*] (5.1.172-79)

[19] See Murray, *Chess*, 738. Furness, ed. *The Tempest* cites George Steevens: 'Shakespeare might not have ventured to engage his hero and heroine at this game had he not found Huon de Bourdeaux and his Princess employed in the same manner', 249.
[20] The courtesan Lamilia in Robert Greene's tract, *Greenes, Groats-worth of witte* (London, imprinted for William Wright, 1592) proposes a game of Chess between her and signior Lucanio, explaining that it is a game 'that the first daunger is but a checke, the worst, the giuing of a mate'. Her brother Roberto quips: 'the game yee haue beene at already then, for you checkt him first with your beauty, & gaue your selfe for mate to him by your bounty', 'Robertoes Tale', D3$^{r}$. See Williams, *Dictionary of Sexual Language*, Vol. 1, 234.
[21] Margaret Jones-Davies, 'The Chess Game and Prospero's Epilogue in *The Tempest', Notes and Queries* 62/1 (2015), 118-120, 118.

Here editors insert a stage direction not present in the Folio stating that Ferdinand kneels before Alonso, his father, king of Naples. This he most likely does as in his next utterances Alonso bids Ferdinand 'Arise' (5.1.181) and blesses him.[22] As Jones-Davies remarks, 'Throughout the play Ferdinand has been under the illusion that, his father being dead, he was the legitimate king'.[23] 'Myself am Naples, / Who with mine eyes, never since at ebb, beheld / The King my father wrecked' (1.2.435-37), he has declared. The chess board on which two kings confront one another is therefore an emblem of the island where, now, the illusory king Ferdinand meets the real king Alonso.[24] And as in Chess, at the end of the game only one king can remain; the other surrenders, as does Ferdinand here, kneeling before his father. Surrender of power is one of the key motifs of the play and this Chess surrender immediately follows Alonso's surrender of Milan back to Prospero and the latter's promise to abjure magic.

As Poole notes, this calligram 'cannot be registered on the stage'.[25] This is no reason to be sceptical of Jones-Davies's theory, however. There are many such 'number games' in early modern works, whether recognised by contemporaries or not, that demonstrate their authors' sub-textual intentions and the fascination of the period with numerology and Pythagorean concepts of the universe. These are demonstrated in studies such as Alastair Fowler's *Spenser and the Numbers of Time*. Fowler analyses the number symbolism running through many poetic works including Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* in which, he states, even the kisses should be counted, but particularly the intricacy of Spenser's *The Fairie Queene* in which there is 'numerological significance in the line-, stanza-, canto-, and book-totals, in the location of these units, and even in the numbers of characters mentioned in each episode'.[26] As Fowler states, 'the intelligent Elizabethan was accustomed to look for a meaning in all manner of formally applied numbers'.[27] Games as microcosms of life connect with this ludic milieu and Shakespeare's clever and discreet textual representation of Chess shows that the game is a vital and explicit metaphor of the plot's political game and power-play, not merely demonstrative of the couple's princely status and wooing.

[22] I acknowledge that Ferdinand is probably sitting or kneeling to play Chess.
[23] Jones-Davies, 'The Chess Game', 118.
[24] Jones-Davies, 'L'Echiquier et Médée: Deux Points de Controverse dans *The Tempest', Etudes Anglaises,* 46/4 (1993), 447-451 (448 - my translation).
[25] Poole, 'False Play', 1.
[26] Fowler, *Spenser and the Numbers of Time*, 4. Epics were in twelve books because they imitated the entire zodiac of life.
[27] Ibid, 238.

When games appear in plays they always do so at critical junctures but in *The Tempest* it is possible that additionally the dramatist plays with a feature of the early modern stage known today as the 'discovery space', the central opening at the rear of the stage which can be hidden by curtains that are pulled away to 'discover' a surprise event, object or moment, such as the chess-playing lovers here. Even if this is discounted, the stage direction is highly accurate because once Prospero 'discovers' the game within the play, one discovery leads to another as Ferdinand 'discovers', in real life mimicry of the chess term 'check by discovery', that he is not yet king; his father not being drowned after all, and Miranda exclaims 'O wonder! / How many goodly creatures are there here!' (5.1.181-82) as she discovers a 'brave new world' (5.1.183) opening before her, and her position in the hierarchy. Loughrey and Taylor discuss this as a 'kind of discovered mate', concluding, as I do, that the Chess game 'presents in miniature the pattern of the entire play'.[28] Now we can see that Ferdinand has indeed, unwittingly, been playing 'false' with her in the wider political game, claiming to be King of Naples and able to 'make [her] / The Queen' (1.2.449-50). Synonymous with discovery, 'wonder' has been another central theme from the outset, signified by Miranda's name. It derives from the Latin *mirandus,* meaning admirable, wonderful, and its earliest use as a female first name is generally attributed to Shakespeare. We learn her name in the first scene (1.2), before we learn his, as the thaumaturge (worker of miracles) reassures his daughter that no-one has been killed in the terrible shipwreck she has just witnessed and starts to tell his wondrous tale of usurpation, extirpation and preservation. Contemporary playgoers, accustomed to allegorical names, would understand the word-play operating when Ferdinand first meets Miranda, whose name *he* does not yet know. He urgently asks if she is a maid or not, interrupting his question with the exclamation 'O you wonder!' (1.2.427), to which she replies, 'No wonder Sir, / But certainly a maid' (1.2.428-29). Prospero, who, as Anthony Dawson notes, has arranged their meeting, 'discovering' Ferdinand to Miranda in his game of Realpolitik, has commanded her not to reveal her name to the young prince. A little later that day she lets it slip, however, and he immediately understands its derivation, commenting 'Admired Miranda, / Indeed the top of admiration' (3.1.37-8). As J.V. Cunningham explains, 'the literal meaning of admiration in the Renaissance – it is the meaning of the Latin word *admiratio* – is "wonder"'. Wonder was a motive for learning, a philosophy espoused by Aristotle, and, closely associated with tragic

[28] Loughrey and Taylor, 'Ferdinand and Miranda', 117.

woe, an effect proper to tragedy.[29] Cunningham explains that wonder is 'the natural effect of a marvellous story' and he considers that Shakespeare 'uses almost the full range of meanings which are to be found in the tradition', not just in tragedies such as *Hamlet*, but in comedy too.[30]

It is not only Ferdinand who finds wonder on the island. Gonzalo sums up the amazement felt by all as he states, 'All torment, trouble, wonder and amazement / Inhabits here' (5.1.104-5). The wonder of the various parties is, to date, at its most extreme in the banquet and the majestic vision of the masque. Alonso still imagines that he has suffered the tragic loss of his son and Prospero leads him to believe that he too has suffered 'like loss' (5.1.143) and lost a daughter. But now, having stage-managed all the day's wonder-full events, he plans to change his former enemy's woe to wonder with the 'discovery' that Ferdinand is not drowned but instead is matched (if not yet mated) with Prospero's own daughter, Miranda. As David Lindley states, 'in terms that echo masquing vocabulary', he announces that he will 'bring forth a wonder to content ye / As much as me my dukedom' (5.1.170-71).[31] Wonder was crucial to the learning experience of the masque with its myths, miracles and metamorphoses and, as Lindley adds, this final scene 'plays with the masque's clima[c]tic moment of disclosure',[32] the moment of transformation, which Gonzalo's words summarize succinctly:

> In one voyage
> Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis,
> And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife
> Where he himself was lost, Prospero his dukedom
> In a poor isle, and all of us ourselves
> When no man was his own. (5.1.208-13)

It is, as Jones-Davies states, the Chess game that marks the end of the magic and the discovery of true knowledge.[33] In the medieval period Chess was used to represent, in microcosm, an ordered and hierarchical society. Paradoxically therefore, as Loughrey and Taylor state, this game of war is both a symbol of conflict and a symbol of harmony.[34] Another way of looking at this is to note, with Anthony Dawson, that it 'transposes the

[29] J.V. Cunningham, *Woe or Wonder: The Emotional Effect of Shakespearean Tragedy* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1960), 63, 60.
[30] Ibid, 87.
[31] David Lindley, ed., *The Court Masque* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 54.
[32] Ibid, 54.
[33] Jones-Davies, 'L'Echiquier', 449.
[34] Loughrey and Taylor, 'Ferdinand', 115.

experience of war and conflict into play'.[35] It is at the precise moment of its placement in *The Tempest* that order is restored to the hierarchies of Milan and Naples and we see that whilst the staged game has been between Ferdinand and Miranda, the wider, metaphorical Chess match, played for real kingdoms, has been between their elders, Prospero and Alonso/Antonio. As Suzanne Gossett suggests, Miranda is Prospero's pawn, though she does not know it, nor suffer for it. Gossett explains that 'Daughters of royal houses were raised to expect that they would be pawns in an international alliance market'.[36] Miranda, however, was not raised as royalty and has no knowledge of her role in her father's political game. Although Prospero engineers the romance, Miranda imagines she has made the choice herself – even that she defies her father. Ferdinand's sister, Claribel, on the other hand, is, prior to the play's opening, forced by obedience to marry the King of Tunis despite her father, Alonso, being 'kneeled to and importuned otherwise / By all of us, and the fair soul herself' (2.1.126-27). We never meet Claribel so our sympathies are not fully aroused, our focus being Miranda. As Gossett says, in this play 'Shakespeare presents his most extensive dramatic solution to the problem of the royal marriage, using a variety of techniques to blur the distinction between political arrangement and personal love'.[37] It should perhaps be noted at this juncture that records suggest that in Shakespeare's lifetime the only two productions of *The Tempest* were at the Jacobean court: 'presented at Whitehall before the kings Maiestie' in 1611 and a year and a half later as part of the celebrations of the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to Frederick V, the Elector of Palatine.[38]

I find Chess to be a fully integrated emblem of the island and the play's main themes, which include foul play and fair play, wonder and discovery, surrender of power and the re-establishment of order. Chess symbolizes all these. The island and its magic circle have effectively been what Johan Huizinga would call a 'playground' within the ordinary world in which a game takes place, a space 'isolated, hedged round, hallowed, within which special rules obtain', and 'dedicated to the performance of an act apart'.[39] Prospero's game has been to right the wrongs of 'foul play', a re-match in a sense. In the play's first scene on the island, following the tempest, as Prospero commences to tell Miranda their tale, the theme of foul play is announced in the exchange between them:

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[35] Anthony Dawson, *Indirections: Shakespeare and the Art of Illusion* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 156.
[36] Suzanne Gossett, '"I'll Look to Like": Arranged Marriages in Shakespeare's Plays', *Sexuality and Politics in Renaissance Drama*, eds Carole Levin and Karen Robertson (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 57-70 (57).
[37] Gossett, 'Arranged Marriages', 67.
[38] See Orgel, ed., *The Tempest*, 1.
[39] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 10.

MIRANDA O, the heavens!
What foul play had we that we came from thence?
Or blessed was't we did?
PROSPERO Both, both, my girl.
By foul play, as thou sayest, were we heaved thence,
But blessedly holp hither. (1.2.59-63)

The gaming analogy is amplified by Prospero's explanation that his ambitious brother, Antonio, wished 'To have no screen between this part he played / And him he played it for' (1.2.107-8). 'Foul play' as the obverse of fair play is thematic; Antonio, Alonso and Sebastian's prior foul play is followed by Antonio and Sebastian's impetuous decision to murder Alonso and Gonzalo as they sleep, and the 'foul conspiracy' (4.1.139) of Caliban and his confederates to club Prospero to death in his cell. Moreover the black and white of the board and pieces can be seen as a symbol of the dichotomy of foul and fair play and indeed the antitheses of the characters. But Chess does more extensive work yet; it has offered an occasion for royal flirtation, with gaming language masking amorous exchanges, as Alonso surely does not miss, remarking 'What is this maid, with whom thou wast at play?' (5.1.185); it has provided the background imagery for a 'check by discovery', a feature of Chess which we will later see Middleton deploy more transparently, and a self-promoted monarch surrendering the crown of kingship back to its happily surviving owner; and the game's oppositional dimension and final surrender have provided an overarching metaphor for Alonso and Antonio's resignation of the dukedom of Milan back to Prospero – and indeed their lack of choice in the matter – and the restoration of a proper world order.

## 'Vengeance met vengeance in a set match' – *Women Beware Women*

The outcome of the Chess match in this next play is very much less harmonious. *Women Beware Women* has accumulated substantial criticism and although few commentators fail to praise the Chess game in Middleton's tragedy, equally few explore its depths and link it to the final masque.[40] The game is far from being merely an 'episode'; it is my contention that when a game is mentioned in a source text it is appropriated and amplified; and if a game is specifically written into the text through the dramatist's invention, as here, it is a purposeful

[40] See Taylor and Loughrey, 'Middleton's Chess Strategies in *Women Beware Women'*, *SEL*, 24/2 (1984), 341-354; John Potter, '"In Time of Sports": Masques and Masking in Middleton's *Women Beware Women*', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 18/4 (1982), 368-383; and Anthony Dawson, '*Women Beware Women* and the Economy of Rape', *SEL*, 27/2 (1987), 303-320.

device, not just for local colour. As always, it is dramatic shorthand for error, but the game's methodology and themes reverberate throughout, though the rules and boundaries are slippery. The Royal Shakespeare Company may have felt similarly for, according to John Jowett, the set of their 1969 production was a chess board, with a large statue of Venus, to emphasise the sexual manoeuvrings.[41] Chess, requiring power (in the piece) and strategy (in the player) is the perfect analogy for the courtly game of power, politics and passion permeating *Women Beware Women* and although the enactment of a Chess game is in 2.2 only, the theme of game is omnipresent. I believe it is possible to read the early scenes as the preliminary stages of a larger game of Chess and the masque as its bizarre end and checkmate, provided we read 'playfully'.[42]

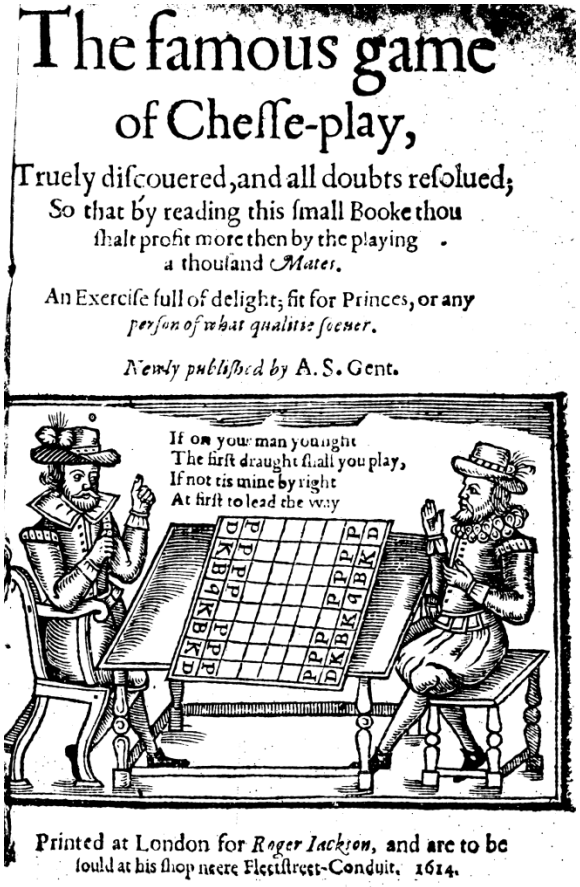
The famous game
of Cheſſe-play,
Truely diſcouered, and all doubts reſolued;
So that by reading this ſmall Booke thou
ſhalt profit more then by the playing
a thouſand *Mates*.
An Exerciſe full of delight; fit for Princes, or any
*perſon of what qualitie ſoeuer.*
*Newly publiſhed by* A. S. Gent.
If on your man you ought
The firſt draught ſhall you play,
If not tis mine by right
At firſt to lead the way
Printed at London for *Roger Iackſon*, and are to be
ſould at his ſhop neere Fleetſtreet-Conduit. 1614.

**Figure 15: Title page of Arthur Saul's *The famous game of Chesse-play* (1614). RB 69227 Huntington Library, San Marino, California.**

[41] John Jowett, ed., *Women Beware Women* in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, 1488-1541 (1488). Textual references are from this edition.
[42] Thomas Karshan states that to '"read playfully" is to remain sensitive to the ironies and multiple possible interpretations of a literary work' and become what Nabokov calls a 'co-author', *Vladimir Nabokov and the Art of Play* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 204, cited in Scham, *Lector Ludens*, endnotes, 329.

Chess is a conflict between black pieces and white pieces placed in squares which Arthur Saul's treatise (see Fig. above) terms 'houses of the field'.[43] In the game's initial stage pawns are the first pieces to move and one player's early moves are often mirrored by the opposing player. The structure of early modern drama lends itself to this pattern and the first four scenes of *Women Beware Women* alternate between two 'houses', Leantio's home (1.1 and 1.3) and what is presumably Livia's house (1.2 and 2.1). Although, tantalisingly, Bianca is not named until Act 3, preventing her yet being readily identifiable as a 'white' pawn, it is plausible that the contemporary audience would know the real story of Bianca Capella. In retrospect we can consider hers the white side. The first move of this inexperienced woman/pawn on her journey across the chess board of life is her elopement with Leantio, of which we hear in the play's opening lines. The factor's self-confessed theft of his bride means that she forfeits a dowry and social distinction and Leantio's mother rebukes her son for this, using the phrase 'give way to a check' (1.1.57). As Jowett's gloss notes, 'check', here meaning 'rebuke', consciously or subconsciously 'suggests the chess term, anticipating 2.2'.[44] This unwise move is then mirrored as the pawn in the other house – Isabella, also as yet unnamed – is moved, or 'tendered' (1.2.9), as a wife to Guardiano's ridiculous Ward. It is soon apparent that there is cunning in this second house, the obvious black side in Middleton's binary motif of innocence and duplicity. Guardiano intends to control his pawns to ensure personal financial gain. His demand 'let's have fair play' (1.2.2) is not only highly ironic, but shows that he is playing a game or playing *in* a game, for the slippage between player, piece and stake is continual, especially in 2.2.

Although Isabella's aunt, Livia, does not support the idea that Fabritio can compel her niece to love, her suggestion that 'one may / Enquire at three years' end amongst young wives / And mark how the game goes' (1.2.35-7) acknowledges the 'game of love'. The boorish Ward might be a pawn in his guardian's strategic game but he is also characterised by his own partiality to less cerebral and more physical battling games, heavy in phallic imagery. Christopher Ricks, who rightly identifies 'game' as one of Middleton's 'key-words' in this play, posits that the Ward's games 'fit the play not only because of their aptness for innuendo, but also because sensual pleasure is itself a game or a sport'.[45] Here I interject a Huizinga theory that it is not the act of copulation, but 'rather the road thereto', that conforms

[43] Arthur Saul, *The famous game of Chesse-play, Truely discouered* (printed at London for Roger Iackson, 1614), A5$^{v}$.
[44] Jowett, ed., *Women Beware Women*.
[45] Christopher Ricks, 'Word-Play in *Women Beware Women*, *Review of English Studies*, 12/47 (1961), 238-250 (245-6).

to ‘formal characteristics’ of play and that terms ‘play’ or ‘game’ are ‘reserved for erotic relationships falling outside the social norm’.[46] These are the predominant games we find in *Women Beware Women*. The Ward is totally absorbed when playing – he states, ‘When I am in game I am furious […] I think of nobody when I am in play, I am so earnest’ (1.2.99, 101-2) and afterwards he is sexually aroused.[47] The Ward is an extreme example but other characters, the Duke, Hippolito, Guardiano and especially Livia, are also ‘furious’ when caught up in game. Huizinga explains the general psychology of the competitive impulse: ‘a player wants to “succeed” by his own exertions […] to achieve something difficult, to succeed, to end a tension’.[48] When Hippolito is desolate – he has confessed to Isabella his incestuous desire for her and, shocked, she has forsworn his company, horrified that ‘blood that should be love is mix’d with lust’ (1.2.230) – Livia relishes the challenge ahead, swearing, ‘I would that love of yours were pawn’d to’t, brother, / And as soon lost that way as I could win’ (2.1.34-5). She both anticipates victory and considers that the harder the task ‘the more glory / When the work’s finished’ (2.1.56-7). She leads Isabella to believe that she is the issue of a secret liaison and not Fabritio’s progeny and consequently owes no filial obedience. She even makes her promise not to tell Hippolito. Like a good move in Chess, this technical manoeuvre in the plot achieves several aims: Isabella informs Hippolito that she will marry the Ward, but the hints of her carnal appetite, and that the marriage will be a veil for adultery, are unmistakable to him.

Over on the white side, Leantio is reluctant to interrupt his marital pleasures and go off to work: ‘game / In a new married couple’ he says, ‘spoils all thrift, and indeed lies a-bed / To invent all the new ways for great expenses’ (1.3.9-12). His reference to ‘game’, referring to sexual pleasure, will be echoed and re-echoed throughout the Chess game in 2.2. In our wider game Leantio, white piece or gamester, makes an error.[49] He attempts to keep his pawn ‘cas’d up from all men’s eyes’ (1.1.170) when the rules of Chess (and of life) demand: ‘You muste goe abroade wyth your pieces, and not keep them enclosed’.[50] His wife moves herself further across the metaphorical chess board when she and his Mother watch the ‘Duke and

[46] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 43. This is consolidated by quotations in *OED*. See ‘game’, *n.* 4.a & b.
[47] Timbrell, who argues that ‘Games and gaming became a surrogate by which men could both achieve conquest and display their abilities at dominating their opponents’, includes this phrase in the title of his thesis: ‘“When I am in game, I am furious”: Gaming and Sexual Conquest in Early Modern English Drama’.
[48] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 10-11.
[49] Potter (‘Masques and Masquing’, 371) reads Leantio as the White King. Taylor and Loughrey (‘Middleton’s Chess Strategies’, 350) suggest a need to look outside the play for this ‘saintish’ king.
[50] Damiano, da Odenara, *The pleasaunt and vvittie playe of the cheasts renewed*, set forth in English by Iames Rowbothum (printed at London by Roulande Hall for Iames Rowbothum, 1562), B2$^{r}$.

State' (1.3.83) make their annual procession to St Mark's. Catching sight of the princely figure, she has the impression: 'Did not the Duke look up? Methought he saw us' (1.3.105).

The game of Chess that I see already under way now moves to the middle of the board where the real contest takes place as the more valuable and powerful chessmen come into play. Pieces such as the rook cannot move until the pawns have moved into further 'houses'. The Duke has been in raptures about the beautiful face he spied at the window and has spoken of her to Guardiano, who sees 'much worth in wealth and favour / To those should work his peace' (2.2.22-3). Livia is quick to take up the challenge and perform the role of procuress, stating:

> And if I do't not,
> Or at least come as near it (if your art
> Will take a little pains and second me)
> As any wench in Florence of my standing,
> I'll quite give o'er, and shut up shop in cunning. (2.2.23-7)

They will operate together in the attack like two chessmen attacking one square and Guardiano anticipates success. He uses a dicing metaphor for his previous successes in such liaisons, boasting: 'I have had a lucky hand these fifteen year / At such court-passage with three dice in a dish' (2.2.42-3). 'Passage' was played by two players with three dice and here there is a clear association between gaming pieces and people – the three dice in Guardiano's concept are the three parties to such affairs, himself included.

Livia first lures Leantio's Mother, charged with guarding the young beauty, from home and then suggests a game of 'chess, or draughts' as a 'trick' (2.2.187) to keep her occupied. Unaware of Livia's underlying strategy the Mother makes an unwise move and admits that she has left a gentlewoman, 'wife to [her] son' (2.2.212) alone at home. Livia feigns disbelief and another fatal advance occurs: a messenger is sent to move, or cause to move, the unprotected stranger. Invited to sit and watch the 'quarrel' (2.2.262), as Livia terms the game, with hints of the violence to come, Bianca's response, 'methinks there's men enough to part you, lady' (2.2.264), already suggests that the women are Queens on the chess board, with chessmen between them, rather than merely 'two weak and tedious gamesters' (2.2.268). And Livia's response, 'Ho! But they set us on, let us come off / As well as we can' (2.2.265-66) confirms that she envisages herself on the board, beset by chessmen. As Taylor and Loughrey suggest, Livia is the (black) chess Queen.[51] As with the Chess Queen, her role as the Duke of Florence's 'quean' gives her power in the male-dominated world. Towards the

[51] Taylor and Loughrey, 'Middleton's Chess Strategies', 349.

end of the fifteenth century the medieval moves of the Queen and Bishop were changed to those they are today, giving the two pieces greatly enhanced powers. Murray states:

> the Queen, originally far weaker than Rook or Knight, and only a little stronger than the Bishop, [became] practically twice as strong as the Rook, the strongest piece in the older game'.[52]

Saul's treatise, Middleton's knowledge of which is acknowledged, states: 'at this game there is a generall, which is the Queene, for shee doth more seruice then any too Dukes can'.[53] Livia is the powerful general on and off the board, her allegiance to the black side confirmed when the Mother picks up the wrong King: 'Nay, nay, the black king's mine' (2.2.298), Livia states.

Guardiano makes his first move, suggesting that Livia set aside the game and instead show the young lady around her 'rooms and pictures' (2.2.272). Mimicking the moves and counter-moves of Chess, Livia makes the counter-proposal that Guardiano escort the visitor himself, showing her also 'the Monument' (2.2.276). Guardiano is identified as the allegorical rook of the black side when he accepts the task: the Mother remarks that as he spoke, 'there came a paltry rook / Full in my way and chokes up all my game' (2.2.291-92). That word 'game' again. As Ricks notes, it occurs *seven* times as the Mother and Livia use it repeatedly, ostensibly referring to the Chess game at which they play on the main stage, but in double-entendre (unconscious only on the part of the Mother) to the simultaneous sexual and metaphorical 'Chess' playing out *'above'* (2.2.309sd, 314sd) on the upper stage which the Duke of Florence aims to win.[54] As Leslie Thomson states, the use of the upper stage is unusual in the period's drama. In Whitehall's court masques it would be the gods and goddesses portrayed on high but, as Thomson says, Middleton uses it ironically, 'to emblematize and call attention to the disparity between what is and what should be in the fallen world of *Women Beware Women* – the Duke's world'.[55] The 'game' that spectators are encouraged to watch is the one on the gallery above, which gives visual form to the actual chess-play on the main stage, with Livia's commentary describing both.

As we know from Huizinga, every game has its stake and Bianca is here both pawn and stake.[56] Livia predicts:

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[52] Murray, *Chess*, 776.
[53] Saul, *The famous game of Chesse-play*, B8$^{v}$.
[54] ll. 289, 295, 297, 300, 303, 412, 418. Ricks, 'Word Play', 246.
[55] Leslie Thomson, '"Enter Above": The Staging of *Women Beware Women*', *SEL*, 26/2 (Spring 1986), 331-343 (333).
[56] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 50.

Here's a duke
Will strike a sure stroke for the game anon;
Your pawn cannot come back to relieve itself. (2.2.299-301)

'Duke' was an interchangeable contemporary term for the chess rook.[57] We know that the duke/rook who will strike a sure stroke in Livia's game is Guardiano, in whose strategy Livia has so much confidence that, despite the Mother's chess-playing skills, she is prepared to wager, claiming, 'I hold two ducats / I give you check and mate to your white king' (2.2.303-4). The interpolation of 'duke' at this moment, reinforced by the punning 'two ducats', reminds us of the actual duke, the lusty Duke of Florence, Livia's 'black King', who has yet to make a move. The chess King, almost completely dependent on the defensive and offensive abilities of lesser pieces, can move only one square at a time. This he does now. Bianca praises the exhibits saying, 'Mine eye nev'r met with fairer ornaments' (2.2.310), a cue to which Guardiano responds: 'There's a better piece' (2.2.313), vanishing as the Duke enters. 'O treachery to honour' (2.2.319), the previously unsuspecting, but now very wary, pawn exclaims, realizing her fatal move and what is at stake. That Bianca is trapped and 'cannot come back' is reflected, as all commentators note, in the rules of Chess.[58] Pawns are the only pieces that may not move backwards. Pawns can 'take' another piece, but only 'aslope' (diagonally) and 'Who so doth before them stand, / They have no power to kill'.[59] The Duke is directly in front of Bianca so she is powerless; indeed he must have his hands on her – she struggles, is twice told: 'strive not' (2.2.326, 328), and shouts. This only serves to arouse him further for he warns:

The lifting of thy voice is but like one
That does exalt his enemy who, proving high,
Lays all the *plots to confound* him that rais'd him' (2.2.335-37) (my italics)

He uses a phrase which directly links this scene to the moment in the masque when Hippolito realizes that Leantio's murder made them 'lay *plots to confound* each other' (5.1.189).

As the Duke leads Bianca away, focus reverts to the Chess game below and we hear Livia boast of her rook's success quite as if he is an embodiment of male power, not a piece

[57] N.W. Bawcutt, 'New Light on Middleton's Knowledge of Chess', *Notes and Queries*, 34/3 (1987), 301-2 shows that, certainly in *A Game at Chess*, Middleton can be seen quoting directly from Jo. Barbier's expanded version of Saul's treatise, printed in 1618, and that the dramatist probably made use of both the original and the revised versions of the book. It is in the 1618 version that 'Rooke' is used in place of the 1614 version's preference for 'Duke' (where the title page illustration labels the relevant square 'D'). It states: 'the Rooke is called of some the Duke; and their reason I suppose, because it is a piece next of worth in this play to the Queene', *The famous game of Chesse-play*, aug. Io Barbier (printed at London by Bar. Alsop for Roger Iackson, 1618), C3$^{v}$. When I cite from this version I will stipulate accordingly.

[58] Middleton's line is an almost direct quotation from Saul: 'A pawne is soone intrapped, because hee cannot goe backe to relieue himselfe', C5$^{r}$.

[59] Saul, *The famous game of Chesse-play*, A4$^{v}$.

moved by her hand: 'Did not I say my duke would fetch you over, widow?' (2.2.387). Adding 'my black king makes all the haste he can, too' (2.2.389), we are to understand that the Duke of Florence is the black King and, offstage, forced mating is underway. As Potter states, 'the mock violence of the chess game serves as a mask for the real violence, the rape'.[60] The Mother's retort: 'Well, madam, we may meet with him in time yet' (2.2.390) is not only ironic but also indicates that the game is ongoing; checkmate has not been called. Livia's revelation: 'I have given thee blind mate twice' (2.2.391) and the Mother's excuse that her 'eyes begin to fail' (2.2.392) has caused some controversy. Livia suggests that she could have called checkmate on two occasions but that neither player realized until after the Mother had moved and avoided danger. Taylor and Loughrey take issue with Paul Yachnin's impression that the 'technical meaning of a "blind mate" contradicts the sense of the scene' to contend that Middleton 'knew his chess and knew his dramaturgy', stating:

> Middleton not only understands this but takes the irony of blind mate a stage further. In *this* game the one who was mated is the blind one, unaware not only that she has been twice let off the hook by her opponent but, more importantly, unaware that Livia was *not* blind, knew what she was doing, and was doing it in order to prolong the game, so that the Mother should be blind to the seduction taking place above.[61]

To this I would add that there is a possible further layer of subtlety inferred from the term. Saul lists the 'diuersity of Mates, and which are worthy of praise, or disspraise',[62] stating first in his initial rhyme that 'A blind Mate, [is] a shameful mate',[63] and in prose that:

> A Darke Mate, or a blind-Mate is all one, for if a Mate be giuen, and hee which giueth it seeth it not, you may say it was darke, he wanted light, or hee was blinde, otherwise hee would haue seene it.[64]

Middleton is surely suggesting that, in moral terms, Livia has been both 'darke' and blind in deliberately prolonging the match but also that in this hierarchical society the Duke, the black King she serves, is most to blame. Here is Saul on the role of the Queen:

> 'Tis for the safegard of the King
> that she makes cleere the way,
> For this she may not blamed be,
> that seekes her King to saue,
> It is her glory for to striue
> her King in peace to haue.[65]

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[60] Potter, 'Masques and Masquing', 371.
[61] Taylor and Loughrey, 'Middleton's Chess Strategies', 343-4; See Paul Yachnin, 'A Game at Chess and Chess Allegory', *SEL*, 22/2 (1982), 317-330 (327).
[62] Saul, *The famous game of Chesse-play*, C3$^{r}$.
[63] Ibid, C3$^{v}$.
[64] Ibid, C7$^{v}$.
[65] Ibid, A5$^{r}$/A6$^{r}$.

When Guardiano descends to the gamesters, Livia and the Mother both utter the word 'game' again, Livia commenting that 'The game's ev'n at the best now' (2.2.409) and the Mother agreeing that, 'Yes, faith, madam', the duke/rook has 'done me all the mischief in this game' (2.2.414-15). These repetitions of 'game', and the five former occurrences during the Chess match, frame the rape and its allusions to sexual arousal, captivity and release, emphasising that one game stands for another. As Anthony Dawson states, 'the meaning of the chess game derives from our recognition of it as a sign of another sign'.[66] The aspects of domination and capture in Chess are conflated with sexual mastery and conquest.

When the defiled Bianca also descends, having seen 'The Monument and all' (2.2.450), she first curses then thanks her traitors, for intermingled with her shame is a new sense of empowerment. 'Sin and I'm acquainted, / No couple greater' (2.2.439-40), she states. In her journey across the board, this pawn has reached the first rank of the adversary – and under the rules of Chess has the privilege of being promoted:

> When he can procede so well in warre, as to arriue at the laste rancke of hys enemies, he is chosen and made the best piece of the playe, to wit, he is the Quene'.[67]

Suddenly Bianca's expectations are changed and she makes clear her discontent at the standard of Leantio's house; the Mother complains 'The Devil's in her / Nothing contents her now' (3.1.72-3); and when Leantio returns he imagines she is unwell. A messenger arrives with an invitation for 'Bianca Capella' (3.1.195) to attend a banquet at Lady Livia's house. It is in this act only, the scenes of Leantio's return and the banquet, that Bianca's name is used, and repeatedly so; seven times by Leantio in 3.1 and nine times by the Duke in 3.2 before Leantio's triple incantation: 'O hast thou left me then, Bianca, utterly! / Bianca! Now I miss thee' (3.2.242-43) and 'O, my life's wealth, Bianca!' (3.2.308). Jowett notes her name's part in this 'romantic and sexual contest between Leantio and the […] Duke'.[68] It is a virtual call to arms as Leantio and the Duke, who in mirroring language have both promised shelter from the storms of life, summon the white Queen from either side of the board.[69] This newly empowered Queen makes her choice: she will go to the Duke. Something is awry with this Chess: the white Queen defects and it is the black King who crowns her, not her own white King. Impossible in real Chess of course, but fully in tune with Middleton's ironic twists and grasp of the power of Chess as a dramatic metaphor. Taylor and Loughrey state that 'at one

[66] Dawson, 'Economy of Rape', 314.
[67] Damiano/Rowbothum, *The pleasaunt and vvittie playe,* A7$^{v}$.
[68] Jowett, ed., *Women Beware Women,* 1491.
[69] Leantio: 1.1.51-2; Duke: 2.2.385. See Dawson, 'Economy of Rape', 310.

and the same time, therefore, the black and white of the chess board is revealed to be an oversimplification and an accurate representation of the facts of life'.[70] Bianca's progress up the social scale is in contrast with her moral decline and to hear the Duke expound 'bright Bianca; we sat all in darkness / But for that splendour' (3.2.101-2) highlights the black/white moral dichotomy. The inspection of Isabella by the Ward during the banquet is similarly parodic, a travesty of courtship; and in that couple's first exchange, which illustrates Isabella's parallel moral descent, games again provide the erotic imagery:

WARD Pray, what
qualities have you beside singing and dancing? Can you
play at shittlecock, forsooth?
ISABELLA Ay, and at stool-ball too, sir; I have great luck at it.
WARD Why, can you catch a ball well?
ISABELLA I have catch'd two in my lap at one game.
WARD What have you, woman, I must have you learn
To play at trap too, then y'are full and whole. (3.3.87-94)

The Ward boasts of his virility, Isabella of her adultery. The traps set in the various relationships are also emblematised in the gaming imagery.

Black Queen Livia next applies her cunning to 'take' the white piece, Leantio, for herself, the ultimate deal between the two likewise parodying ceremonial marriage vows (see the final lines of 3.2). When Leantio and Bianca next meet near the palace they engage in a game of verbal sparring, at the end of which Leantio asks, 'Why do I talk to thee of sense or virtue / That art as dark as death' (4.1.95-6) and suggests her soul rests in an ignorance darker than her womb. The imagery of darkness and moral blindness, especially following the heavy emphasis on her name, Bianca, reminds us of her apostasy to the black side. Chess is a long game, played out over time. Similarly, to use Potter's words, 'the staining of the whiteness of Bianca […] is not a single isolated event, but a progressive series of actions' throughout the play.[71] Bianca reveals to her new lord that 'the former thing' (4.1.114), her husband, has a new mistress, Lady Livia, and that they have made dangerous threats. The Duke's assurance that her wished for peace will be 'provided to your hand' (4.1.128) continues the imagery of gamesters moving pieces, and the hand as instrument of agency, and confers guilt on Bianca for what follows. To ensure Bianca's 'peace' the Duke incites Hippolito to murder Livia's new bed-fellow, in honour's cause. Is it too fanciful to see the hypocritical Hippolito as a chess knight who 'assist[s] the King alwayes, / And ouer ranke or file hee leapes, / his honour

[70] Taylor and Loughrey, 'Middleton's Chess Strategies', 353.
[71] Potter, 'Masques and Masquing', 369.

for to raise'?[72] In any case, Hippolito duly despatches Leantio, a move which, like a fatally ill-considered Chess move, has repercussions across the board, including great personal losses: when the distraught Livia finds her lover dead, she curses Hippolito and reveals, in front of Guardiano and his cuckolded Ward, the 'black lust' (4.2.66) between her brother and her niece and her part in betraying Isabella's honour. A train of revenges is set in motion and a masque to celebrate the hasty nuptials of the Duke and Bianca is the 'occasion offer'd' (4.2.160) for their execution.

In a number of plays Middleton creates 'a masque episode which encapsulates the play's overarching theme and engineers the resolution'.[73] Such is the case here where the masque is a dramatic metaphor. There are, however, many parallels which unmistakably link it to the Chess game and allow for a ludic vision of the masque as a bizarre and apocalyptic game of moral Chess played entirely by the eight main black pieces, each piece abusing its role and 'taking' another in a manner which delivers poetic justice; a game in which, as Hippolito says, 'Vengeance met Vengeance / Like a set match' (5.1.195-96).[74] M.R. Golding sees the massed avengers as 'autonomous pieces in a fantastic game of chess' that 'move into position for the final checking'.[75] The object of Chess is to overthrow the enemy; it is a symbolic fight to the death, described in the etymology of 'checkmate', which derives from '*Shāh*' (the Persian monarch), and '*māt*' ('defeated' in Persian, 'dead' in Arabic): 'the King is dead'.[76] Such derivations have been largely forgotten in the widespread use of Chess as a metaphor.[77] This 'set match' ends in very 'real' deaths.

The most obvious parallel is the teamwork of Guardiano and Livia, the Rook and Queen of 2.2. Again it is Guardiano who formulates the plan, with Livia characteristically quick to join forces, stating 'I conceive you, sir / Even to a longing for performance on't' (4.2.167-68). The duo resurrect the apparently tranquil, pastoral 'device' (4.2.209) prepared for an earlier celebration, under cover of which their various 'mischiefs' (4.2.163) 'will be thought / Things merely accidental' (4.2.165-66). As with the allegorical chess pieces the roles allocated are perversely appropriate: Livia, the Duke's bawd, playing her 'old part still' (4.2.216), is Juno, goddess of marriage; Isabella is a 'nymph' (4.2.219) – meaning, variously,

[72] Saul, *The famous game of Chesse-play,* A5$^{v}$.
[73] Caroline Baird, 'From Court to Playhouse and Back: Middleton's Appropriation of the Masque', *Early Theatre,* 18/2 (2015), 57-85 (57).
[74] The eight pieces are: the Duke, Cardinal, Bianca, Livia, Guardiano, Hippolito, Isabella, Ward. The Ward flees. Only the Cardinal remains alive (Fabritio is a spectator).
[75] M.R. Golding, 'Variations in the Use of the Masque in English Revenge Tragedy', *The Yearbook of English Studies,* 3 (1973), 44-54 (53).
[76] See Murray, *Chess,* 159.
[77] Another is jeopardy (originally *jeu-parti*). See Murray, *Chess,* 753.

'attendant of a god', 'maiden' or 'prostitute'[78]; and Hippolito and Guardiano, both failures as dutiful protectors, play two shepherds in love with the nymph. Bianca, now a Queen/quean, makes a deliberate but ultimately fatal move. She too has seen that 'In time of sports death may steal in securely' (5.1.59) and designs a precursory dance of cup-bearers as an ante-masque. Like the masque it purports to represent innocence, love and harmony but conceals a plot to poison the censorious Cardinal, heir to the dukedom.

Less commonly noted are the verbal parallels. In the aftermath of the black King's capture and rape of pawn Bianca, Guardiano's first aside and Bianca's first soliloquy, as they separately descend after the deed, contain phrases and images replicated in the masque, such as 'snares', 'infectious mists', 'leprosy', 'poison', 'treachery / That wore a fair veil', 'stranger', and even 'Murders pil'd up upon a guilty spirit / At his last breath'.[79] In addition the parallel allusions to 'plots to confound' (2.2.337 and 5.1.189) – the Duke's threat as he restrains Bianca, and Hippolito's realization amid masque carnage – directly link the choreographed strategies at play in both the rape and the acts of vengeance. Chess victory depends on the ability to visualize a series of moves and counter-moves. The amoral plots to capture Bianca and snare Isabella succeed, but the counter-moves are not considered and all parties pay the price in the masquing.

There is a still more significant link: a deliberate harnessing of Chess and the court masque as twin devices in moral allegory because of their mutual origins in morality. In Jacobus de Cessolis's popular and widely translated 'chess morality' in which the chess board and pieces represent an ideal society the author claims that Chess was invented by a philosopher to correct – check – the life and manners of an evil king.[80]

Scholars describe the book as a *speculum regis*, or a 'mirror for a prince'. Similarly, the court masque, with its origins in mumming and the driving off of evil spirits, developed to become a self-reflexive showcase and mirror of the court.[81] Like the chessmen of Jacobus, everything about masquing – the iconography, costumes and particularly the dancing – was an allegorical 'mirroring [of] the social order, and beyond that the harmonious dance of the cosmos'.[82] The masque of *Women Beware Women* both knits together the separate plots and

[78] See *OED, n,*[1]1 & 2 a & b.
[79] ll. 2.2.396, 421, 423, 424, 427-8, 429, 430-1. See also Potter's comments on the parallel emotions of the scenes, 'Masques and Masquing', 373.
[80] *Liber de moribus hominum et officiis nobilum* [*Book of the Morals of Men*]. Caxton's English translation of Jacobus de Cessolis was one of the first books printed in England: *The Game and Playe of the Chesse* (1474). See Adams, ed., *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, 19-21.
[81] Enid Welsford, *The Court Masque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 8.
[82] Lauren Shohet, *Reading Masques* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2010), 30.

works in tandem with Chess simultaneously to emblematize and critique the amoral sexual games of the Florentine court. In Chess the pieces should follow rules to win the battle and 'kepe the royame that […] shyneth in the kyng and in the quene', not engage in rape, prostitution, and incest.[83] The masque in this play is not a Platonic display of the court's beneficence but a Machiavellian murder plot. The goddess Juno, representing the monarch's authority, 'was to resolve the predicament and decide between the suitors, creating an idyll, not kill the prospective bride and trigger annihilation'.[84]

In this black game all the pieces fail in their social duties, including the cup-bearers who 'spilt one' and 'filched many' (5.1.99), mixing up the cups. Their error causes Bianca's 'deadly hand' to 'fall['n] upon' (5.1.224) the Duke, with the imagery of her 'hand' again evoking a gamester's fatal move. Wretched, she draws the Duke's last breath in a kiss and drains the poisoned cup. In remorse this pawn-turned-queen, white by birth but black through sin, has an epiphany: 'Learn by me / To know your foes' (5.1.254-55), she cries. These she enumerates, almost in the morality tradition: 'Pride, Greatness, Honour, Beauty, Youth, Ambition', telling them: 'You must all down together' (5.1.259-60), as if they are chessmen taken down in one swift, apocalyptic endgame. In his sententious quatrain that closes the play the Cardinal completes the dead Bianca's list, with 'Sin' and 'Lust' (5.1.263, 266). Together these personified characteristics constitute the eight deadly chessmen ranged against Bianca in life's chess-match. She realizes that 'the deadly snares / That women set for women' (5.1.252-53) are the inherent hazards of being a woman in a male-dominated world. She dies in the belief that 'Like our own sex, we have no enemy' (5.1.256), which is more easily understood rephrased as 'We have no enemy like our own sex'. The image I have of toppling chess pieces is endorsed by what must be a reference to Chess's finale, checkmate. As the Cardinal suggests, Sin and Lust are the most destructive pieces/traits. With the board virtually bare he intones: 'Two kings on one throne cannot sit together / But one must needs down, for his title's wrong' (5.1.264-65). Lust, identified as the Duke, is 'down', accidentally taken by Bianca. In a parody of the union in which two become one flesh, dying they become 'two spirits in one poison'd vapour' (5.1.235). 'Sin', the black king in the dukedom, can now be put in check by the Cardinal, and with no pieces left on guard, it is checkmate.

[83] Caxton in Adams, ed., *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, IV, 118-9.
[84] Baird, 'From Court to Playhouse', 70.

## ‘Can ye play at Chesse Sir?’ – *The Spanish Curate*

In *Women Beware Women* we have seen Chess as a symbol of contest, with its association with the game of war darkly illustrated by rape. In *The Tempest* we have seen Chess as a representation of the more playful, consensual game of love and desire. We need to qualify the statement of Delmar Solem, an early commentator on game scenes in plays, who notes, ‘in all but one of the instances where Chess is required for the staging […] it is in conjunction with a love scene, or a scene which involves cuckolding’, with the word-play reflecting an Elizabethan conceit by ‘connecting Chess terminology with love’.[85] It would be more accurate to say ‘in conjunction with the sexual game’. Chapman is one of the earliest dramatists to engage his *dramatis personae* in games of Chess. In *Bussy d’Ambois* (1604) the game of Chess between Henry and the Duke of Guise in 1.2 provides what Nicholas Brooke calls ‘a dramatic comment’, on the political contest and ensuing quarrel. Using the terminology of Chess to comment on Bussy’s flirtation with the Duchess, Barrisor refers to Bussy as a new-come gallant ‘that dares mate / The Guise thus’ (1.2.109).[86] Although Brooke suggests that the game continues throughout the scene, references to Chess are scarce and the operative pun is on the various meanings of ‘mate’. Little use is made of a knight’s move, for example. Nor can Chess be separated from the sexual game in *A Game at Chess*, Middleton’s political allegory, which is presumably the exception to which Solem refers.

Before I come to *A Game at Chess*, however, I will illustrate some of my key points and findings with a brief look at Fletcher and Massinger’s comedy, *The Spanish Curate*, one of many early modern plays concerned with the law, with a court scene. Robert Kean Turner points out in his textual introduction that ‘Both the main plot and the subplot of *The Spanish Curate* […] come from *Gerardo the Vnfortunate Spaniard,* Leonard Digges’s translation of Céspedes y Meneses’s *Poema tràgico del Español Gerardo*’.[87] Turner does not mention that a game of Chess in *Gerardo*, during which an attempted seduction takes place, is

[85] Solem, ‘Elizabethan Game Scenes’, 18.
[86] Nicholas Brooke, ed., *George Chapman Bussy D’Ambois* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964), 24 n.147. There are also (similarly under-utilised) Chess games in Chapman’s *The Revenge of Bussy d’Ambois*, *The Conspiracy of Charles Duke of Byron* and *Sir Giles Goosecap*.
[87] Robert Kean Turner, ed., *The Spanish Curate* in *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, Vol. 10, Gen. ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 295. Line references are to this edition. The connection was first noticed by Gerard Langbaine. (The same work is used by Middleton and Rowley in *The Changeling*.)

exceptionally closely replicated by Fletcher and Massinger.[88] I find that if a game occurs in a source text – even if it is not the very magnet that attracts the dramatist, which I suggest might be the case – the use of the game and its operation as a dramatic metaphor is significantly enhanced, as occurs in *Arden of Faversham* and *Soliman and Perseda*.

The subplot of *A Spanish Curate* involves the attempted seduction by Leandro of Amaranta, the beautiful wife of Bartolus, a 'wrangling Advocate' (1.1.276). During friendly banter between Don Jamie, Leandro and his friends on the subject of 'handsome women' (1.1.247) and which race has the fairest, Jamie fires Leandro's desire for Amaranta, describing her as a 'wonder' (1.1.270) that 'Nature made without a patterne, / Whose Copy she hath lost too' (1.1.272-73). His sexual appetite whetted, Leandro announces his determination to 'enjoy her' (1.1.299) even though access will not be easy as Bartolus keeps her 'shut up / Sequestred from the world' (1.1.273-74). Serenading under her window in satins is not Leandro's style: he is a born gamester whose motto is '*Difficilia pulchra'* (2.1.45).[89] He is sure that if he can gain access to her house he may 'have faire play' (2.1.27) and 'win this Diamond from the rock and weare her' (2.1.46). We see at once that Amaranta is the stake in a game. The idea of a diamond as a prize may have been taken from an earlier discourse in *Gerardo* but this sort of gaming metaphor is absent in Leandro's discourse in the source.[90] In disguise as a young Clerk dressed in serge, and by means of a fake letter of introduction and a healthy amount of gold, Leandro exploits the greed and gullibility of Lopez, the eponymous Spanish curate. With the aim of gaining access to Amaranta, he persuades Lopez to get him apprenticed to Bartolus to study Law.

Despite the generous fees he is paying to Bartolus, Leandro is provided with the poorest of accommodation in 'an old out-Roome / Where Logs, and Coles were layd' (2.4.11-12). Amaranta takes up the metaphor of fire, warning her jealous husband that by inviting a young man into their house, 'Now ye lay fire; / Fire to consume your quiet' (2.4.12-13). She is as keen to catch sight of Leandro as he is to see her, especially when she hears him singing and playing his lute. Leandro bides his time pretending to be 'bookish' and 'bashful' (3.4.21) and works himself into Bartolus's trust. In both source text and play Leandro is presented with an opportunity to seduce his Master's beautiful wife when a Chess game between the

[88] For the Chess game see Gonzalo de Céspedes y Meneses's *Gerardo, the Vnfortvnate Spaniard. Or A Patterne for Lasciviovs Lovers*, originally in Spanish, and 'made English' by L[eonard] D[igges] (London, printed for Ed. Blovnt, 1622), The Second Part, The First Discourse, 258-60.
[89] This appears to be a corruption of an aphorism from Erasmus's *Adagia*: '*difficilia quae pulcra*', meaning 'what is beautiful takes effort'.
[90] Céspedes/Digges, *Gerardo*: in 'The Challenge' that occurs in The Third Discourse of the First Part 'a rich Diamond' is the reward of the 'Victorious Aduenturer', 181.

married couple is interrupted, the lawyer leaving the room to attend to a client. Leandro is asked to ensure Amaranta does not cheat in his absence:

BARTOLUS ’Pre thee observe these men just as they stand here,
And see this Lady not alter ’em,
And be not partiall, Pupill.
LEANDRO No indeed Sir.
BARTOLUS Let her not move a pawn, I’le come back presently –
Nay you shall know I am a Conquerour –
Have an eye Pupill. (3.4.55-59)[91]

Leandro has previously been responding to the couple’s commentary on the game in wishful asides.[92] When Bartolus boasts ‘I have you now close, / Now for a Mate’ (3.4.41-2) Leandro finishes the line, saying: ‘You are a blessed man. / That may so have her. Oh that I might play with her –’ (3.4.42-3). By sharing the line Leandro is metaphorically playing in the same game and it is clear that Leandro’s ‘play’ does not refer to chess-play, but to the sexual game. When Bartolus leaves, Amaranta asks Leandro, ‘Can ye play at Chesse Sir?’ (3.4.60); to which he responds, ‘A little Lady’ (3.4.61). She asks him how she can ‘avoid this Mate and win the Game too’ (3.4.62), elaborating: ‘Whether may I remove, (Ye see I am set round) / To avoid my husband?’ (3.4.67-8). She thus describes both her Queen’s fate and her own virtual imprisonment within the home.[93] When she goes on to enquire, ‘shall I move this man?’ (3.4.70) Leandro places himself, in no uncertain terms, on the metaphorical board itself, urging her ‘move one can serve ye, / Can honour ye, can love ye’ (3.4.71-2); and then, even more clearly ‘Move me, and I wil move any way to serve ye, / Move your heart this way (Lady)’ (3.4.74-5).[94] He even reveals his game, stating ‘Behold the sport of Love’ (3.4.76). Amaranta appears tempted, noting his ‘noble eyes’ (3.4.63), and considering, ‘Sure, he’s some worthy man’ (3.4.78). The dramatists cleverly keep Amaranta’s responses ambiguous. With Bartolus due to return imminently she commands Leandro: ‘Now play your best Sir, – though I loose this Rook here / Yet I get Libertie’ (3.4.83-4). Is she playing the match on the board or the real life game? Is Bartolus or Leandro the ‘Rook’ she is prepared to sacrifice? Yet again Leandro makes clear the game he plays, saying ‘The God of love warm your desires but equal: / That shall play my game now’ (3.4.86-7). But he is too forward and misjudges, kissing her and forthrightly declaring his love. She strikes him with the chess board. Although this action is an editorial entry it is supported by Leandro’s later remark:

[91] cf. Céspedes /Digges, *Gerardo*: the lawyer says in joking fashion to his pupil: ‘Leandro, thou seest how neere losing Violante is; Prithee, looke she stirre not the men, for I had rather then any thing beate her this time’, 259.
[92] The asides are editorial emendations.
[93] cf. Céspedes/Digges, *Gerardo*: Violante says: ‘I should be much beholding to you, if you could teach me how to saue the Checke-Mate my Husband thinks to giue me’, 259.
[94] Turner, ed., *The Spanish Curate* puts ‘Lady’ in brackets; it is not marked as an emendation.

'Your chesse-board is too hard for my head' (3.4.122). In *Gerardo* too the chess board is used to accost the seducer.[95] Murray explains that in medieval romances 'passion often ran high during a game' and boards and pieces not infrequently served as weapons of attack or defence since boards were made of metal or wood, and pieces of ivory, bone, rock-crystal etc.[96] In *Parzival* of Wolfram v. Eschenbach (1200-10) Gauvain wields a chess board, which was hanging up by an iron ring, as a shield, 'and the lady puts the enemy to flight with the chessmen'.[97]

Hearing the commotion Bartolus returns and with the chessmen scattered Leandro fears Amaranta will betray him. Her account both reveals and conceals the truth, through Chess:

> Your pupil said he plaid well,
> And so indeed he do's: he undertook for ye
> Because I would not sit so long time idle,
> I made my Liberty, avoided your mate,
> He again as cunningly endangered me,
> Indeed he put me strangely to it. When presently
> Hearing you come, and having broke his ambush too,
> Having the second time brought off my Queen fair,
> I rose o' th' sudden smilingly to shew ye,
> My apron caught the Chesse-board, and the men,
> And there the noise was. (3.4.102-12)

Amaranta's chastity was indeed endangered and the interpolation of the word 'ambush' signals both the military characteristics of Chess and the unexpected trap in which she found herself. However, it is also clear that with the term 'my Queen' Amaranta now means herself. She too has been on the metaphorical chess board of life and is using the terms of the chessmen in the same way as Leandro (unlike the Mother in *Women Beware Women*, who does not join in Livia's sub-textual commentary). It is the conflation of players and pieces, with their appellation as 'men', 'knights', 'queens', and/or the slippage between the two that is one of the main reasons games can so successfully be analogous to the human race and microcosms of life. This is, I believe, why dramatists keenly alight on source texts in which games feature, utilising the metaphorical opportunities they afford and exploiting the ability for gaming opponents to be both players and played.

Leandro does not succeed in seducing Amaranta. This is one of several plots to humiliate Bartolus who finally appears to admit the error of his ways. He promises to allow

[95] Céspedes/Digges, *Gerardo*: 'with the Chesse-Boord, discharging with both hands that and her anger to boot on my head', 260.
[96] Murray, *Chess*, 739.
[97] Ibid, 742.

Amaranta freedom to come and go as she wishes and invites everyone to a breakfast. Bartolus has not liked being mocked and 'bobd' (5.2.24), however, and plans unpleasant revenge on them all – Lopez, Diego, Milanes, Arsenio and Leandro. He is thwarted when Don Jamie arrives and reveals that Leandro's 'triall of [Amaranta's] constancie' (5.2.129) was a 'Plot cast by me to make thee jealous / But not to wrong your wife' (5.2.145-46). He threatens to expose the lawyer's villainous ways unless he abandons all his planned revenges.

Now we can see how the dramatists weave one of the key strategies of Chess into the plot: the attacking of one piece in order to safeguard the higher value pieces and achieve checkmate. One of Bartolus's more 'vitious courses' (3.3.42) concerns the main plot. Don Henrique has been married for fifteen years to Violante, who brought a large dowry to the marriage, but is barren, leaving Henrique no heir. He is desperate to avoid his somewhat presumptuous younger brother Jamie inheriting everything, under Spanish law. Bartolus serves 'Processe' (3.3.30) on Jamie, and on Octavio, Jacinta and Ascanio, at Henrique's suit. In court he reveals that Henrique was previously married to Jacinta, but subsequently reflecting on the inequality of the match he secretly divorced her and married Violante, leaving Jacinta expecting a child. That child, the young Ascanio, Henrique now claims as his heir. Huizinga devotes a chapter of his study on the play element in culture to 'Play and Law'.[98] He states that 'the juridical process started by being a contest and the agonistic nature of it is alive even today'. He explains that 'Contest means play' and considers that the 'court' is 'a magic circle, a play-ground where the customary differences of rank are temporarily abolished'.[99] Henrique might appear to be winning, but Jamie's strategy in this wider 'game' between the two brothers is to attack and sacrifice Bartolus, a lesser piece (let us call him a Rook) in order to salvage his relationship with Henrique for whom, in spite of all, he has 'a Brothers Love' (5.3.15). The brothers do reconcile and Jamie secures his own future. As always with the placement of a game, the Chess game, or 'triall' of Amaranta, is at a crucial point; it is immediately juxtaposed with this court scene and the main 'game' or legal contest of the play and begins with Bartolus rejoicing in his 'wealthy Gleanings' (3.4.3). If the spectator almost wills Leandro to 'win' Amaranta and cuckold the avaricious advocate, the key point, structurally, is that Jamie and Henrique are playing their own, parallel, strategic game.

[98] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 76-88.
[99] Ibid, 76-77.

## ‘Here’s a strange game indeed’ – *A Game at Chess*

Unlike the other plays I have discussed it is obvious from its very title that Middleton’s *A Game at Chess* will contain game metaphors. The very *dramatis personae* are living chess pieces; they both refer to one another by their chess piece denomination, ‘Black Bishop’ ‘Black King’, and address one another as ‘knight’, ‘pawn’ and so forth. We do not see any seated gamesters as we do in the other plays; the pieces are moved, as Swapan Chakravorty states, ‘by an authorial hand’ and according to ‘fictional and ludic rules’.[100] Performed at the Globe in an unprecedented nine-day run between 5 and 14 August 1624, the play ‘cunningly refers to events of 1623’, as Janet Clare puts it, when Prince Charles, accompanied by the Duke of Buckingham, the pair in disguise, journeyed to Madrid, aiming to secure his bride, but found himself kept virtually captive by the Spanish court.[101] The events and most of the personages involved in this risky strategy are allegorised in a Chess game, although spectators quickly saw through the conceit. Whilst the Prince of Wales and Duke of Buckingham are identifiable from their chess caricatures, even more recognisable portraits are found in the black pieces. The Black Knight, described by Trudi Darby as the ‘anti-hero’ around whom the plot revolves, represents the Conde de Gondomar, Spain’s ambassador to James I’s court 1613-1622.[102] John Woolley’s contemporary report even refers to ‘The play of Gundomar’, whilst John Chamberlain’s letter to Sir Dudley Carleton suggests how closely Gondomar was impersonated: ‘they counterfeited his person to the life, with all his graces and faces, and had gotten (they say) a cast sute of his apparell for the purpose, with his Lytter’.[103] Moreover, the new resident ambassador wrote to the Spanish court that ‘the king of the blacks has easily been taken for our lord the King, because of his youth, dress, and other details’.[104] We are fortunate that title pages of editions published in 1624-5 ‘display leading characters, chessboard, and “the bag” for the captured pieces’.[105] As John Astington

[100] Swapan Chakravorty, *Society and Politics in the Plays of Thomas Middleton* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011 – print publication date: 1996), 2.
[101] Janet Clare, *‘Art made tongue-tied by authority’: Elizabethan and Jacobean Dramatic Censorship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 190. For Charles’s virtual imprisonment, see Glyn Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta: The Cultural politics of the Spanish Match* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 111.
[102] Trudi L. Darby, ‘The Black Knight’s Festival Book? Thomas Middleton’s *A Game at Chess*’, in *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles’s Journey to Madrid, 1623*, ed. Alexander Samson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 173-187 (184).
[103] John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, 21 August 1624, Howard-Hill, ed., *A Game at Chess*, Appendix 1, 205.
[104] Don Carlos Coloma to the Conde-Duque Olivares, 10 August 1624, Ibid, 194.
[105] John H. Astington, *Stage and Picture in the English Renaissance: The Mirror up to Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 188.

points out, '*Game at Chess* is the first quarto single playtext to have been illustrated with an engraving rather than a woodcut'.[106] The figures are lifelike and R.A. Foakes suggests they almost certainly show the players 'as they were costumed on stage'.[107] One engraving (see Fig. below) shows eight characters at Chess around a table but, as Foakes says, there is nothing in the play to suggest this.


**Figure 16: Title page of *A Game at Chaess*, Q1 (1625), 063940 © British Library Board.**

One can, however, speculate that the stage was marked out as a chess board, perhaps using a large piece of chequered cloth similar to that described as covering the ballroom floor in Rabelais's Chess ballet.[108] This is hinted at by the second engraving, and indeed by the eye-

[106] Ibid, 188.
[107] Foakes, *Illustrations of the English Stage*, 123.
[108] In Rabelais, *Cinquiesme et dernier livre des Faicts et dicts héroiques du bon Pantagruel* [1564], *François Rabelais: Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Mireille Huchon (Editions Gallimard, 1994) the floor of the ballroom is 'couvert d'une ample piece de tapisserie veloutée, faite en forme d'eschiquier, savoir est, à carreaux, moitiée blanc, moitiée jaulne', 778.

witness, John Holles, who wrote, 'The whole play is a chess board, England the whyt hows, Spayn the black'.[109]


**Figure 17: Title page of *A Game at Chesse* (1625) STC 17884. RB 28125 The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.**

Gary Taylor, co-editor of Middleton's *Collected Works* and its *Textual Companion*, considers *A Game at Chess* to be 'one of the great achievements of the Western literary imagination'.[110] We know a considerable amount about it because, as Taylor says, it stimulated 'more immediate commentary than any other play, masque or pageant of its age'.[111] Its notoriety, moreover, generated an immediate demand for copies and 'its text survives in many more manuscripts than any other play of the period; [and] it was published

[109] John Holles, Lord Haughton to the Earl of Somerset, 11 Aug 1624. T.H. Howard-Hill, ed., *A Game at Chess*, Appendix 1, 199.
[110] Taylor, 'Castration: An Abbreviated History of Western Manhood' (2000) in *The Renaissance Text: Theory, History, Editing*, ed. Andrew Murphy (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 44-54, cited in '*A Game at Chess*: General Textual Introduction', in *Textual Companion*, 712-851 (712).
[111] Taylor, ed., *A Game at Chess: An Early Form*, in *Collected Works*, 1773-1824 (1773).

in more illicit editions than any other play'.[112] Given also the number of revisions Middleton himself made and the different scribes involved, one has to salute Taylor, whose magisterial essay charts this uniquely complicated textual transmission.[113] Given its pre-eminent place in the making of theatrical history, it is not surprising that *Game at Chess* has attracted an intimidating amount of criticism, which can only be sketched here. Following the early twentieth-century work on Middleton's sources, in 1975 Margot Heinemann proffered the theory that *A Game at Chess* was not only what J.W. Harper called 'a move in the great game which it allegorised', but that it was protected from censorship by the Earl of Pembroke and was 'one of several attempts by some of the Parliamentary Puritans and their Dutch and European contacts to use the stage to inform and arouse the mass of the population'.[114] This view is rejected by later commentators such as Thomas Cogswell. Janet Clare and Richard Dutton are among those who tackle the enigma of this extraordinary case of 'non-censorship' by Sir Henry Herbert.[115] T.H. Howard-Hill's edition of 1993 assembles (in English) many contemporary documents relating to the play's reception and eventual suppression and he concludes that the political climate between April-August 1624 was such that Middleton's risk of punishment for writing an anti-Spanish, anti-Jesuit play was 'as small as it could ever have been'.[116] This would seem to be corroborated by Woolley's statement, written on 6 August 1624, that 'such a thing was neuer before invented. and assuredly had so much ben donne the last yeare, they had eueryman ben hanged for it…'.[117]

Rather than dwell on the risks run, I would like to highlight the uniqueness – even anomaly – of this play: 'such a thing was neuer before invented'. Not only was the openly satirical representation of very recent politics and living kings new, but the concept and ingenuity of such a sustained conceit – the entire play purporting to be a Chess game, albeit a very peculiar one, with anthropomorphic chess pieces – was entirely novel. Through a plethora of signposting, as pieces move in on other pieces during the allegorized journey of Charles and Buckingham into the Black House of the Spanish court, the text frequently reminds us that it is a Chess game. This game with theatrical playmaking deserves the closest

[112] Ibid, 1773.
[113] Taylor, '*A Game at Chess*, General Textual Introduction', 712-848.
[114] Margot Heinemann, 'Middleton's *A Game at Chess*: Parliamentary-Puritans and Opposition Drama', *English Literary Renaissance*, 5/2 (1975), 232-250 (249). She cites J.W. Harper, ed., *A Game at Chess* (London: Benn, 1966), xv. Her later book *Puritanism & Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) expands her arguments.
[115] Clare, *Dramatic Censorship*, 198. Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Reading and Writing in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984) also refers to *Game at Chess* as one of those 'famous puzzling incidents of *noncensorship*', 17.
[116] Howard-Hill, ed., *A Game at Chess*, 16.
[117] John Woolley to William Trumbull, 6 August 1624, in Howard-Hill, ed., *A Game at Chess*, Appendix I, 193.

attention. Accordingly, I will not be adding to the earlier debates, but I will look at Middleton's choice of Chess and track, perhaps more closely than others, how the play uses Chess in alignment with theories I have explored as it 'forces us to imagine characters who are both persons and pieces', as Taylor says, and whose actions require interpretation 'in terms of chess, or in terms of life'.[118] This is no easy task as the play is famously resistant to legibility but I aim to show how Chess informs the dramatist's writing, the game's progress matching that of the plot in a manner which is more than that of sustained metaphor, and how, paradoxically, the camouflage of allegory proves instead to be a means for disclosure, because of Chess. As Taylor says of the numerous asides and soliloquies which keep the audience in the know, 'as in chess, everything is visible and victory depends, not upon force, but upon a change of perception: "discovery"'.[119] The text for my references is Taylor's *A Game at Chess: A Later Form.*[120]

The trip to Madrid, from which Charles and Buckingham finally returned after eight months, without a Spanish bride to the relief of a joyful populace who feared a return to Catholicism, became what Stephen Wittek calls a 'heroic voyage of discovery on behalf of European Protestantism'.[121] Roussel Sargent notes that the word *discovery* occurs frequently in *Game at Chess* and considers that 'From Middleton's point of view the whole play must have been intended as a discovery'.[122] Indeed at least four of the anti-Catholic pamphlets that appeared following the breakdown of marriage negotiations, and which provide Middleton with source texts, lay pointed emphasis on discovery, with phrases such as 'discouery of the impious tricks and deuices of the Priests and Iesuites'[123], 'the Prince of Wales by comming in Person discouered our Plot'[124] and 'the maske of Spaines boundless ambition being

[118] Taylor, ed., *A Game at Chess: A Later Form* in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works,* 1825-1885 (1826).
[119] Ibid, 1828.
[120] The problem for anyone writing on *A Game at Chess* is to decide which edition to use. As Taylor says the text survives in many different versions and some have been lost. Middleton's original licensed draft is lost, as is his post-production abridgement. In a one hundred and thirty-six page essay Taylor explains the play's transmission. Given the depth of his research I have chosen to use one of Taylor's two alternative editions, namely *A Game at Chess: A Later Form*. This, Taylor explains, is 'an attempt to realize […] not only the play as collaboratively produced and performed in August 1624, but a reading text which could effectively represent those performances', Taylor and Lavagnino, eds, *Textual Companion*, 848. This version does not contain the Black Jesting Pawn and the single scene in which he appears, cut from some published versions but on which Bloom concentrates. This can be found in Howard-Hill, ed., *A Game at Chess*, Act 3 scene 2.
[121] Stephen Wittek, 'Middleton's *A Game at Chess* and the Making of a Theatrical Public, *SEL*, 55/2 (2015), 423-446 (427).
[122] Roussel Sargent, 'Theme and Structure in Middleton's *A Game at Chess*', *Modern Language Review*, 66/4 (1971), 721-730 (726-7).
[123] John Gee, *The Foot out of the Snare* (London, printed by H.L. for Robert Milbourne, 1624), E1$^{r}$.
[124] Thomas Scott, *The Second Part of Vox Popvli, or Gondomar appearing in the likeness of Matchiauell in a Spanish Parliament* (printed at Goricum [i.e. London] by Ashverus Ianss [i.e. William Jones],1624), C4$^{v}$.

discouered and pull'd off'.[125] Earlier commentators have reviewed Middleton's borrowings from these pamphlets but I highlight a few specific phrases in Thomas Scott's lines that might, together with the 'discovery' motif, have suggested the peculiarity of the dream Chess allegory.[126] In the *Second Part of Vox Popvli* (1624) Scott conjures the image of Chess when he refers to Spain 'repenting her selfe of parting with so pretious a pawne' (Charles); he also describes a meeting in Seville at which the nobility 'each as his precedence tooke his place', and where, once 'all set and silent', they discuss new strategies concerning the 'Treaty of the Match'.[127] Recognising that, in the period, Chess was 'a game in which silence is to be vsed', this accumulation of images, ending with 'Match', reinforces a vision of ranked chess pieces, reflected in Middleton's Prologue: 'First you will see the men in order set' (Prol. 3).[128] Scott's pamphlet also makes reference to being 'all this while in a Dreame'.[129]

In amongst this imagery of Chess, Scott refers to the aforementioned Primero gamester's best and final bet, the 'rest' (and thus a clear signal of risk): 'we had beene better to haue played faire, then to hazard the loosing our rest by such an encounter'.[130] Indeed John Robert Moore ponders why Middleton did not use cards, as Heywood did in *A Woman Killed with Kindness,* also centred around a marriage 'match', and he reasons that a cluster of plays staged by the King's Men, featuring Italians or Spaniards engaged in Chess games (those discussed earlier in this chapter), and the 1622-24 residence in England of Greco, a great chess-player, prompted the choice.[131] This fails to appreciate the subtle differences between the metaphoric powers of individual games and how carefully gaming metaphors are chosen. Cards can provide a socio-political vehicle (through their hierarchical nature), but card games are more in use in plots that involve the game of love, due principally to the imagery provided by the 'hearts' suit. One can argue that there was a romantic quest involved in Charles's clandestine journey, but *A Game at Chess* is principally about the game of diplomacy and state politics, Spain's desire for universal Catholic monarchy, and about the effect a Catholic queen would have on Protestant England. It is about a contest of contrasting ideologies which was played out in the manner of what Dutton calls an 'early modern

[125] John Reynolds, *Vox Coeli, or, Newes from Heaven* (printed in Elesium [i.e..London], 1624), B3$^{r}$.
[126] There is an account of living Chess in *Hypnerotomachia: The Strife of Loue in a Dreame* (printed at London for William Holme, 1592). See Murray, *Chess*, 748.
[127] Scott, *The Second Part of Vox Popvli*, A2$^{v}$ – A3$^{v}$.
[128] Saul, *The famous game of Chesse-play*, B3$^{v}$.
[129] Scott, *Second Part of Vox Popvli*, C4$^{v}$.
[130] Idem, D$^{v}$.
[131] John Robert Moore, 'The Contemporary Significance of Middleton's *Game at Chesse'*, *PMLA*, 50/3 (1935), 761-768 (764).

diplomatic square-dance'.[132] Middleton had used the symbolism of Chess's black and white in *Women Beware Women* but in *Game at Chess*, he pointedly calls his sides – The House of Stuart (whose court was, of course, at *White*hall) and the House of Habsburg – 'the White House' and the 'Black House'. This is the first instance of a chess side being referred to as a 'House', in the singular, for although in the period the squares of the chess board were referred to as 'houses' (and 'noble houses' for those of the chief pieces) the opposing forces were always described in military terms such as 'armies' (Alfonso MS), 'armies' or 'forces' (Saul) and 'bande' [troop] by Rabelais.[133] Every element of Chess and its two symmetrical kingdoms provide Middleton with a perfect fit: the concept of capture and escape, the inherent weakness of the King, the strategic importance of the Queen (here generally understood to be an allegory of the Church), the progress of pieces across the board from one kingdom to their opponent's territory, and the irregular move of the Knight.[134] All are harnessed; as is the goal of checkmate and, in particular, the specific tactic of 'checkmate by discovery' which, as other critics note, requires two pieces to work together to give 'check' to the opposing king. Rather than the 'pawne' of Scott's satire, a more fitting representation is provided for the Prince of Wales, heir to the English throne, through the Knight, a piece described in Saul's treatise as 'the man of execution'.[135] Gondomar, who encouraged Charles to 'mount' Spain, Alexander Samson reveals, is appropriately represented by the opposing Black Knight.[136]

As the play begins two figures 'appear' or are 'discovered', one asleep.[137] The words 'game' and 'play' are prominent in the early lines and later resonate with sexual undertones, much as in *Women Beware Women*. The error symbolized generally by and in games is underlined in *Game at Chess* when, at the end of the Induction's opening speech, we learn the identity of both as the speaker commands: 'Up Error, wake / Father of supererogation, rise! / It is Ignatius calls thee: Loyola' (Ind. 35-7). Error is reluctant to be roused from his dream in which he 'saw the bravest setting for a game now / That ever my eye fixed on' (Ind. 40-1). To Loyola's question, 'Game? What Game' (Ind. 41), Error replies:

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[132] Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship and Authorship in Early Modern England: Buggeswords* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 141.
[133] The squares are 'houses' in Saul, Damiano and Cotton; Howard-Hill notes that neither *OED* nor Murray records 'house' (sing.) as a side in Chess.
[134] R.C. Bald, ed., *A Game at Chess* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 11. Bald elaborates on Fleay's suggestion that the Queen is an allegory of the Mother church.
[135] Saul, *The famous game of Chesse-play*, augmented Barbier (1618), B5$^{r}$.
[136] Alexander Samson, ed., 'Introduction: The Spanish Match' in *The Spanish Match: Prince Charles's Journey to Madrid, 1623* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 2.
[137] Taylor, ed., *A Game at Chess: A Later Form* speculates that Ignatius and Error rise through the trapdoor.

> The noblest game of all, a game at chess
> 'Twixt our side and the White House, the men set
> In their just order ready to go to't. (Ind. 42-4)

It is immediately clear that the first speaker, the ghost of Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish Catholic and infamous founder of the loathed Jesuit order, and Error, the embodiment of all that was considered corrupt in Catholic doctrine, are on, or support, the Black 'side'. Contemporary spectators would need no prompting to understand that their opponents in this dream Chess, the White side, are, therefore, England and Protestantism. As Robert Lublin remarks, we know from extant letters that the English were dressed in white and those playing the Spanish appeared in black; as a result the colour scheme simultaneously establishes the characters as pieces in a game of Chess and 'delineate[s] clearly the moral positions of the two sides'.[138] The Prologue confirms that it is a game between right and wrong:

> What of the game called chess-play can be made
> To make a stage-play shall this day be played
> […]
> and in the close
> You shall see checkmate given to virtue's foes. (Prol. 1-2 and 7-8)

The juxtaposed hyphenated phrases, 'chess-play' and 'stage-play', draw our attention to the cross-over we will find between microcosm and macrocosm.

Loyola demands to share Error's vision and a dumb show is conjured: '*Enter severally the White House and Black House, as in order of the game*' (Ind. 52sd). The text makes clear that all the 'pieces' are in place as Error declares: 'You have your wish. / Behold, there's the full number of the game, / Kings, and their pawns, queens, bishops, knights and dukes' (Ind. 52-4).[139] Middleton uses the less usual term for the chess rook, 'duke' and, as in *Women Beware Women*, he makes use of the slippage between the term and the real life dukes. Following Saul he emphasises that 'both kings / Repose much confidence' (Ind. 57-8) in the dukes, thereby exposing the allegory: the chess dukes represent Duke Olivares and the Duke of Buckingham, the court favourites of Felipe IV and James I respectively. Loyola is unimpressed to find that his son and daughter are merely pawns. He signals the Spanish goal, stating: 'I would do anything to rule alone. / It's rare to have the world reined in by one' (Ind. 73-4). As Jerzy Limon notes, the device of starting with the two full houses on stage informs

[138] Robert Lublin, '"An vnder black dubblett signifying a Spanish hart": Costumes and Politics in Middleton's *A Game at Chess*', *Theatre Survey* 48/2 (2007), 247-263 (248).
[139] As David Holmes points out, Middleton has used the same device of a dumb show for a 'little glimpse giving' in *Your Five Gallants*, where the full cast appears, five gallants, each representing a city vice, *The Art of Thomas Middleton: A Critical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 186.

the reader or spectator 'that in spite of the fact that the play presents a sequence of episodes, this is a "true" game of chess' and we are 'witnessing episodes of a larger game strategy'.[140]

With the board thus set, following the methodology of Chess it is the pawns, the subject of the sub-plot, that move first. The Black Queen's Pawn is the first to move/enter, followed by the White Queen's Pawn in a mirroring advance as so often happens in the early stages of Chess (and as I interpret the first moves of 'pawns' Bianca and Isabella in *Women Beware Women*). Moore has identified the opening sequence as 'the Queen's Gambit Declined' and considers this opening may be an allegory of the Spanish marriage.[141] As Rabelais similarly starts his balletic Chess in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* with the same opening move by the darker side (in his case golden, rather than black) this is probably over-stretching the metaphor. The Black Bishop's Pawn moves next and the two black pieces work the chess board together, aiming to corrupt the White Queen's Pawn. Admitting that she contemplated marriage to the White Bishop's Pawn before he was viciously castrated by the Black Knight's Pawn, whom she now hates, she initially appears 'impregnable' (1.1.185), to the frustration of the Black Bishop's Pawn. He resorts to pressing her to study a tract of obedience. The White Bishop's Pawn, who moves next, is confident that she is 'constant to the House she comes of' (1.1.201). The Black Knight's Pawn, on the other hand, is prepared to wager she 'never returns virtuous' (1.1.211) at the hands of the Jesuit. Chess is a game of attack and defence and Middleton demonstrates these tactics in verbal sparring between the White Queen's Pawn and her foe, mirrored in the text with one line starting with the antonym of the previous line's end:

BLACK KNIGHT'S PAWN — Most noble virgin –
WHITE QUEEN'S PAWN — Ignoble villain! Dare that unhallowed tongue
Lay hold upon a sound so gracious?
What's nobleness to thee? (1.1.220-23)

In the Induction, Error has called Chess 'The noblest game of all' (Ind. 42) and in the final scene the White Knight refers to checkmate by discovery as 'the noblest mate of all' (5.3.161). Here, in the first scene, the pawns' word-play on 'noble' and 'ignoble' represents a move textually. Although Yachnin notes that any attempt to follow the action as a true Chess game 'breaks down at 1.1.243sd when the Black Knight enters out of turn', one can speculate that, on occasion, the moves of chess pieces were mimicked on stage and this would surely be such an instance, with the two pawns making mirroring moves alongside their mirroring

[140] Jerzy Limon, *Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/24* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 99.
[141] Moore, in 'Contemporary Significance' credits Dr Percy Long with the latter suggestion, 765.

language.[142] Limon notes, too, that in the 'temptation' scene (2.1), when the lascivious Black Bishop's Pawn takes up the innocent White Queen Pawn's request to make trial of her obedience and commands her to 'seal a kiss of love upon my lip' (2.1.52), comedy was likely to have been made of his inability to assault her due to the limitations in the chess moves open to him.[143] He commands her to 'Come, come, be nearer' and the white pawn finishes the line with her teasing question 'Nearer?' (2.1.101) as she (most probably) moves further away. When he commands again, a few lines later, 'Be nearer. Why so fearful?' (2.1.110) there is another textual mirroring of chess-play:

> BLACK BISHOP'S PAWN Nearer the altar the more safe and sacred.
> WHITE QUEEN'S PAWN But nearer to the off'rer, oft more wicked. (2.1.111-12)

The repetition of 'nearer' and the antithetical end-rhymes of 'sacred' and 'wicked' reflect mirroring moves, surely mimicked by physical movements aligned to the rules of Chess. Middleton mines the resonances of Chess in a way that Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois* fails to do, an example being the later wary remark of the Fat Bishop:

> I know the Knight's walk in this game too well.
> He may skip over me, and where am I then? (3.1.30-31)

Given the above, I beg to differ with Yachnin who states that Middleton 'neglects entirely to exploit the allegorical significance of the Knight's "crooked" move'.[144] The White Queen's Pawn's escape is enabled by a distraction, an extraneous noise. Saved for now, she makes the first reference to discovery with her threat: 'I will discover thee, arch-hypocrite' (2.1.148).

What is this game's stake? The Black House admit to playing for 'universal monarchy' (1.1.51, 244), also described as 'the main work, the great existence, / The hope monarchal' (1.1.291-92). The White Queen's Pawn misreads what Chakravorty so adeptly calls 'black theatre' and imagines she is aiming at 'universal goodness' (2.1.41) and 'the great work of obedience' (2.1.91), the contrasting goals illustrated by shared adjectives but opposing nouns, more verbal chess-play.[145] When the Black Knight refers to the White Queen's Pawn as 'your trifle' (1.1.284) the Black Bishop's Pawn defends her importance, saying 'To the op'ning of the game I hold her' (1.1.287). In Chess the pawns need to be played to open up the board to the more powerful pieces but, as Taylor's gloss notes, there is double-entendre in this phrase with the same sexual meaning of 'game' we saw in *Women*

[142] Yachnin, '*A Game at Chess* and Chess Allegory', 329. Other critics such as Limon have pointed out the numerous violations of the true rules of Chess, the most obvious being the changing of sides and the absence of one black bishop.
[143] Limon, *Dangerous Matter*, 100.
[144] Yachnin, '*A Game at Chess* and Chess Allegory', 319.
[145] Chakravorty, *Society and Politics*, 167.

*Beware Women*, made explicit here with the suggestion of the sexual orifice.[146] The Black Queen's Pawn is disdainful of the Black Bishop's Pawn's lust but for now she provides the necessary escape for the wayward bishop's pawn because his fall at this stage would expose the more powerful pieces to danger, as Chakravorty notes.[147]

As in Chess there are multiple plots and strategies in one game with pieces working in tandem. The Black Knight holds a grudge against the Fat (White) Bishop for suggesting that the hangman would be the best cure for his pain (an allusion to the anal fistula from which Gondomar suffered). He and the Black Bishop plan to lure the Fat Bishop on to the Black side 'And then damn him / Into the bag for ever' (2.2.54-5). And as so often, where one game is mentioned there follow references to other games. The Black Knight aims to make him 'the balloon-ball of the churches' (2.2.68). Balloon (or Balloon-ball) was a game 'roughly comparable to modern Volleyball'.[148] The object was to knock the balloon, a 'great ball of double leather fild with winde', as far as possible with an open hand or the fist.[149] This game reference, as ever carefully chosen, signals both the irreverence in which the Fat Bishop is held and his rotund figure. It also shows the inability of the Fat Bishop to retaliate.[150]

By this point it has been a while since all pieces were visible and to reinforce the Chess imagery 'both the sides fill' (2.2.82) again, with the stage directions listing the pieces. This has the effect of signalling an important advance in the plot. The White Queen's Pawn addresses the 'King of Integrity / Queen of the same' (2.2.99-100) and 'discovers' her attempted rape. With the board opened up by the pawns we are now seeing more of the high-ranking pieces starting to move. The Black Knight warns the White Queen's Pawn:

> There's no remove in all the game to 'scape it.
> This Pawn, or this, the Bishop or myself,
> Will take thee in the end, play how thou canst. (2.2.167-69)

The escape and capture theme of Chess is alluded to throughout, as is the aim of 'check'. The pawn does not crack under pressure and accuses the Black House of being a 'House of Impudence, / Craft and equivocation' (2.2.172-73), so the Black Knight has to raise his game. He declares: 'I play thus then' (2.2.174), and leads her into his trap, requiring her to 'Bring

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[146] Taylor, ed., *A Game at Chess: A Later Form*, 1841.
[147] Chakravorty, *Society and Politics*, 177
[148] Cram et al., eds, *Willughby's Book of Games*, 45.
[149] Gervase Markham, *Countrey Contentments, in two bookes* (printed at London for R. Iackson, 1615), Bk 1, 109.
[150] The Fat Bishop represented Marc Antonio de Dominis, Archbishop of Spalato 1566-1624. 'Originally a Catholic, de Dominis converted to Anglicanism on arrival in England and was subsequently honoured by James I. His motives were regarded with suspicion by the English clergy, an attitude which seemed to be justified when, on the accession of a new Pope, he reverted to Catholicism' in 1622. See Clare, '*Dramatic Censorship'*, 193. His part in the play did not appear in the first manuscripts, but was added prior to the August performances.

forth the time of this attempt's conception' (2.2.176). When she responds, 'Yesterday's cursed evening' (2.2.184), his 'move' is to claim that the Black Bishop's Pawn has been thirty leagues away for the last ten days. The White King is duped by the lie and leaves the desperate pawn, whose danger is implied in the sexual imagery the Black Knight uses, to whatever censures the Black House desires. In Chess, the King is weak, rarely moving, with the lesser pieces taking the active roles, the knights particularly. The White Knight assures her she is 'not lost' (2.2.228) and consults with the White Duke following which the White Bishop's Pawn, her former paramour, leaves in haste to seek proof of her truthfulness. The Black House does not (whether it can or not) 'take' the White Queen's Pawn at this moment. The Black Knight decides 'Nay, I'll punish thee / For a discoverer: I'll torment thy modesty' (2.2.251-52) and plans to lock her in a room full of Aretino's pictures of naked figures. His imagery strays into that of dicing with his delight in winning equated to 'a Jesuitical gamester' (2.2.243) sweeping the board 'at one cast' (2.2.242). His success is short-lived, however, as his pawn arrives to state: 'Sir, your plot's discovered' (3.1.126):

> The White Knight's policy has outstripped yours, it seems,
> Joined with th'assistant counsel of his Duke (3.1.149-50)

Throughout the play/game the White Knight and rook (Duke) work together, both attacking and, as here, defending. The White House finds men to confirm that the would-be rapist left only that morning, pre-dating his letters, and thus prove the White Queen Pawn's version of events. The Black Queen's Pawn astonishes the Black King, Queen, Bishop and Duke by fawning on her opposite number and confirming the truth of the white pawn's story. Only the Black Knight, who states 'I stand for roguery still. / I will not change my side' (3.1.218-19), recognises 'a new trap' (3.1.241) and 'conspiracy' (3.1.244) in the black pawn's moves. The Black Knight is an inveterate gamester and enjoys prolonging the game. When the Black Duke aims for the White Queen, the Black Knight reins him back:

> You're too hasty, sir.
> If she were took, the game would be ours quickly.
> My aim's at that White Knight, t'entrap him first:
> The Duke will follow too. (3.1.246-49)

Glyn Redworth records that Gondomar's motto was '*Osar morir de la vida*' – risking death gives life' – and the dramatist appears to make use of this appetite for risk.[151] If, as Chakravorty suggests, the Middletonian forbears of the White Queen's Pawn are the Duchess in *More Dissemblers Besides Women* and Bianca in *Women Beware Women*, I would add that

[151] Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta*, 13.

one of the Black Knight's forbears is *Michaelmas Term*'s Quomodo.[152] Quomodo similarly cannot stop playing and is beaten by someone better at his own game.

One of the text's most extensive conceits of Chess features at this crucial moment when the Black Knight satisfies his side with a pawn, the White King's Pawn, the first piece to be taken. The White Knight issues a rallying command, 'Guard the sacred persons' (3.1.255), the King and Queen, and the Bishop, 'him in third place' (3.1.257).[153] Their loss is soon considered slight with the revelation that the White King's Pawn is a Black House spy. The White Queen acknowledges his dispensability and that the loss will only sharpen their game: 'You have him, we can spare him, and his shame / Will make the rest look better to their game' (3.1.279-80). When the Black Knight suggests his side will increase their cunning the White Knight warns: 'We shall match you / Play how you can – perhaps and mate you too' (3.1.281-82). Chess terminology provides double-entendre with 'match' and 'mate' offering 'marry' and 'copulate', the aim of the Prince's quest. The Fat Bishop announces his premeditated apostasy to the Black House at this juncture too. Both he and the traitorous White King's Pawn believe that they can transfer to the Black House but Middleton invokes the rules of Chess here just as he bends them at other points, according to his purpose: 'Pawns that are lost are ever out of play' (3.1.310), declares the Black Knight.

The noble pieces leave the chess board stage and we revert seamlessly to the predominant pawns' plot. As Jane Sherman states, 'Middleton used the pawns' plot to tell, far more candidly, the *same* story that the main plot so discreetly skirted'.[154] This is, of course, the aforementioned 'match' between the Prince and the Infanta and the anxieties surrounding it, though it is the prospective husband of the White Queen's Pawn that the dissembling Black Queen's Pawn claims to have seen in a 'magical glass' (3.1.329). Often referenced as a game of '*perfect* information' (as opposed to cards, one of *imperfect* information), players of Chess can see all the pieces on the board at all times, but skill is required to pre-empt moves and understand the ramifications of each move and counter-move. The gullible White Pawn falls for the theatre of her black counterpart's invocation and the apparition of a richly dressed man and, torn between fear and desire, fails to recognise the disguised Black Bishop's Pawn. The White Queen's Pawn is too innocent and trusting; too inexperienced a chess *player* (rather than piece) to understand the motives and the game of lechery and

[152] Chakravorty, *Society and Politics*, 174.
[153] 'The Kings Pawn giueth guard to the third house before the Queene, and to the third house before the Kings Bishop'. See Saul, *The famous game of Chesse-play*, B6$^{r}$.
[154] Jane Sherman, 'The Pawns' Allegory in Middleton's *A Game at Chess*', *Review of English* Studies, 29/114 (1978), 147-159 (154).

treachery the Black Queen's Pawn and Black Bishop's Pawn are playing. They pursue their blood's game: lust. When he sees his quarry, the Black Bishop's Pawn plans his strategy: 'Yonder's my game, which (like a politic chessmaster) / I must not seem to see' (4.1.34-5), and feigns unacquaintance. Similarly dissembling, the Black Queen's Pawn introduces the White Queen's Pawn. The crossover between chess-player and chessman, the 'real world' and the Chess world is continually fluid. One minute they are 'pieces' the next they are 'blushing gamesters' (4.1.110). The Black Bishop's Pawn makes an unwise move rushing the White Queen's Pawn, whose interest is marriage, not intercourse. Underlining their collusion over strategy, he asks his fellow black piece, 'Where lies our game now? / You know I cannot marry, by my Order?' (4.1.133-34). She suggests the white pawn will be placated by a marriage 'contract' (4.1.136) which is duly agreed. Though they have been operating as a pair, they have individual goals now and the Black Queen's Pawn plans to 'enjoy the sport' (4.1.148) and get sexual satisfaction, arguing 'My blood's game is the wages I have worked for' (4.1.149).

The Chess conceit becomes more extensive again as the main plot is about to reach the crucial point of Charles and Buckingham's arrival in Madrid, and the prospective match's threat to English Protestantism, which is allegorized in the White Queen's Pawn's imminent penetration. The Black King enters and commands: 'Why, Bishop, Knight, where's your removes? Your traps? / Stand you now idle in the heat of game?' (4.2.135-36). The Black Knight assures him, in Chess terms, that victory is in sight; he himself is to be sacrificed to win the game:

> My life for yours, Black Sovereign, the game's ours.
> I have wrought underhand for the White Knight
> And his brave Duke, and find 'em coming both. (4.2.137-39)

The White Knight is confident too and advises the White Duke that they must 'feign a little' (4.4.17), responding to the latter's fears that 'all the gins, traps, and alluring snares / […] / Are laid for the great hope of this game only' (4.4.5-7). The Black Knight puts on a supreme show of dissembling honesty and promises, 'Of honour you'll so surfeit and delight / You'll ne'er desire again to see the White' (4.4.47-8). The horrified White Queen sees them entering the Black House and despairs: 'O he's gone, / Ensnared, entrapped, surprised amongst the Black ones' (4.4.49-50); she fears, 'I shall be taken. The game's lost, I'm set upon' (4.4.57), as the Fat Bishop moves on her, warning:

> 'Tis vain to stir: remove which way you can,
> I take you now. This is the time we've hoped for.
> Queen, you must down. (4.4.61-3)

‘Down’, the toppling of a chess piece, is equated with sexual conquest as he continues:

> The Black King’s blood burns for thy prostitution,
> And nothing but the spring of thy chaste virtue
> Can cool his inflammation. (4.4.64-6)

As Limon states, ‘most of the actions of the Black House are defined in sexual terms’.[155] The White Bishop takes the turncoat Fat Bishop and the bishop’s diagonal move is surely represented visually by a long, swift diagonal passage across the stage, seemingly from nowhere, as the bewildered turncoat asks, ‘Where stood this Bishop all this while that I saw him not?’ (4.4.71). The White King tells him to put the taken piece, described simply as ‘covetousness’, ‘into the bag again’ (4.4.108).

Act 5, the depiction of Charles’s arrival in Madrid, opens with a transition scene, a masque-like scene with ‘*Loud music*’ (5.1sd). There are Latin orations, ‘abstruse things open’ (5.1.32) magically, reminiscent of the fantastic parting mountains of Inigo Jones’s masquing hall scenery, and there is a song.[156] The stage directions and the words of the song directly echo Beaumont’s *Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray’s Inn* that had honoured the marriage of Princess Elizabeth and Frederick in 1613, in which an altar and dancing statues feature as they do here, as Taylor and Sabol note.[157] Middleton provides a resolution of the pawns’ plot in a synthesis of three early modern commonplaces as ‘the world’s a stage, on which all parts are played’ (5.2.19), the closely related ‘life is a dream’ and ‘life is a game’, the main motif of this play, fuse together. The Black Bishop’s Pawn, now in his ‘*reverend habit*’ (5.2.4sd), confronts the White Queen’s Pawn. Neither yet knows that the Black Queen’s Pawn has cozened them both: in a bed-trick Middleton has used before, we have seen in dumb show the cunning Black Queen’s Pawn conveying the White Queen’s Pawn and Black Bishop’s Pawn to separate bedchambers and entering the male pawn’s chamber herself. He announces that he comes ‘to marry you to th’ gentleman / That last enjoyed you’ (5.2.47-8) and, believing that he slept with her, gloats to the still unviolated white pawn that he is both ‘the marrier – and the man’ (5.2.59), and now ‘quit’ with her for his exposure or ‘discovery’ (5.2.66). He is stunned to discover his bedfellow was in fact the Black Queen’s Pawn, who reveals his previous sexual indiscretions, including leaving her ‘with child, twice’ (5.2.104). The White Bishop’s Pawn and White Queen move and take the two lusty black pawns. The Black Knight’s Pawn imagines he can take the White Bishop’s Pawn but fails to take into account

[155] Limon, *Dangerous Matter*, 114.
[156] As Dutton remarks, the trip to Madrid is ‘the subject of most of the final act of the play’. See Dutton, *Buggeswords*, 135.
[157] Gary Taylor and Andrew Sabol, ‘Middleton, Music and Dance’, in Taylor and Lavagnino, eds, *Textual Companion*, 119-181 (134).

the White Queen's Pawn who finally gets her revenge on her first love's castrator, crying 'O merciless bloodhound! / 'Tis time that thou art taken' (5.2.115-16).

For the last scene, and the culmination of the game, the stage directions indicate that the high-ranking pieces now enter: the Black King, Queen, Duke, Bishop and Knight and the White Knight and Duke, but with the White King (who does not leave his chess kingdom, England) and Queen notably absent.[158] It is the White Knight who places himself at high risk now. As Sargent notes, 'It is appropriate that the play should conclude with a scene involving the high-ranking pieces, just as it was fitting that the start of the pawns' sub-plot should open the play'.[159] As food temporarily takes over as the overriding metaphor for the appetite for power, the White Knight professes that his preference for a first course would be 'hot ambition' (5.3.78). His opposite number, the Black Knight, admits 'We're about that already' (5.3.82), suggesting that the 'White Kingdom' (5.3.84) is merely a lean salad garden compared to the rich banquet other European conquests provide. The White Knight dissembles again, claiming a further 'vice' in that after a surfeit of food he is 'as covetous as a barren womb, / The grave, or what's more ravenous' (5.3.107-8). The Black Knight dismisses covetousness as simply 'good husbandry' (5.3.109), admitting to the amassed wealth in the vaults of their monasteries. Taking over from the two attacking chess knights, the White Duke now moves, questioning how he is going to manage his sexual appetite given the 'strict key of [Catholic] life' (5.3.121). The Black Knight dismisses lasciviousness as 'the trifle of all vices […] /The very novice of this house of clay' (5.3.125-26). When the Black Duke enquires, 'Are you ours yet?'(5.3.138), the White Knight lays claim to a final sin with 'the hidden'st venom (5.3.144), that of being 'an arch-dissembler' (5.3.145), never speaking the truth. The Black Knight thinks he can match this 'move' and capture his white counterpart and boasts: 'What we have done / Has been dissemblance ever' (5.3.158-59). But he has not paid attention to the game and, finishing the Black Knight's line, illustrating the swiftness of his final move over the board, and, I suggest, the stage, the White Knight exults:

> There you lie then,
> And the game's ours. We give thee checkmate by
> Discovery, King – the noblest mate of all. (5.3.159-61)

For 'checkmate by discovery' two chess pieces of the same colour operate together, as the duo of Charles and Buckingham do in their expedition to Madrid, initially travelling incognito under the names of Thomas and John Smith. The strategy involves one piece

[158] Even in *A Game at Chess: An Early Form*, ed. Taylor, the stage directions are clear on this point: 'Enter Bl. K.Q.D, with pawnes and Black Knight meeting the wh. Knight and Duke', 1816.
[159] Sargent, 'Theme and Structure', 726.

moving to reveal that the second is holding the King in check. As Taylor states, in this endgame the White Duke is behind the White Knight, protecting him, in the first 'rank', or row, of the Black House.[160] When the White Knight takes his black rival, the stationary Duke, with a clear path to the enemy King, is revealed or 'discovered'. The Black King, now in check, cries: 'I'm lost, I'm taken! (5.3.162). Saul's treatise variously describes 'A mate by discouery' as 'the worthiest of all', 'the noblest Mate of all', 'one of the pretyest trickes thou canst put vpon thy aduersarie at Chesse', and 'the most industrious mate of all'.[161] In the words of Breton, the White Knight 'take[s] by sleight a traitrous foe'.[162] In Breton's poem *The Chesse-Play,* the preceding lines of the stanza read:

> The Knight is knowledge how to fight
> Against his Princes enimies,
> He neuer makes his walke outright
> But leaps and skips, in wilie wise.[163]

Like Quomodo, Follywit and so many of Middleton's comic tricksters, the Black Knight (Gondomar) makes the mistake of prolonging the game and is beaten by the White Knight (Charles), operating the same moves, but with superior gamesmanship. The 'maske of Spaines ambition and malice' is duly 'pul'd off', the Black House discovered and checked as their perfidy is brought to light; the English White House wins the political game and the heir to the English throne avoids a disastrous 'mate' to the Infanta.[164] Their 'Queen' – the Protestant faith – is unscathed. Making his escape back to England, the White Knight is welcomed by the White King James as 'Truth's glorious masterpiece' (5.3.168).

White triumphs but we should not forget, as Richard Davies and Alan Young point out, that the 'White House's victory celebrations, as the black pieces slide into the 'bag of shame' (5.3.178), are 'part of an overall dream of Error'.[165] Whilst the game and their win, like the real expedition, reveals the dystopian ideals of the Black House and, as Thomas Cogswell notes, 'cut through years of diplomatic nicety', there has been failure in the politics of the White House too.[166] The White King, who has been depicted as Dutton says with the 'utmost respect and, perhaps, a prudent brevity' and the White Queen's Pawn are easily

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[160] Taylor, ed., *A Game at Chess: A Later Form*, 1881.
[161] Saul, *The famous game of Chesse-play,* C3$^{r}$ (worthiest); *The famous game of Chesse-play, aug. Barbier*, E4$^{r}$ (pretyest), E5$^{r}$ (noblest), G1$^{v}$ (most industrious).
[162] Breton, *The Chesse-Play,* l. 23; printed in *The Phoenix Nest* (London, 1593), 28-30.
[163] Ibid, ll. 19-22.
[164] Reynolds, *Vox Coeli,* B3$^{r}$.
[165] Richard A. Davies and Alan. R Young, '"Strange Cunning" in Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess' University of Toronto Quarterly*, 45/4 (1976), 236-245 (243).
[166] Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the coming of war, 1621-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 60.

gulled by forged letters and fraudulent mirrors, symbolic of the ill-conceived marriage match.[167] Kings are symbolized by the chess kings, the most valuable but weakest chess pieces. Furthermore the expectation of order associated with Chess is clouded by what Taylor terms the 'disordered world of "a dream"' in which there are 'no rules'.[168] The White Knight and Duke use 'dissemblance', the very same ruse or 'instrument that picks ope princes' hearts' (5.3.155) that the Black House use. The act of fraudulently outwitting the Black House at their own game becomes a competition in itself, a game within the game.[169] Though one might argue that the White's moral privilege has been lost there is no doubting the compliments paid to the cunning and bravery of these 'two princely pieces' (4.4.98), Charles and Buckingham, just as Saul considers checkmate by discovery the 'noblest Mate of all', requiring the player to be 'vigilant to espye the occasion for to bring it about'.[170] It was, as the White Knight states, a game 'Won with much hazard', but consequently 'with much more triumph' (5.3.173). Tension and risk add to the thrill of games and Huizinga's theories are of interest on this point. He considers that the competitive instinct 'is not in the first place a desire for power or a will to dominate. The primary thing is the desire to excel others, to be first, to be honoured for that'.[171] He considers that a game of Chess affords 'the purest example of victory which has nothing visible or enjoyable about it save the mere fact of winning'.[172] The prince and the duke had to place themselves in danger in the Spanish court – or travel across the chess board to the furthest point of the black side – and, as Cogswell states, 'pass themselves off as eager confederates of the Habsburgs' in order to trick the Spaniards into revealing their treachery and immorality.[173]

Whilst the Tables board often represents the body, the chess board's two symmetrical kingdoms tend to represent territories, and as Daniel O'Sullivan states, its sixty-four squares and thirty-two pieces are also 'capable of expressing so much of the human mind'.[174] The requirement for power and strategy, in piece and player respectively, allows the game to provide dynamic allegories which again work across genres. Dramatists harness all these capabilities. Whilst echoes remain of the medieval emblem of order, with four hierarchical social ranks, the early modern period makes sophisticated use of a further metaphoric quartet:

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[167] Dutton, *Buggeswords*, 136.
[168] Taylor, ed., *A Game at Chess: A Later Form*, 1827.
[169] This is another Huizinga theory, *Homo Ludens*, 52.
[170] Saul, *The famous game of Chesse-play*, aug. Barbier, E4[r].
[171] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 50.
[172] Ibid, 50.
[173] Cogswell, 'Thomas Middleton and the Court, 1624: *A Game at Chess* in Context', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly*, 47/4 (1984), 273-288 (277).
[174] O'Sullivan, ed., Introduction, *Chess in the Middle Ages*, 13.

the characteristics of supremacy, symmetry, sacrifice and surrender. The feature of move and counter-move can be mimicked dramatically and textually, and both the expressive terminology and the board's black and white binary are fully utilised.

The element of surrender is particularly well utilised in *The Tempest*, with its tale of usurpation and abjuration. The martial origins of Chess are evident in its emblematic use, especially in *Game at Chess* where, following the correct chain of command, it is the foot soldiers or pawns who move and are sacrificed first, with the metaphorical cavalry charge led by Prince Charles as the White Knight, the king a distanct figure. But the metaphor extends to sexual conquest too, notably the rape of *Women Beware Women* where power and rank are paramount.

The designation of pieces in human terms, from 'knights' to 'knaves', is one of the main reasons why games are successful representations of life in microcosm, and frequent use is made of a slippage between player and piece. In the rarely discussed comedy, *The Spanish Curate*, we have a useful counterpoint to the use of Chess in Middleton's tragedy. It shares the features of strategy and manipulation with an even clearer conflation of life and game. When Amaranta asks for Leandro's help with her next move in her Chess game, she simulatenously describes her Queen's fate and her own virtual imprisonment with the home and Leandro is unambiguous in his metaphoric transfer to the board, begging her, 'Move me'. Using the board as a weapon to fend off her unsuccessful seducer, her account to her husband of the game and the reason for the scattered pieces both reveals and conceals the unexpected 'ambush' from which she has escaped, her honour intact, just as Livia's commentary on what is happening on the chess board both masks and illuminates the Duke's rape of Bianca, so clearly the 'pawn' in the oft-quoted line: 'Your pawn cannot come back to relieve itself' (2.2.301).

In both plays Chess terminology is describing two different 'games' simultaneously, one sexual. The *Spanish Curate*'s real battle, however, is between the play's two brothers, Jamie and Henrique, and, as in battle, both sacrifice lesser 'pieces' in pursuit of their goal, just as occurs in *Game at Chess*. In all these plays Chess and both its methodology and terminology is woven into the very fabric of the plot as an active device, with terms such as 'blind mate' and 'checkmate by discovery' resonating from deep within the plots. The game in which Amaranta's chastity is on 'triall' is not merely theatrically interesting but links the agonistic contests of subplot and plot, juxtaposed as it is with the summons served on Octavio, Jacinta and Ascanio and the key scene in the court of law.

# CONCLUSION

We will probably never know for sure if Middleton himself was actually 'checked' and jailed for the satirical daring of *A Game at Chess*. Following the extraordinary nine-day run of performances, the King and Privy Council closed down the Globe and, for a while, all the London theatres and, as Gary Taylor says, 'ordered a manhunt for Middleton'.[1] As far as we know he never wrote another play. He died three years later, in 1627. But, to quote Taylor again, his final play 'was the first, and is still the most evocative and complex, characterization of a recognizably modern political world', with the force of the cloaking device of Chess 'intensifying the pleasures of interpretation'.[2] We may never know, either, whether Middleton is the author, though he is clearly the 'speaker', of the following short verse inscribed in the Dyce copy of Q2:

> A harmles game: coyned only for delight
> was playd betwixt the black house and the white
> the white house wan: yet stille the black doth bragge
> they had the power to put mee in the bagge
> use but your royall hand. Twill set mee free
> Tis but removing of a man that's mee.[3]

Like *The Spanish Curate*'s Leandro, who, when asked to advise on the game of Chess he is observing, suddenly places himself on the metaphorical chess board and begs Amaranta: 'Move me' (3.4.74), this verse shows that the dramatist either considered himself or was considered as much a part of the game, both gamester and chessman, as the characters are both players playing and pieces played.

At the outset of my research I was confident that I would find that study of the games embedded in drama would offer insights into the stakes and hazards of early modern life. In an age that was as perilous as it was rich in invention, where one could be imprisoned for debt and hanged for stealing, games, which have always represented in microcosm the activities of man, would surely express the contests within society and thereby further our understanding of the plays. Johan Huizinga's study of the inter-connection of play and culture has been of central importance and is explicit that all games have a stake of some sort.[4] In the early modern period risk and stake are bound up in a single word – 'hazard'. Not only is

[1] Taylor, *A Game at Chesse: An Early Form*, 1773.
[2] Ibid, 1775.
[3] Inscription in Dyce copy of Q2 (STC 17883) in the Victoria and Albert Museum Library, reproduced in T.H. Howard-Hill, ed., *A Game at Chess*, Appendix 1, 211.
[4] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 50.

Hazard also the name of a compulsive dice game, but 'chance' is the term for the caster's throw. In Shakespeare's *King Henry V,* on the eve of battle the Dauphin and the French lords are so confident of winning on the battlefield that they joke amongst themselves and suggest playing at dice for English prisoners. Rambures asks, 'Who will go to hazard with me for twenty prisoners?' (3.7.85-6); and the Constable warns him, 'You must first go yourself to hazard ere you have them' (3.7.87-8).[5] Today's equivalent would perhaps be to say he needs to put 'skin in the game', an aphorism particularly widespread in investment but also in gambling and politics.[6] It is precisely the gamester's self-risk that floored attempts in condemnatory tracts to compare gaming to usury. The early polemicist Northbrooke stated that:

> there is no usurie in the world so heinous, as the gaine gotten by this playe at Dyce, where all is gotten with a trice ouer the thumbe without anye trafficke or loane.[7]

As Eric Kerridge points out, however, the usurer's gain was 'assured'.[8] He cites Miles Mosse who, in 1595, preached:

> The usurer neuer aduentureth or hazardeth the losse of his principall: for he wil haue all sufficient securitie for the repaiment and restoring of it backe againe to himselfe.[9]

Gamesters, on the other hand, as another contemporary states, are 'sudainly poore, sudainly rich, changing their state at every chance; their life is as uncertain as the dice'.[10] Taking a risk is one of the defining characteristics of a game. In Huizinga's words, 'to dare, to take risks, to bear uncertainty, to endure tension – these are the essence of the play spirit'.[11]

It is the presence of games, with their agonistic core, that allows dramatists to explore this 'play spirit', the gamester's enjoyment of tension, not only in their villains (such as Quomodo, Livia, the Black Knight) but in heroes too (Erastus, Leandro, The White Knight).

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[5] Craik, ed., *Shakespeare: King Henry V*.
[6] See e.g., *OED*, skin, *n.*, Phrases P18.
[7] The explicit link between gaming and usury is echoed by Lambert Daneau, *Treatise touching Dyceplay and prophane Gaming*, Englished by Tho: Newton (printed at London for Abraham Veale, 1586) and William Perkins, *A Golden Chaine, OR The Description of Theologie, containing the order of the causes of Saluation and Damnation, according to Gods word* (Printed at London by Edward Alde, 1591). These arguments were short lived. See Tosney, 'Gaming in England', 245; Lajous, 'Playing for Profit', 60.
[8] Eric Kerridge, *Trade and Banking in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 34. See also Norman Jones, *God and the Moneylenders: Usury and Law in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), esp. 6-11, for the distinction between usury and interest and the insistence of shared risk in lending.
[9] Miles Mosse, *The Arraignment and Conviction of Vsvrie* (printed at London for Thomas Man, 1595), 53, cited in Kerridge, *Trade and Banking*, 34.
[10] Anon., *A Timely Advice. OR, A Treatise Of Play, and Gaming* (London, printed by Th. Harper for Richard Stevenson, 1640), 65.
[11] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 51.

The tension, between risk and reward, is perhaps best expressed by Hotspur who claims that his father's absence from battle 'lends a lustre and more great opinion / A larger dare to our great enterprise' (*1 Henry IV,* 4.1.76-7). Because of their representation of life (and even faces and bodies), their cosmic symbolism and their oppositional principles, games are potent allegorical devices with which to illuminate the wider, commonplace – and not so commonplace – games that society engages in, from the romantic chase to the financial gamble, and even war. The early modern passion for games invests them with a cultural currency and a lens through which to see these contests and culture's game-like attitude to, for example, women and adultery. The acknowledged addictive quality of the gaming experience facilitates the demonstration of obsession in characters, with patrimonies gambled, jewels representing loved ones lost and gained, physical risks taken to protect honour, coalitions entered to minimise risk and strategies played out with bluffing and cheating. Games and their varying levels of chance and strategy, all requiring the basic and primitive desire to win, provide a prism to reflect social climbing and falling, religious, generational and gender contests, and political power struggles and the penalties of both playing by the rules and of breaking the rules and the fickleness of fortune. The very language of games parallels that of so many other discourses. Consider, for example, the shared terms of game and war: win, victor, prize, vanquished, strategy; or those of economics: gamble, risk, profit, loss. Even the verbal contest of the juridical process, which might seem the very antithesis of game, is shown to have clear elements of play, taking place in a 'court', and with a system of restrictive rules and role-playing.[12] As Huizinga points out, the emblem of the scales of justice, whilst representing the weighing of evidence, is itself indicative of 'uncertain chance'.[13]

More surprising have been the insights afforded into the dramatists' theatrical art. Games serve the innate playfulness of an age in which wit itself was a game, but with a real seriousness, a dramatic purpose. They play a key role in the dramatic structure in which they are embedded so as to actively facilitate the plotting, in more complex ways than simply through metaphor. The choice a dramatist makes is careful and deliberate and even if the game is suggested in a source text, its use is enhanced. It is not just in *A Game at Chess*, which so obviously mimics a Chess game, that we find the plot action mirroring the game's features. In a great many plays I have found a marked congruence between the form of game and the action of a play so that the entire play is, in essence, an extension of the chosen game.

[12] See Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, chapter IV 'Play and Law', esp. 78.
[13] Ibid, 79.

This is perhaps best illustrated by my reading of *Arden of Faversham* as a game of tables with Arden viewed as a tableman progressing from the outer board in London to the home board in Faversham, protected on the board's points by his friend Franklin until he is separated from him and finally exposed as a 'blot' and murdered. Noteworthy too is the clear purpose behind, for instance, the choice of the dice game Inn and Inn, with its requirement to throw 'doublets', for *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon*'s plot with its emphasis on pairs and doublings. Rules of life and rules of the game of Ruff concatenate in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* in a game that is aborted before it begins. I am ready to accept that such allusions may have escaped the attention of some playgoers but we can still appreciate the dexterity of the dramatists' textual game. Because of the enormous variation in levels of audience sophistication, Andrew Gurr considers that John Webster, for instance, offered the 'routine epigrammatic moral' for some and 'an oblique *lusus* for the learned'.[14] Ben Jonson was one of those who wrote of the frustration he felt, clearly expressed in the Prologue to his *Staple of News* (1625), at 'the vulgar sort / Of nutcrackers, that only come for sight' (Prol. 7-8).[15] He and writers such as Dekker, Marston and Webster, Gurr proposes, 'had to use print' to ensure that allusions and allegories were properly absorbed by 'learned eares' or later readers of the quartos.[16] The same could be suggested regarding the structure provided by games. Sonja Musser Golladay has revealed that the Alfonso MS, Alfonso X of Castile's thirteenth-century 'Book of Games', is in itself a game or a puzzle with key instances of intentional use of symbolic numbers with, for instance, sixty-four folios for the section on Chess, mirroring the chess board's number of squares.[17] Similarly the calligram of Chess, a sixty-four word duologue, that Margaret Jones-Davies has found secreted into *The Tempest*'s Chess scene, may well not have been noted at the time. Just because this could not have been registered on the stage, it does not follow that it was not intended by Shakespeare, who is possibly exercising what Harry Berger refers to as 'the indomitable zest for literary *jouissance*' of so many early modern authors.[18] Lukas Erne has challenged the view that Shakespeare was indifferent to the publication of his plays, and even argues for 'theatrical' and 'literary'

[14] Gurr, *Playgoing*, 124, 101.
[15] Ben Jonson, *Staple of News*, ed. Anthony Parr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).
[16] Gurr, *Playgoing*, 121, 3. The term 'learned eares' (Prol. 11) appears in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels: Or The Fountain of Self-Love* (1600), *Ben Jonson, Vol. IV: Cynthia's Revels, Poetaster, Sejanus, Eastward Ho*, eds C.H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932).
[17] Musser Golladay, 'Historical, Artistic and Metaphysical Dimensions', 1227-1230.
[18] Harry Berger, Jr, *Imaginary Audition: Shakespeare on Stage and Page* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 18, cited in Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 25.

versions of certain plays.[19] Word games, numerology and the rebus-like puzzles hidden in emblems and heraldry were games educated Elizabethans and Jacobeans relished.

Returning to the theatrical side of the art, I believe, furthermore, that some of the dramaturgy is even 'choreographed' by a game. Not only the peculiar moves of chess knights and diagonally-moving bishops but, for example, the 'dealing' of pairs of characters in *Your Five Gallants* and the poker-like final show of hands that occurs through the masque of this play; or the invisible gaming table in the final scene in the Wise-woman of Hogsdon's house, with all Chartley's jilted wives, vengeful friends and abused elders casting their retorts or accusations in turn.

I have concentrated on the plays in which table games were dramatized on stage but there are further avenues of research, such as more physical pursuits – ball games for instance, and chasing games. Bethany Packard's contribution to Robin O'Bryan's book examines only a selection of references to Prisoner's Base and Barley-break, games in which, as she says, 'each player is both pursuer and pursued'.[20] The connection between game and war is another rich area for further analysis, a key text for which is *King Henry V*.[21] The only stage directions which directly refer to an inset game in Shakespeare's plays are those for Chess in *The Tempest*, but, as can be most readily seen from my appendices, like his fellow dramatists Shakespeare nevertheless uses gaming references regularly, often several in a single play, including more physical games such as billiards, bowls, quoits and tennis. Even with such games, which do not allow dramatic simulation due to the large arena they require, the specific metaphor can be shown to be carefully and deliberately chosen (or carefully deployed if originating from a source text). In *Henry V*, the insulting gift to the English king of tennis balls is often mentioned in criticism. It derives from Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and the anonymous earlier play, *The Famous Victories of Henry the fifth* (1598), and can be found also in the medieval *Brut* chronicles (its first occurrence) and a ballad, *The Batayle of*

[19] Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 27.
[20] See Bethany Packard, '"To catch the fellow, and come back again": Games of Prisoner's Base in Early Modern English Drama' in O'Bryan ed., *Games and Game Playing in European Art and Literature*, 183-202.
[21] Forthcoming (August or September 2019), however, is *Games and War in Early Modern English Literature: From Shakespeare to Swift*, eds Holly Faith Nelson and Jim Daems (Amsterdam University Press) which will include Louise Fang's essay: '"Can this cockpit hold the vasty fields of France?": Cockfighting and the representation of war in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (information from personal correspondence with co-editor Holly Nelson. Also Paul Campbell writes on Tennis and *Henry V* in an unpublished doctoral thesis: 'Recovering the Sporting Context of Shakespeare's *Henry V*: Reading Court Tennis in Elizabethan and Jacobean England' (Australian National University, 2007).

*Agyncourt* (c. 1419).[22] The game we now call Real Tennis, to distinguish it from lawn tennis, is thought to have originated in medieval Europe, and to have simulated a battle for a castle, the participants required to attack or defend its gate, and thus followed sports such as jousting as simulated war-play. It was immensely popular in France and by the late sixteenth century there were some two hundred and fifty courts in Paris alone, where it was (and still is) called 'jeu de paume' (palm game), the ball originally hit with the palm of the hand. It was the favoured game of the nobility and a succession of kings, as was the case when the game spread to England, though it was also played by commoners, from tradesmen to clergy.[23] There could be no clearer indication of the paradox that 'play is battle and battle is play' than Henry's 'return' or linguistic tennis.[24] He instructs the French messengers to report back to the Dauphin: 'Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler / That all the courts of France shall be disturbed / With chases' (1.2.264-66). In an extended conceit he uses eight tennis terms – rackets, balls, set, strike, hazard, match, courts, chases – many more than the sources provide, and makes tennis his idiom for battle. Like Hotspur, he shows the readiness to 'wrangle' that generalship and gamesmanship require. Of particular note is that whereas the *Brut* chronicler continues to portray the siege of Harfleur in terms of a medieval tennis match, Shakespeare restricts the tennis analogy to the scenes that take place at court, deliberately playing on the semantic parallel of tennis court and royal court because the French court and crown is what the war is about. When the action moves away from royal courts to the battle-field, or to other contests such as dealing with his own trio of traitors, Cambridge, Scroop and Grey, Shakespeare moves on to new gaming metaphors, including the terminology of games that were also likely pastimes of Prince Hal and his Eastcheap companions, bowling, dog-racing and cock-fighting.

I do not claim, of course, that metaphors of game are exclusive to early modern drama. Cards and the chess board continue to inspire writers as different as Alexander Pope, Anne Brontë, Lewis Carroll and Samuel Beckett, to name just a few.[25] Scholarly coverage of the use of games in other literary periods is reasonably extensive, although, apart from a

[22] See Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 4.376-408 and Craik, ed., *Henry V*, 6-11. The *Brut* Chronicles (a collective name for a number of medieval chronicles in verse and prose about the history of England, named after the legendary founder, Brutus) and the anonymous ballad c. 1419 are discussed in Gillmeister, *Tennis*, 111-116.
[23] See Roman Krznaric, *The First Beautiful Game: Stories of Obsession in Real Tennis* (Oxford: Ronaldson Publications, 2006), 31-35 and Gillmeister, *Tennis*, 84-99. Krznaric relates that in 1451 the Bishop of Exeter complained about the nuisance caused by tennis matches between clergy and laity in a churchyard, 32.
[24] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 41.
[25] e.g., Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (cards); Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (Chess); Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland* (cards) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (Chess); Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* and *Endgame* (Chess).

doctoral thesis by Glen Downey on the Chess motif in Victorian fiction, studies tend to be author- rather than period-specific.[26] If one writer spawns more discourse than most it is probably Lewis Carroll whose creative output, as Kathleen Blake says, is 'overwhelmingly one of rule-based games'.[27] It has, however, been suggested that Middleton's deployment of the Chess metaphor influenced later writers. Inga-Stina Ewbank noted in 1963 that the game of Chess that Helen plays with Hargrave in Anne Brontë's *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is a 'structural device' 'so like that used in Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, II, ii, as to make one wonder whether, consciously or subconsciously, it is an echo'.[28] Stevie Davies identifies the same debt in her edition of Brontë's novel, adding that the game 'figures the war between the sexes enacted in Hargrave's attempt to entrap and "conquer" Helen'.[29] Downey considers that *Through the Looking Glass* follows in the tradition of Middleton's political allegory, with anthropomorphic chess pieces and a plot structured on the solution to a chess problem.[30] But Carroll was a mathematician and the moves his characters make are strictly in accordance with the laws of the game, whereas Middleton and company adopt an approach to the metaphor characterised by the nonchalance or *sprezzatura* of a period when wit was itself a game played seriously, collapsing the rules as the purpose suited. It is in the early modern period that the passion for games was at a peak. Games were new to England, with a frisson deriving from attempts at prohibition and their underlying symbolic and divinatory aspects. Their dramatization within plays is not accidental; they are not mere decoration or scene-fillers. The vogue for games and their embedded signification endows them with a currency which in turn provides dramatists with a novel shorthand device with which to communicate and sitr in their audiences a vicarious willingness to wrangle and imagine characters as persons and pieces. But nor is the *lingua franca* they provide their sole purpose. Whilst medieval writers used the symbolic order of the chessmen for instructive moralities, and dice and cards were identified with Vice in moral Interludes, it is with the early modernists that a sophisticated use of the subtleties of the gaming metaphor develop apace.[31] The basic signal

[26] Glen Robert Downey, 'The Truth about Pawn Promotion: The Development of the Chess Motif in Victorian Fiction' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Victoria, 1998).
[27] Kathleen Blake, *Play, Games, and Sport: The Literary Works of Lewis Carroll* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974), 62.
[28] Inga-Stina Ekeblad (now Ewbank), '*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and *Women Beware Women*', *Notes and Queries*, 10 (December 1963), 449-50 (450). Ewbank sources a copy of 'Middleton, Thomas, Plays, 1657' in the catalogue compiled from the Brontë family library.
[29] Stevie Davies, ed., *Anne Bronte The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (London: Penguin, 1996), 520.
[30] Downey, 'Development of the Chess Motif', iii.
[31] Muriel Bradbrook, *English Dramatic Form* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970), notes that 'a favourite form for the Moral plays appears to have been the game of Chess or Cards, with the knaves of the pack generally identified with Vice', 46, 60.

of error offered by games underpins their deployment as a nuanced synthesis of plot device and emblem, resonating and intersecting with thematic discourses through their methodology and terminology. For the spectator or reader, the discovery of the fulcrum provided by games not only intensifies the pleasure of intetpreting metaphor, but furthers our appreciation of early modern dramaturgy and provides a window onto the likely staging. Given the acknowledged keenness of the age in hiding and detecting messages in such things as emblems, mottos, heraldry and numerology, it is revelatory to find what is hidden in and revealed by games. It is, to use a more modern phrase, a game-changer.

# **APPENDIX A:** INSET GAMES

| DATE | G | DRAMATIST | PLAY(scene) | COMPANY/PLAYHOUSE | GAME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1550 | M | Anon | *Nice Wanton* (B1$^{r}$) | not known | Dice, Cards |
| 1556 | C | Mr S | *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (2.2) | Christ's Church, Cambridge | Cards (Trump) |
| 1582 | C | Anon | *Game at Cards* (lost) | not known | Cards |
| 1594 | ? | Anon | *The Set at Maw* (lost) | Admiral's Men/ Rose | Cards (Maw) |
| 1588 | H | Marlowe | *Tamburlaine the Great Pt II* (4.1) | Admiral's Men / Rose | Cards |
| 1592 | T | Anon | *Arden of Faversham* (14) | not known | Tables |
| 1592 | T | Kyd | *Soliman and Perseda* (2.1) | not known | Dice (Mumchance) |
| 1597 | C | Chapman | *An Humorous Day's Mirth* (8) | Admiral's Men / Rose | Cards (& lottery) |
| 1598 | C | Porter | *Two Angry Women of Abington* (1.1) | Admiral's Men / Rose | Tables |
| 1603 | T | Heywood | *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (8) | Worcester's Men / Rose | Cards (eight games inc Vide-Ruff) |
| 1604 | C | Chapman | *All Fools* (5.2) | Children of the Chapel / Blackfriars | Dice |
| 1604 | H/T | Chapman | *Bussy d'Ambois* (1.1) | Children of Paul's / Paul's | Chess |
| 1604 | C | Dekker/Webster | *Westward Ho* (4.1) | Children of Paul's / Paul's | Cards (Noddy) |
| 1604 | C | Middleton | *Michaelmas Term* (2.1) | Children of Paul's / Paul's | Dice |
| 1604 | C | Heywood | *The Wise-woman of Hogsdon* (1.1) | Queen Anne's Men? / not known | Dice (Inn and Inn) |
| 1606 | C | Chapman | *Sir Giles Goosecap* (4.1) | Children of the Chapel / Blackfriars | Chess |
| 1607 | C | Middleton | *Your Five Gallants* (2.3) | Children of the Chapel / Blackfriars | Dice, Cards (Primero) |
| 1610 | H/T | Chapman | *Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* (3.2) | Children of the Chapel / Whitefriars | Chess |
| 1610-14 | C | Rowley | *A Woman Never Vexed* (2.1) | not known | Dice |
| 1607-8 | T | Chapman | *The Tragedy of Byron* (4.2) | Children of the Chapel / Blackfriars | Chess, Cards (Primero) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1609 | T | Daborne | *A Christian Turned Turk* (1) | not known | Dice (Hazard) |
| 1610 | T | Fletcher | *The Tragedy of Valentinian* (2.1) | King's Men / Globe, Blackfriars | Dice |
| 1611 | C | Cooke | *Greene's Tu Quoque* (9) | Queen Anne's Men / Red Bull | Dice, Cards (Gleek) |
| 1611 | R | Shakespeare | *The Tempest* (5.1) | King's Men / Globe, Blackfriars | Chess |
| 1615 | C | Tomkis | *Albumazar* (3.5) | Trinity College, Cambridge | Cards (Gleek) |
| 1621 | T | Middleton | *Women Beware Women* (2.2) | not known | Chess |
| 1622 | C | Fletcher / Massinger | *The Spanish Curate* (3.4) | King's Men / Globe | Chess |
| 1624 | PS | Middleton | *A Game at Chess* | King's Men / Globe | Chess |
| 1621-33 | T | Ford | *Love's Sacrifice* (2.2) | Queen Henrietta's Men / Cockpit | Chess |
| 1631 | T | Shirley | *Love's Cruelty* (1.2) | Queen Henrietta's Men / Cockpit | Cards (one (& thirty) |
| 1633 | C | Shirley | *The Gamester* (Act 2) | Queen Henrietta's Men / Cockpit | Dice |

Key:

| G | Genre |
|---|---|
| C | Comedy |
| M | Morality |
| H | History |
| R | Romance |
| PS | Political Satire |
| T | Tragedy |
| ? | not known |

**CARD GAMES**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1566 | Mr S | *Gammer Gurton's Needle* | Trump |
| 1587 | Marlowe | *Tamburlaine Part II* | no specific game mentioned |
| 1597 | Chapman | *An Humorous Day's Mirth* | no specific game mentioned |
| 1603 | Heywood | *Woman Killed with Kindness* | Noddy, Double Ruff, Knave out of Doors, Lodam, Saint, New Cut, Post and Pair, Vide-ruff |
| 1604 | Dekker/Webster | *Westward Ho* | Noddy |
| 1607 | Middleton | *Your Five Gallants* | character called Primero |
| 1611 | Cooke | *Greene's Tu Quoque* | Gleek |
| 1615 | Tomkis | *Albumazar* | Gleek |
| 1631 | Shirley | *Love's Cruelty* | One-and-Thirty |

**BACKGAMMON/TABLES**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1592 | Anon | *Arden of Faversham* |
| 1598 | Porter | *Two Angry Women of Abington* |

**DICE**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1592 | Kyd | *Soliman and Perseda* | Mumchance |
| 1604 | Chapman | *All Fools* | unnamed dice game |
| 1604 | Heywood | *Wise-woman of Hogsdon* | unnamed, but identifiable as Inn and Inn |
| 1604 | Middleton | *Michaelmas Term* | unnamed dice game |
| 1607 | Middleton | *Your Five Gallants* | unnamed dice game |
| 1609 | Daborne | *A Christian Turned Turk* | unnamed, but identifiable as Hazard |
| 1610 | Rowley | *A Woman Never Vexed* | unnamed dice game |
| 1610 | Fletcher | *Tragedy of Valentinian* | unnamed dice game |
| 1611 | Cooke | *Greene's Tu Quoque* | Novum |
| 1633 | Shirley | *The Gamester* | unnamed dice game (character called Will Hazard) |

**CHESS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1604 | Chapman | *Bussy d'Ambois* |
| 1606 | Chapman | *Sir Giles Goosecap* |
| 1607 | Chapman | *The Tragedy of Charles, Duke of Byron* |
| 1610 | Chapman | *Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* |
| 1611 | Shakespeare | *The Tempest* |
| 1621 | Middleton | *Women Beware Women* |
| 1622 | Fletcher/Massinger | *The Spanish Curate* |
| 1624 | Middleton | *A Game at Chess* |
| 1633? | Ford | *Love's Sacrifice* |

Appendix based on information in Joseph McCullen, 'Parlor and Tavern Games' and Delmar Solem, 'Elizabethan Game Scenes', supplemented by my own research.

## APPENDIX B: GAME REFERENCES (those with 'inset' games in bold)

| DRAMATIST | PLAY | GAMES |
|---|---|---|
| **ANON** | ***Arden of Faversham*** | **Tables** |
| ANON | *A Knack to Know a Knave* | Dice, Cards |
| ANON | *Look about you* | Bowling, Tennis |
| ANON | *Nobody and Somebody* | Post and Pair |
| ANON | *The Victim of Delight* | Shuttlecock |
| Lording BARRY | *The Family of Love* | Maw, Quintain |
| BEAUMONT | *The Woman Hater* | Dun's in the Mire |
| BEAUMONT/ FLETCHER | *The Captain*<br>*The Chances*<br>*The Maid's Tragedy*<br>*The Scornful Lady*<br>*Monsieur Thomas*<br>*The Knight of the Burning Pestle*<br>*The Night Walker* | Barley-break, Nine Holes<br>Cross & Pile, Ducks & Drakes<br>Cards<br>Bowling, Tennis, Tops, Traytrip<br>Span-Counter, 'set up rest'<br>Shoeing the Wild Mare<br>Tops |
| BROME (Caroline dramatist) | *Antipodes*<br>*Jovial Crew*<br>*The New Academy* | Base<br>Mumchance<br>Bone-ace, Gresco, Primo visto My Ladies Hole, Tickle-me-quicklie |
| CHAPMAN/ JONSON/ MARSTON | *Eastward Ho* | Balloon, Ducks & Drakes Gresco, Hazard, Primero, Tennis |
| **CHAPMAN** | ***All Fools*** | **Dice,** Barley-break, Bowling, Shuttlecock, Tennis |
| | ***An Humorous Day's Mirth*** | **Cards** |
| | ***Bussy D'Ambois*** | **Chess** |
| | *May-Day* | Maw |
| | ***Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*** | **Chess** |
| | ***Sir Giles Goosecap*** | **Chess** |
| | ***The Tragedy of Byron*** | **Chess**, Primero |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *The Gentleman Usher* | Fox in the Hole, Laugh and Lie Down |
| **COOKE** | ***Greene's Tu Quoque*** | **Gleek**, **Novum,** Ducks & Drakes |
| **DABORNE** | ***A Christian Turned Turk*** | **Hazard** |
| DAY | *Isle of Gulls* | Tennis |
| DEKKER | *Blurt, Master Constable* | Dice, Noddy, Tables, Tennis Laugh and Lie Down |
| | *Penny Wise Pound Foolish* | Primero |
| | *Satiromastix* | All Hid |
| | *The Honest Whore Pt 1* | Barley-break |
| | *The Honest Whore Pt 2* | Bowling |
| | *The Virgin Martyr* | Barley-break |
| | *The Witch of Edmonton* | Cherry Pit, Ducks & Drakes Tennis |
| DEKKER/ CHETTLE/ HAUGHTON | Patient Grissel | Maw |
| **DEKKER** / **WEBSTER** | ***Westward Ho*** | **Noddy**, Dun's in the Mire |
| | *Northward Ho* | Span-Counter |
| NATHAN FIELD | *A Woman is a Weathercock* | Bowling, Quintain, Primero |
| **FLETCHER/ MASSINGER** | ***The Spanish Curate*** | **Chess** |
| **FLETCHER** | The Tragedy of ***Valentinian*** | **Dice** |
| **JOHN FORD** (Jacobean & Caroline dramatist) | ***Love's Sacrifice*** | **Chess** |
| | *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* | 'set up his rest' |
| | *The Fancies, Chaste and Noble* | Tennis |
| | *The Lover's Melancholy* | Shuttlecock |
| **HEYWOOD** | ***A Woman Killed with Kindness*** | **Vide-Ruff,** Double Ruff, Noddy, Knave out of Doors, Lodam, Saint, New Cut, Post and Pair |
| | *Four Prentices of London* | Balloon |
| | ***The Wise-woman of Hogsdon*** | **Inn and Inn**, Hoodman Blind |
| JONSON | *A Tale of a Tub* | Crambo |
| | *Bartholomew Fair* | Crambo, Figgum, Leapfrog, Making and Marrying, Mumchance (Tom Quarlous is a gamester) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Cynthia's Revels* | Primero, Shuttlecock, Tennis |
| | *Epicoene* or *The Silent Woman* | Primero, Tennis |
| | *Every Man in His Humour* | Fayles, Shovel-groat, Tick Tack |
| | *Every Man Out of His Humour* | Passage, Primero |
| | *Magnetic Lady* | Muss, Crimp |
| | *The Alchemist* | Gleek, Mumchance, Post and Pair Primero, Traytrip (and Surly is 'a gamester') |
| | *The Case is Altered* | Hitty-Titty |
| | *The Devil is an Ass* | Figgum, Gleek |
| | *The New Inn* | Crambo, Loggats, Tops |
| | *The Sad Shepherd* | Barley-break, Base |
| | *The Staple of News* | Tennis |
| | *Volpone* | Primero, Balloon |
| **KYD** | ***Soliman and Perseda*** | **Mumchance** |
| **MARLOWE** | *Edward II* | Base |
| | ***Tamburlaine the Great, Pt II*** | **Cards** |
| JOHN MARSTON | *The Insatiate Countess* | Primero |
| | *The Malcontent* | Shuttlecock, Trap |
| | *What You Will* | Badminton |
| MASSINGER | *The City Madam* | Bowling |
| | *The Guardian* | Barley-break, Hoodman Blind Quoits |
| MIDDLETON/ DEKKER | *The Roaring Girl* | Irish, Shovel-groat |
| MIDDLETON/ ROWLEY | *The Changeling* | Barley-break |
| | *A Fair Quarrel* | Wrestling |
| MIDDLETON/ WEBSTER | *Anything for a Quiet Life* | Passage |
| **MIDDLETON** | ***A Game at Chess*** | **Chess allegory** |
| | *A Mad World My Masters* | Hoodman Blind, Muss, cards |
| | ***Michaelmas Term*** | **Dice,** Laugh and Lie Down |
| | *The Nice Valour* | Tennis, Chess, Primero, Billiards |
| | *No Wit, No Help like a Woman's* | Bowling, Cards, Dice |
| | *The Old Law* | refs to people as 'a trick of discarded cards', 'Coat' cards and life as a game |
| | *The Phoenix* | Shuttlecock, Tennis |
| | *The Revenger's Tragedy* | refs to four cards as a trick |
| | *The Spanish Gypsy* | 'set up his rest', Trapsticks |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *A Trick to Catch the Old One* | Tennis, Dice |
| | *Wit at Several Weapons* | Ruff,Hot-cockles, Blindman's Buff, Trapstick, Cards (and character called Cunningame) |
| | ***Women Beware Women*** | **Chess**, Trapsticks, Hot-cockles Battledores, Shittlecock |
| | ***Your Five Gallants*** | **Dice**, characters called Primero and Mistress New Cut |
| | *A Yorkshire Tragedy* | Dice |
| GEORGE PEELE | *The Old Wives Tale* | Ruff, Trump |
| **HENRY PORTER** | ***Two Angry Women of Abington*** | **Tables**, Tennis, All Hid, Bowling |
| ROWLEY | *All's Lost by Lust* | Maw, Tick Tack, Whipper Ginny, In-an-In |
| | ***A Woman never Vexed*** | **Dice** (Passage, Hazard), Trol-my-Dame |
| SHADWELL (Caroline dramatist) | *The Royal Shepherdess* | Barley-break, Trap |
| | *A True Widow* | Crimp |
| **SHAKESPEARE** | *All's Well that Ends Well* | Hoodman Blind |
| | *Anthony and Cleopatra* | Cards, Billiards, Fast and Loose Muss |
| | *As You Like It* | Quintain |
| | *The Comedy of Errors* | 'set up rest' |
| | *Coriolanus* | Tops |
| | *Cymbeline* | Base |
| | *Hamlet* | All Hid, Hoodman Blind, Loggats |
| | *Henry IV Part 1* | Quoits |
| | *Henry IV Part II* | Shoeing the Wild Mare |
| | *Henry IV Part II* | Shovel-groat, Tennis |
| | *Henry V* | Tennis, Bowls, Dice, Leapfrog, 'set up rest' |
| | *Henry VI* | Span-Counter |
| | *Henry VIII* | Primero, Tennis |
| | *King Lear* | 'set up rest', Handy Dandy |
| | *King John* | Fast and Loose |
| | *Love's Labour's Lost* | All Hid, More Sacks to the Mill Novum, Pushpin, Tops, Post and Pair, Fast and Loose |
| | *Measure for Measure* | Tick Tack |
| | *The Merchant of Venice* | 'set up rest', Dice |
| | *The Merry Wives of Windsor* | Fast and Loose, Primero, Shovelboard, Tick Tack, Tops |
| | A *Midsummer Night's Dream* | Nine Men's Morris |
| | *Pericles* | Tennis |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Romeo and Juliet* | Dun's in the Mire, 'set up rest' |
| | *Taming of the Shrew* | One and Thirty |
| | ***The Tempest*** | **Chess** |
| | *Troilus and Cressida* | Bowling |
| | *Twelfth Night* | Cherry Pit, Tops, Traytrip |
| | *Two Noble Kinsmen* | Barley-break |
| | *A Winter's Tale* | Trol-my-Dame |
| SHIRLEY | *Hyde Park* | gaming, Noddy |
| (Caroline dramatist) | *Love's Cruelty* | Laugh and Lie Down, One and Thirty |
| | ***The Gamester*** | **Dice, Cards (& character called Will Hazard)** |
| | *The Grateful Servant* | Quintain |
| | *The Lady of Pleasure* | Saint |
| **Mr S** | ***Gammer Gurton's Needle*** | **Trump** |
| **TOMKIS** | ***Albumazar*** | **Gleek**, Double-Ruff |
| WEBSTER | *A Cure for a Cuckold* | Cross and Pile |
| | *The Weakest Goeth to the Wall* | Bowling, Maw |
| | *The White Devil* | Tennis, 'set up rest' |
| WHETSTONE | *Promos and Cassandra* | Fast and Loose |
| ROBERT WILSON | *The Three Ladies of London* | Bowling |

Main source: Paul Brewster's 'Games and Sports in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Literature', which is presented alphabetically by game.

This is supplemented by my own research.

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**Figure 18: Frontispiece to Charles Cotton, *The Compleat Gamester* (London, 1674). RB120898 The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.**