A Game of Hazard, Per Chance:

Reading Dice Games and Predestined Action in *Troilus and Criseyde* and *Troilus and Cressida*

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Dedicated to those who have supported me, including every professor who has taught, influenced, and inspired me.

Abstract

This thesis examines the references to the dice game Hazard in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* and the Folio version of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* as means to expand the understanding of Troilus's ability to act as an agent of change within his predetermined story. Utilizing Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* as the foundation for game and play, this work focuses on Hazard as a game of chance present in both works. As a dice game that relies entirely on chance, Hazard is a game and a place of moral and religious anxiety as demonstrated through a survey of dice-based divination and the game itself as it appears in the early modern period. For medieval and early modern literary scholarship, the interest in games and play has dramatically increased through the efforts of scholars such as Laura Kendrick, Wolfgang Rudat, Serina Patterson, Gina Bloom, and Tom Bishop. Chaucer's direct reference to a winning Hazard roll in Book IV complicates and expands Troilus's philosophical crisis about his agency. In the Folio's PPrologue Hazard is also directly referenced, framing chance as hanging over the skill-based games of love and war in *Troilus and Cressida.* While the war in *Troilus and Cressida* is situated as a pause the love story, the character's actions of the characters in this new telling are still unable to alter the result of the known story. Throughout the play the audience knows that nothing they witness can alter the fact that Cressida will leave, and Troy will fall. Both Chaucer's and Shakespeare's audiences know the fate of Troy just as God, in both Boethian philosophy and Protestant theology, knows the fate of every soul but still leaves space for free will. The audiences, therefore, in both versions of the story are placed within a quasi-omnipotent state, left knowing the result but only able to witness the action as it falls, leading to the inevitable.

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Chapter 1: The Rules of the Game: Historiography & Hazard

When one says they are interested in studying games in the medieval or Renaissance, it regularly results in a conversation about representations of the past within modern video, board, or role-playing games. While the conversation around representations of pre-modern cultures and societies in contemporary pop culture is important, it is not the only conversation around games worth having. As Serina Patterson notes in the Introduction to *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, “Games- with their ability to reflect cultural processes, values, and impulses- have long held the fascination of anthropologists, psychologists, historians, and folklorists, but few of the pioneers in the study of games discuss medieval games in any detail.”[1] In this claim, Patterson makes a necessary distinction through absence: scholars of literature have not regularly engaged with the study of games, with the exception of theories of play and playing in the early modern theatre. *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, published in 2015, is one of the first collections of works on the relationship and presence of games within medieval literature. The collection follows a slow , increase scholarly interest in medieval games and sports since the World Wars from many scholars such as Rhiannon Purdie, Martha Bayless, William Klingshirn, John Marshall Carter, W.L. Braekman, and others. Where the conversation surrounding medieval games in the last 50 years is sparse, interest in games, gaming culture, and play in the early modern period has increased in frequency as the interest in material culture and historicism increased in literary scholarship.

Dice games and games of chance, games which rely on luck or chance exclusively rather than strategy, skill, or any other direct human involvement, have received less attention. Chess, falconry, hunting, and many other games and sport are seen as the pursuit of the nobles and

[1] Patterson, *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, 3.

elite,[2] where dice and games of chance instead rely on luck. Unlike well-trained hounds or complicated chess strategies, luck is something equally likely to be possessed by a lord or an apprentice. Dice games, like many other aspects of popular culture, were widely spread and likely altered over time and space. Combining the lack of prestige, the ease of access, and no need for skill, dice, and games of chance exist in a small space within history and game studies that, while possibly harder to concretely place or know, transcend amusement and past time and reach into religion and morality..

For early modern English literary scholars who focus on drama, games and playing have been associated with the theatre almost since the conception of the commercial English stage. John Northbrooke's 1577 *Spiritus est vicarius* is both anti-theatrical and anti-dicing, as Katherine Steele Brokaw points out in her chapter in *Games and Theatre in Shakespeare's England*. Dice and dice games posed a moral danger to the players, similarly to the theatre, although dice and games of chance were unique in their ability to tempt and corrupt as the games required no practice nor skill.[3]

Gina Bloom's work on games and the early modern stage has begun a large and wide-ranging conversation within the field that spans a variety of types of play and games. Bloom's *Gaming the Stage* creates a compelling reciprocal connection between the early modern theatre and the gaming and gambling culture of the time. She argues that the theatre and stage inherently function like games that the audience interacts with, playing through analysis of gaming scenes on the stage.[4] Bloom's reading is "less *semiological* than *phenomenological,* attending not only to what games mean but also how it feels to play them or even watch them played by others."[5]

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[2] Reeves, *Pleasures and Pastimes in Medieval England*, 103–14.
[3] Brokaw, "The Roll of the Dice and the Whims of Fate in Sixteenth-Century Morality Drama," 94–95.
[4] Bloom, *Gaming the Stage: Playable Media and the Rise of English Commercial Theater*, 3–8.
[5] Bloom, 9.

Bloom's method of analysis is, at least in part, emulated in this work as it will address the mechanics of the game of Hazard and explore what audiences for both works might have experienced or understood through their knowledge of games and play. The games that Bloom analyzes are chess, backgammon, and cards, all of which qualify, for this paper, as games of skill insofar as they rely on the player's strategy more so than chance or luck.

To bring a productive analytical framework for the dice game Hazard in *Troilus and Criseyde* and *Troilus and Cressida,* I will develop a three-pronged approach: 1) the philosophical and aesthetic scholarly conversation stemming from Johan Huizinga's 1938 *Homo Ludens* to establish constraints of games and play 2) a survey of the history of dice and dice games of chance leading into the medieval period, and 3) the history and rules of the dice game of Hazard specifically. This approach will develop a theoretical and historical framework to expand the Hazard references in both works from merely a nod to a contemporary pastime to a space of expansion within the works' representation of agency and free will, and contextualize the audience's experience of the stories within the larger, known Troy narrative.

I. What is Meant by Play

Roger Caillois ends his 1958 work, *Man, Play, and Games*, with the claim that

> various approaches— from psychology to mathematics and, in passing, history and sociology— by reason of their special biases have been unable to contribute anything too fruitful to the study of play…these results are still without true meaning or impact, unless they are interpreted within the context of the central problem posed by the indivisibility of the world of play.[6]

[6] Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games*, 175.

Caillois's claim, though now eclipsed by 65 years of scholarship, can still be applicable, possibly more so to the study of medieval games. The aspect of play that Caillois identifies as essential to the study of games is indivisibility. Play cannot be divided into various parts nor parsed into one genre or field of study. It is inherently both independent and interdisciplinary. Play is mutable and complete in and of itself, yet it is still recognizable and changing.

An enduring characteristic of playas described in *Homo Ludens* is the "magic circle" or play-ground that necessarily separates play from "real" or real life. Play exists in a "temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own."[7] Play, according to Huizinga, exists outside of binaries such as virtue and vice and Chaucer's pilgrims' game and earnest,[8] yet those aspects of description exist within the game space or play-ground. Games can be virtuous or earnest, vicious or playful[9], but they are ultimately indivisible, as Caillois claims. The magic circle game space where a game occurs is in touch with the real yet fundamentally shifted; the space shifts to include a layer with new rules and a new perception of the real that is being engaged with in the game. The space where play occurs is both within the mind and outside in the physical world. The space occupied is allows for an expanded understanding or increased consequences of the actions taken than what the actions may mean or do in real life. That difference ends when the game does.[10] Huizinga's other aspects of play relevant to this analysis are: it is voluntary, creates order with its own rules, and serves as a foundation for grouping people into those who know or play and those who do not.[11] Play, therefore, is both inclusive and divisive.

[7] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, 8.
[8] Binary established in The Prologue to "The Miller's Tale" in *The Canterbury Tales* where the narrator cautions that "men shal nat maken ernest of game" (Chaucer, "The Miller's Prologue," 1987, A 3186.). This line is the source for much discussion in Chaucerian game scholarship, especially Carl Lindahl's referentially titled *Earnest Games,* as a cue from Chaucer/the narrator on the status of the tales as a game.
[9] Playful in this case meaning "not serious," possibility closer to Huizinga's use of comedic, folly, or farce.
[10] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, 8–10.
[11] Huizinga, 13. The element of play excluded here is that it does not result in material profit, which, while interesting to analyze gambling habits on games of chance, does not directly pertain to the scope of this work.

Peter McDonald's 2019 "*Homo Ludens:* A Renewed Reading" expands the philosophical understanding and applicability of Huizinga's theory of play. McDonald's article aims to "reopen [*Homo Ludens'*] ambiguities"[12] to challenge the usage of Huizinga's work in contemporary game studies. Huizinga acknowledges the role that play and playing can have within religion, festivals, and ceremony, resulting in what Eric Voegelin classes as "a *superabundans*, as an overflow of the spirit" of play that allows for the extension and application of Huizinga's ludology beyond what would traditionally be a game.[13] McDonald argues that Huizinga's overflow is based in its examination of "play as a phenomenon," that is "both intentional- or about something – and apodictic, or self-evident."[14] Huizinga's play is changeable yet always requires intention and self-recognition to understand that the activity one is undertaking is different from non-play actions. That intentionality and recognition of play shifts the magic circle from "outside the normal world" to instead "overlay[ing] it."[15] McDonald stresses the understanding of the magic circle as existing within and over reality. The overlay of the magic circle allows things, such as history, to be gameable where previously history would not be able to be divorced from known reality.

The last element of McDonald's reading that is particularly useful for framing games and gameplay addresses tension within games. McDonald asserts that the tension within play comes from "the element of uncertainty"[16] in addition to Huizinga's stated tension arising from "a striving to decide the issue and so to end it."[17] The uncertainty of the ending that the players strive for is an aspect of play where pleasure can be found.

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[12] McDonald, "Homo Ludens," 247.
[13] McDonald, 250.
[14] McDonald, 252.
[15] McDonald, 257.
[16] McDonald, 257.
[17] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, 10.

For analyzing the relationship between audience and author in Chaucer and Shakespeare's works, Huizinga, Caillois, and McDonald's explanations concerning play space are integral. The play space created by the works is between the work and the audience, either in their imagination or the physical space of the theatre. Within that space, both the audience members and the author enter and agree that they will "play" with the story of Troilus and his love. The play that occurs is related to and divorced from both the enduring legend of Troy and Troy's historical reality. The authors, like Huizinga, see the play-ground overlays the real and creates a space that is voluntary to attend or read, contains its own rules for games of chance, love, and war, and creates a specific group of people playing (reading or attending) and those not. While reading or watching, there is tension both from not knowing how this particular telling will end and from striving toward the ending that, in this space, is already known for all types of games being played.

The references to Hazard work to engage the player deeper in the experience and separates those who understand and those who do not. Troilus's Hazard reference in Chaucer is only accessible to an engaged reader who knows the game itself and, through continued engagement with Chaucer's game, can access a more exclusive and deeper understanding of the work (secrecy) with this insider game knowledge. For the Prologue of *Troilus and Cressida,* the reference to Hazard communicates to the reader that the war being waged is a game of chance rather than skill. Therefore, the action that follows the Prologue can be understood as resulting from chance rather than skill or overt effort by the characters.

II. The Language and History of Dice and Dice Games[18]

To understand the dice game of Hazard and its historical and cultural importance, one must first track the complicated history of dice and dice games. Games, both dice and other, in the medieval period vary widely in composition, gameplay, game classification, and target audience. Two of the categories of medieval gaming, dice games, and board games, overlap significantly. Dice games, for the purposes of this paper, will be defined as games played with dice without a set board or mechanism onto which they are thrown. Board games are simply any game that possesses a particular surface on which the game is played and confined. More specifically, this work will focus exclusively on the dice game of chance, Hazard, rather than any skill-based game or game that utilizes tactic, strategy, and player intervention to influence the result.

Three Latin terms are used in secular and ecclesiastical game language from the later classical into medieval period: *alea, ludus,* and *sortes.* All three terms evolve throughout the medieval period and obtain various connotations within Latin and translations. The language around dice games is further complicated when tracing the various *alea*, *ludus*, and *sortes* traditions.

The terminology of *ludus* and *alea* becomes fraught through the medieval period, and *alea*, meaning dice, receives and maintains a connotation with both gambling in general and divination practices from the classical and the medieval periods.[19] The gaming of clerics was condemned in Justinian's Code, though the code only forbids "*ad tabulas ludere*," or games with tables, rather

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[18] The historical use of dice and the discussion of Latin terminology are repurposed from my 2022 conference paper at SEMA, "Holy Rollers: A Tenth Century Dice Game in Cambrai," and the discussion of English game history is from a paper submitted in an undergraduate Medieval Literature course at Auburn University with Dr. Craig Bertolet. Both sections have been edited for clarity and applicability.

[19] See Martha Bayless's "Alea, Taefl, and Related Games: Vocabulary and Context," in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard, Toronto Old English Series 14 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 9–12. for more on the conflation of gaming vocabulary in medieval England.

than dice games or games at large. Bishop Isidore of Seville continues the complication of game terminology in his *Etymologiae* entry "'*alea* i.e. *ludus tabulae*,'" conflating the two separate traditions under one heading and condemning both as he states that "Fraud and lying and perjury are never absent from games of chance, and finally both hatred and ruin. Hence, at certain times, because of these crimes, [games with tables and with dice] have been banned by the laws."[20] While *ludus* and *alea* are conflated here, the sense of separation through the game pieces remains; there are games with tables and there are games with dice though the language between them may fluctuate.

The word *sortes* is used primarily within two different divination traditions. The word functions to provide classification of divination means. *Sors* can be defined as "a casting or drawing of lots," "fate," or "oracular response."[21] The first divination tradition, bibliomancy, *sortes biblicae*, the practice of opening to a random page or passage in the Bible to answer a question or direct one's study, has its roots in the classical period.[22] Where *sortes biblicae* relies on *sortes* to function more as an oracular response than a lot, the second practice, *sortes sanctorum*,[23] sometimes referred to or conflated with *sortes apostolorum*[24] and commonly

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[20] Barney et al., "The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville," 371.
[21] "Sors."
[22] Filotas, *Pagan Survivals, Superstitions and Popular Cultures in Early Medieval Pastoral Literature*, 242. For more on the relationship between *sortes biblicae* and *sortes vergilinae,* among others, see Pieter W. van der Horst's chapter "Sortes: Sacred Books as Instant Oracles in Late Antiquity" (143-174) in *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World.*
[23] Sometimes referred to as *sortes apostolorum,* though the variations found within the period concerning various *sortes* concerning ecclesiastical or religious matters have resulted in many different phrases and attributions. For consistency's sake, and to match the research I have found, I will be referring to the practice exclusively as *sortes sanctorum.* For a list of recommended literature for further reading on *sortes sanctorum,* see László Sándor Chardonnens's p. 476 in *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics, 900-1100: Study and Texts.* For work on the later *sortes sangallenses,* see Hermann Winnefeld's *Sortes Sangallenses* (1887). For more on the distinction of *sortes sanctorum* from the *sortes sangellenses,* see William Klingshirn's chapter (pages 99-128) in *Mantikê: Studies in Ancient Divination* (2005) ed. Johnston and Struck.
[24] *Sortes alearum* could be included in this section, however due to the isolated nation of the surviving artifacts (as discussed by Luijendijk and Klingshirn in "The Literature of Lot Divination" on page 37 I am not confident in including it.

translated as "Lots of the Saints," relies upon dice and a provided interpretation table, thus qualifying it as a form of astragalomancy.[25] *Sortes sanctorum* rolls three six-sided dice to determine which of fifty-six possible results from a provided chart will answer the player's question or tell them what might be in their future.[26] A characteristic of divination through *sortes* is that each outcome must be perceived as equally likely, and the result relies first on chance and then on interpretation.[27] The scores are tabulated as a list of each roll rather than a mathematic total, relying on the order in which the dice fall either in time or in space for interpretation.

Sortes traditions are not limited to dice, but they do rely entirely upon chance to decide the result, either of the book opening or the dice roll. As W.L. Braekman argues in "Fortune-telling by the Casting of Dice: A Middle English Poem and Its Background," divinatory *sortes* activities were popular in the later medieval period using both dice and fortune tables, similar to *sortes sanctorum* and also opening books onto random pages in the vein of *sortes biblicae.*[28] While based in the classical period, the *sortes* tradition evolved into the later medieval period into two iterations of divinatory practice.

The instability of the definition for *alea* continued into the Middle Ages, as "in two Middle English glossaries, for instance, 'dyce' is translated as *alea*, but elsewhere in one of these same glossaries *alea* is glossed '*tabelere'* (the game of *tabula* [an altered form of *alea* involving a particular table])."[29] Because of the instability in the surviving vocabulary, and the lack of archeological evidence concerning various games, Martha Bayless asserts that one cannot make claims concerning the specifics of the games played in the British Isles during the medieval

[25] Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics, 900-1100: Study and Texts*, 153:478. For more on the connection of *sortes sanctorum, sortes sangellenses,* and the Greek *sortes astrampsychi,* see William Klingshirn's chapter (pages 99-128) in *Mantikê: Studies in Ancient Divination* (2002) ed. Johnston and Struck
[26] Luijendijk and Klingshirn, "The Literature of Lot Divination," 42–43.
[27] Luijendijk and Klingshirn, *Sortilege and Its Practitioners in Late Antiquity*, 1.
[28] Braekman, "Fortune-telling by the Casting of Dice," 3–7.
[29] Bayless, "Alea, Taefl, and Related Games: Vocabulary and Context," 12.

period.[30] However, even without knowing the specific games, dice games were played throughout Britain and by members of various classes by at least the tenth century.

Dice games were synonymous with gambling, drinking, violence, and blasphemy. As many games either were played explicitly for gambling purposes or allowed for the possibility of gambling since the dice rolls rely on chance, the association of such games with gambling is logical.[31] The association of excessive drinking and subsequent violence, commonly over displeasure over losses or cheating, with dice games is also fairly intuitive since many dice games were played in ideal spaces to socialize and purchase alcohol, such as inns and taverns.[32] Religious and secular communities share concerns over gambling, drunkenness, and violence, but blasphemy falls directly under an ecclesiastical concern. The social connotations with dice and games of chance, therefore, extend through the religious and into the moral, conflating concern about the status of behavior being sinful and dice themselves as a gateway of temptation to increased sin.

III. Hazard

Hazard does not have a clear entry period into England, nor is it clear where the game originated. The name could come from the Arabic "*azzar*" for dice or named for the activity used to waste time while besieging "El Azar" during the first crusade.[33] While its origins are unknown, Hazard is the ancestor to the modern Craps.[34] Hazard is a dice game played with either two or three 6-sided dice. The dice are rolled simultaneously and the sum of the dice is

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[30] Bayless, "Alea, Taefl, and Related Games: Vocabulary and Context."
[31] Purdie, "Dice-Games and the Blasphemy of Prediction," 169.
[32] Purdie, 169.
[33] Purdie, 168.
[34] Bell, *Board and Table Games from Many Civilizations I*, 1:132.

used to determine the type of roll.. The dice sides are designed so that the highest number on the die, 6, is opposite 1, and that pattern continues with 5 opposite 2 and 4 opposite 3, illustrated in Figure 1 in the Appendix. The game can be called either by the roll showing on the top of the dice or the bottom.[35]

Rhiannon Purdie, using Alfonso X's *Book of Games* and C.A. Knudson's article "*Et Les Autres Jeux De Dés Dans Le 'Jeu de Saint Nicolas*,'" states that Hazard is played with three dice and attributes confusion about the medieval meaning of "pair" to the confusion over the number of dice used.[36] To win the game, regardless of which side is used for the roll calculation, a player rolls a "Hazard roll, either (14)15-18 or 3-6(7)."[37] For example, if the roll on the bottom of the dice shows a 5, 6, and a 4, totaling 15, then the top would show 2, 1, and 3, totaling 6, as outlined in Table 1, also in the Appendix. Should the first player to roll not roll a winning "Hazard" roll, that non-winning first roll would become a "chance" that the next player can attempt to roll, in addition to the Hazard roll, to win.[38]

Purdie's presentation of Alfonso's rules differs in complexity, player roles, and number of dice from Charles Cotton's explanation in *The Compleat Gamester,* published in London in 1647. While this work was published nearly half a century after the latest work considered in this thesis, the most scholars cited in this work use *The Compleat Gamester* for the rules of Hazard. Unlike Purdie's sources, Cotton's work was composed in England. *The Compleat Gamester* opens with a frontispiece and explanation that runs through the different games played in the illustration and presented in the work. Among those listed is Hazard. The Hazard section reads, "Nothing but *Hazzard* doth attend each age./ Next here are *Hazzards* play'd another way,/ By

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[35] Purdie, "Dice-Games and the Blasphemy of Prediction," 168.
[36] Purdie, 170.
[37] Purdie, 170. The numbers in parentheses could be winning rolls depending on the version played.
[38] Purdie, 170–71.

Box and Dice; 'tis *Hazzard* is the Play."[39] Where the frontispiece explanation suggests that there may be multiple versions of Hazard, there is only one entry in Cotton's work. Cotton states "This Game is play'd but with two Dice, but there may play at it as many as can stand round the largest round Table."[40] The Hazard that Cotton describes is played only with two dice rather than three, but the gameplay explanation is similar. It is especially interesting to note that the Hazard that Cotton details only has one person rolling the dice and everyone else betting against his rolls. The game, at this point, is played explicitly for gambling purposes.

To begin Cotton's Hazard, the Caster first rolls the Main, which must be between four and nine total. The Caster must then roll again for the Chance, which would be between four and ten as he states, "in short, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten are chances to any Main."[41] Nicks, which do not appear in Purdie's explanation of Hazard, "are either when the Chance [Caster's second roll] is the same with the Main [Caster's first roll]…or six and twelve, seven and eleven, eight and twelve."[42] Within the Nicks rules, Cotton wants the reader to "note, that twelve is out to nine, seven, and five; and eleven is out to nine, eight, six, and five," in addition to the first list of Nick possibilities there are immediate loss rolls of 2 or 3.[43] See Table 2 in the Appendix for a table showing complimentary rolls. For the Caster to win, according to the example Cotton includes, he must roll the Chance to his Main or a Nick. If he rolls the Main, he must pay whatever amount is on the board. If he rolls a Nick, he "sweeps" the money on the

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[39] Cotton, *The Compleat Gamester, or, Instructions How to Play at Billiards, Trucks, Bowls, and Chess Together with All Manner of Usual and Most Gentile Games Either on Cards or Dice : To Which Is Added the Arts and Mysteries of Riding, Racing, Archery, and Cock-Fighting*, 168.
[40] Cotton, 168.
[41] Cotton, 168.
[42] Cotton, 168–69.
[43] Cotton, 169.

board. If he rolls another Chance, he must roll again, and presumably, if he rolls any of the immediate "out" rolls, he loses.[44]

Within the Hazard entry, Cotton states, "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; and having once accustom'd himself to play at Hazzard he hardly ever after minds any thing else," and he ends the entry with the claim that " happy is he that having been much inclined to this time-spending -money-wasting Game, hath took up in time, and resolved for the future never to be concerned with it more; but more happy is he that hath never heard the name therof." [45] Cotton's record of Hazard categorizes it as both a game of chance and a game for gambling. Cotton's final thoughts in his work reveal that he, at least, views Hazard only as a means for gambling, but that does not mean that it was only a method of gambling.

Whether Hazard is played with two or three dice, one Caster or multiple people rolling, it ultimately does not change the salience and content of the references to Hazard in Chaucer and Shakespeare's works. For Chaucer's reference, it is only necessary to note that 6 and 7 are winning rolls, regardless of how many dice used or the number of players playing. What is important to note for *Troilus and Cressida* is both the gaming terminology of "Hazard" and "chance" and that by the early modern period, the game of Hazard has moved from an accessible game that could be bet on to a well-known method of gambling that could, depending on the size of the bet, be ruinous.

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[44] Cotton, 169–70.
[45] Cotton, 172–73.

Chapter 2: Hazard, Decision Ahead: Troilus's Philosophy in Book IV[46]

Connecting Geoffrey Chaucer's work and games is intuitive since the premise behind his tale of pilgrims is a storytelling game. The expansion of the critical apparatus of *The Canterbury Tales* to include theories of play and game theories has yielded successful and highly influential work over the past few decades. The conversation surrounding Chaucer, his works, and the games and play can be traced to Laura Kendrick's 1988 *Chaucerian Play: Comedy and Control in the Canterbury Tales*, which introduces theories of play into the writing and experience of reading and interpreting *The Canterbury Tales*. In Kendrick's introduction, she asserts that Chaucer, among others, knew "something of the meaningful depths of play and how man's creation and identification with unreal, fictional worlds helps him, not only to cope with the real world, but also to change himself and thereby, to some extent, the world."[47] Therefore, her book asserts that the tales should be read as existing within the depths of play and the unreal to understand their potential for change in the real world. While her work is rooted in examining Chaucer's play with sacred and sacrilegious language with a focus on the bawdy humor of the churl using tools of psychoanalysis, the introduction of Chaucer as a mediator of both *sentence* and *solas, earnest* and *game*, is invaluable to Chaucerian studies.

Kendrick's groundbreaking work paved the way for scholars like Carl Lindahl in his *Earnest Games Folkloric Patterns in the Canterbury Tales,* E.H. Wolfgang Rudat's *Earnest Exuberance in Chaucer's Poetics : Textual Games in the Canterbury Tales,* Richard Green's "Troilus and the Game of Love," Tison Pugh's "Christian Revelation and the Cruel Game of Courtly Love in *Troilus and Criseyde,*" and Andrew Higl's *Playing the Canterbury Tales: The*

[46] Aspects of this chapter come from a paper submitted in Dr. Laura Howe's Spring 2022 Chaucer course at the University of Tennessee.
[47] Kendrick, *Chaucerian Play: Comedy and Control in the Canterbury Tales*, 3.

Continuations and Additions. Some scholars, such as Lindahl, Rudat, and Higl, follow Kendrick's scholarship more directly and engage with the rhetoric or experience of the text itself along themes of game and play, in these cases, all within *The Canterbury Tales*. Others, such as Green and Pugh, instead shift to a historicist or cultural studies lens and look at the games happening within the action and space of the story within *Troilus and Criseyde.* The works follow *Chaucerian Play* by engaging with aspects of John Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*, since it is seminal for from the study of games and play.

Since the work owes its structure and variety to the characters playing a game, *The Canterbury Tales* logically lends itself to game theory-based analysis. However, the "potential *dulce* for those who are willing to use a playful spirit and possess enough flexibility to be able to go with the flow in whatever direction Chaucer's spirit moves them,"[48] can extend game theory and analysis throughout Chaucer's corpus. His writings all seem to "extend *earnest game* strategy…to include the poet himself"[49] as well as engage his audiences, both the "medieval interpreter"[50] that Kendrick invites her readers to imagine as well as the contemporary reader of his works. I would like to invite an additional player, or level of play, within Chaucer's corpus of the Chaucerian narrator, as he exists between the audience, author, and the characters. The narrator is within and without the game, explaining the game while still partaking in it, mediating and moderating the gameplay for all involved. The narrator is consistently involved in both *The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Criseyde,* as he knows the result of the action but engages with and escorts the audiences through the stories.

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[48] Rudat, *Earnest Exuberance in Chaucer's Poetics: Textual Games in the Canterbury Tales*, 13.
[49] Rudat, 4.
[50] Kendrick, *Chaucerian Play: Comedy and Control in the Canterbury Tales*, 7–8.

Where Kendrick focuses on language as a game in *The Canterbury Tales*, both Green and Pugh's articles on games of skill within *Troilus and Criseyde*, though separated by 26 years, discuss the courtly love within the story as a game. Pandarus is the game master, while Troilus and Criseyde are both his players and his game tokens as they attempt to move themselves on the board while he is positioning them. Pandarus knows the rules of the game of love and, therefore, can instruct the young players on how to play skillfully. The analysis by both scholars is convincing and is reinforced by the language of the text, regularly referring to the wooing of Criseyde as both a game and a hunt, with Troilus as the hunter-player character. Green's argument is steeped within the scholarship of the late 1970s as he focuses on the tale as one of performative courtly love within a "vein of social comedy"[51] written "for an audience whose sensibilities were very much in tune with the spirit of self-conscious play."[52] Pugh's article is set "to explore, in a complementary fashion [to Green], [courtly love's] perils. Quite simply, play and game are not always fun, and from this perspective, we see that the play of courtly love partakes in the chaos of the fallen world by masking performative cruelties."[53] Pugh's article carefully constructs the game that Pandarus, Troilus, and Criseyde play in such a way that the game of love can be harmful rather than enjoyable. While he does offer an alternate reading to Green's game of love, the game of love Pugh analyzes is still based upon the character-player's ability to execute best game practices in the game of love. Green and Pugh use game-based analysis to add dimension to the relationships between the actions of the characters and their roles in the game of love. This game of skill, therefore, is established and confined to Pandarus,

[51] Green, "Troilus and the Game of Love," 208.
[52] Green, "Troilus and the Game of Love," 208.
[53] Pugh, "Christian Revelation and the Cruel Game of Courtly Love in 'Troilus and Criseyde,'" 379.

Troilus, and Criseyde. Chaucer cannot play the game of courtly love with his characters, nor can his narrator or audience; they can only judge the moves as skilled or unskilled.

As he plays the game of love, Troilus is brought ever closer to the future that Chaucer's audience anticipates. Chaucer's narrator begins *Troilus and Criseyde* by introducing the audience to the story of love within the well-known Trojan War legend. However, the narrator will not specifically tell "how this town cam to destruccion" within his work.[54] Troilus and Criseyde, therefore, are overshadowed by the narrator's and the audience's knowledge that Troy will fall to ruin. Further, the narrator ends their direct address in Book I by clearly stating that the love story between Troilus and Criseyde will also meet a tragic end.[55] Before the story has truly begun, the audience knows the future for the characters they have yet to meet. The audience's affective responsibility has been shifted; rather than eagerly anticipating the end of the story, the audience can now only wonder at the beginning and the middle. The framing of the story within the bounds of myth and history structures the telling of the tale and the action as predetermined or at least, inconsequential to the overall fate of the tale. The characters' actions are thus triply bound: the characters are bound to the author, the author-narrator is bound to the story, and this story is bound to its well-known end. The actions taken by the characters must therefore lead to the inevitable end. The audience can only wonder if another action could have been made to change the tale.

ADDIN ZOTERO_ITEM CSL_CITATION {"citationID":"CLqA1V3C","properties":{"formattedCitation":"Pugh, \\uc0\\u8220{}Christian Revelation and the Cruel Game of Courtly Love in \\uc0\\u8216{}Troilus and Criseyde,\\uc0\\u8217{}\\uc0\\u8221{} 379.","plainCitation":"Pugh, "Christian Revelation and the Cruel Game of Courtly Love in 'Troilus and Criseyde,'" 379.","dontUpdate":true,"noteIndex":54},"citationItems":[{"id":353,"uris":["http://zotero.org/users/4306247/items/2LCNSWCV"],"itemData":{"id":353,"type":"article-journal","container-title":"The Chaucer Review","issue":"4","language":"en","page":"379-401","title":"Christian Revelation and the Cruel Game of Courtly Love in \"Troilus and Criseyde\"","volume":"39","author":[{"family":"Pugh","given":"Tison"}],"issued":{"date-parts":[["2005"]]}},"locator":"379","label":"page"}],"schema":"https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json"} [54] Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde," 2019. I.141

[55] Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde," 1987, I.55-56.

As the love of Troilus and Criseyde becomes threatened in Book IV, the pace of Chaucer's story slows. The deceleration in Book IV is largely due to the inclusion of Troilus's speeches and philosophical ponderings about fate and his prayers, highlighting his crisis. Troilus's turmoil consumes most of the first 1000 lines of Book IV. Troilus focuses more on understanding his abilities and his limits rather than his possible actions. When he learns of Criseyde's impending departure, Troilus first blames Fortune,[57] then debates with Pandarus about his possible actions,[58] and finally contemplates free will in the temple first alone and then with Pandarus[59] all before meeting with Criseyde herself. The progression of Troilus's externalized processing of the Trojan parliament's decision follows Boethius's conversation with Philosophy in Book IV. In Book IV, Prose 5, Philosophy addresses man's theory of Fortune as the "somwhat foolish and confus" attempt at understanding life "whan the resoun of the ordre is unknowe."[60] As Book IV ends, Philosophy then explains God's "purveyaunce" and free will to Boethius,[61] just as Troilus too turns to free will. Book IV's Troilus, like Boethius, wonders at questions of free will and Fortune, however, unlike Boethius, he does not have anyone to answer.

The position of the audience as outside of the story and possessing the knowledge of the future of the work has been identified by Frank Grady as paralleling the Boethian God described in *The Consolation.*[62] While the audience may or may not fulfill the knowledge requirements for God, Troilus the character has been the container for Chaucer's Boethian philosophical musings in scholarly discussion, and rightly so. Following Megan Murton's analysis in "Praying with Boethius" and her close re-examination of the relationship between love and Boethian

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[57] Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde," 1987, IV.250-336.
[58] Chaucer, IV.365-658.
[59] Chaucer, IV.946-1085, 1086-1146.
[60] Chaucer, "Boece," Bk IV. Pr 5. ln 32-33.
[61] Chaucer, Bk IV. Pr 6. ln 32-289.
[62] Grady, "The Boethian Reader of 'Troilus and Criseyde,'" 230.

adaptation, Troilus's speeches in Book IV are redeemed from being understood as Boethian failures since he does not reach the conclusions presented in *Boece*. His crisis in Book IV, combined with the rest of the tale, creates a character directly informed by Boethian philosophy and, specifically, the role of determinism in the story and Troilus's life. Troilus, and the story itself, are set upon a clear path from which the narrator cannot deviate.

There is only one future for Troilus rather than the plural future that Philosophy tells Boethius about, and both the audience and the narrator are in the position of the knowledgeable Boethian God. Where there is only one fate of Troy, Troilus in Book IV faces many decisions and possible futures resulting from those choices. Chaucer's usage of "future" in *Troilus and Criseyde* is the first usage of it in English not in translation, and the first instances of "future" in translation occur in Chaucer's translation of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, *Boece*. Where Boethius's Latin uses *futura* often, Chaucer only renders it as "future" or "futures" a few times. *Futura* is plural, so there is not just one future but multiple futures possible. The first instance of future being used rather than replaced occurs in Book 5, Prose 6, during the discussion of eternity and the eternal. Chaucer translates the explanation of eternity as "Eternitee, thane, is parfit possessioun and al togidre of lif interminable…For alle thing that liveth in time, it is present and proceedeth fro preteritz into futures' (that is to sayn, fro time passed into time coming)."[63] Within this definition of the eternal, Chaucer situates the eternal as possessing eternal life and living in time, which would allow for the movement through the stages of time. Chaucer addresses this careful position of the eternal outside of as well as within time by clarifying that experience is always of the present.[64] As Prose 6 of Book 5 continues, Boethius

[63] Chaucer, "Boece." Bk. V, Pr. 6, ln. 11-16
[64] This is also similar to St. Augustine's description of time and his understanding of God's position within and without it. For more see "Troilus's Future: Perspectives on Futurity in Troilus and Criseyde" by Tyler Jones https://hortulus-journal.com/troiluss-future-perspectives-on-futurity-in-troilus-and-criseyde-by-tyler-jones/

and Philosophy discuss free will and man's ability to act and its relationship with God's eternal knowledge. As the conversation develops, Philosophy grounds the eternal knowing in the present so that man can act in the present, yet that action will always be known to God. As Troilus is confronted with deciding what to do or not do about Criseyde in Book IV, he questions his ability to act in the present as it might impact the futures he can envision with Criseyde. However, as the Boethian God and the Chaucerian audience and narrator know, there is only one future for him and, thus, only one (in)action.

In Book IV, prior to Troilus's philosophical musings, Pandarus works to console and counsel the distraught Troilus as he bemoans the determined departure of Criseyde. In lines 541-574, Troilus lists his concerns about the dangers surrounding "ravisshing" Criseyde.[65] Pandarus, not convinced by Troilus's concerns, presses him to "Divine nat in reson ay so deepe" but to instead

> Forthy tak herte, and think right as a knight:
> Thurgh love is broken alday every lawe.
> Kith now somwhat thy corage and thy might;
> Have mercy on thyself any awe;
> Lat nat this wrecched wo thyn herte gnawe,
> But manly set the world on sixe and sevene,
> And if thou die a martyr, go to hevene.[66]

Pandarus invokes Troilus's knightly virtues, such as courage and might, in service of Love and violation of the law. His argument hinges on Troilus's continued devotion to Love, which, recalling Book I, is only tenuously outlined as service to a servant to Love. Following Pandarus's suggestion, Troilus's knightly deed in service to Love would be stealing Criseyde and preserving their love rather than allowing law and man to tear them apart. In this service to Love, he is beholden not to his own desires to follow the ruling of his city but instead to the continuance and

[65] Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde," 2019. IV. 548
[66] Chaucer. IV. 589, 617-23.

honor of Love. Though he would risk losing Criseyde's love in addition to breaking his actual vows and loyalty as a Trojan prince by stealing her, the act in service to that Love would absolve him of sin along the logic of Christian martyrdom.[67]

At the end of Pandarus's persuading, he references the dice game of chance, Hazard, in the couplet of advice offered in lines 622-23 of Book IV. This reference has not received consistent scholarly attention or consensus. Pandarus encourages Troilus to "manly set the world on sixe and sevene,/ And if thou die a martyr, go to hevene."[68] The 2019 *Norton Chaucer* only offers a gloss for the line, stating that 622 is referencing "a throw of the dice,"[69] and the 2006 *Troilus and Criseyde with facing-page Il Filostrato* includes a footnote for line 622 that reads, "But in manly fashion bet the world on a throw of the dice. The precise sense of *on six and seven*, presumably from the dicing game of hazard, is unknown."[70] *The Riverside Chaucer*'s 3rd edition glosses the line similarly on the page of the work and within the explanatory notes. Unlike the Norton editions, the *Riverside* does offer a variety of references to expand comprehension of the reference within the explanatory notes.[71] The first entry is to consult the note attached to "The Pardoner's Tale" line 653, where there is a summary of Cotton's Hazard game rules. The following entry is to the Oxford English Dictionary's (OED) 5th entry for "six," which states: "In phrases with six and seven, sixes and sevens, etc., originally denoting the hazard of one's whole fortune, or carelessness as to the consequences of one's actions, and in later use the creation or existence of, or neglect to remove, confusion, disorder, or disagreement."[72] The OED expands the term's connotation of carelessness, neglect, and

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[67] Benson and Robinson, *The Riverside Chaucer*, 1047. Explanatory note to line 623
[68] Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde," 2019. IV.622-23
[69] Chaucer. IV.622
[70] Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde with Facing-Page Il Filostrato*. IV.622
[71] Benson and Robinson, *The Riverside Chaucer*, 1047.
[72] *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "Six, Adj. and n," 2023.

confusion, etc., Yet the editors of the Norton and the Riverside do not include those connotations in their footnotes. The third source to reference is Robert Kilburn Root's 1926 *The book of Troilus and Criseyde*'s note on the same lines. [74] Root's note is the first, discovered thus far, that connects the actual result of the roll mentioned by Pandarus to the game rules of Hazard.[75] Root explains the relationship to Craps and runs through similar rules to those found thus far. Though his explanation is not the clearest concerning gameplay, he does emphasize the possibility of chances being "*against* the 'setter,' who bets against him. To 'set' one's all on six and seven is, therefore, to venture with odds against one."[76] He identifies moments within *The Canterbury Tales* that also references Hazard and the phrase "to be at sixes and sevens."[77] Root's note, however, remains with his edition as it is not utilized beyond a point of reference in the Riverside Chaucer. As established both in the first chapter and Root's note, both six and seven are among the winning rolls in the dice game of Hazard, though Root's source for Hazard rules is unclear.

Troilus could win the game of love if he were to "*set"* or place the dice on six and seven. Therefore, if he were to cheat by stealing Criseyde, he could win the game of love. However, within the connotation of the proverb "six and seven," there is an understanding of difficult odds. Therefore, if the verb set is taken in the proverbial sense rather than physical or circumstantial, the phrase adds an additional layer. Not stealing Criseyde would be placing the dangerous bet with low odds or "setting" his hopes on an unlikely outcome. It would be more likely that the story of Troilus and Criseyde would still end in some kind of woe, even if he did steal her. He could lose her love they could have a difficult life, or one or both could die.

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[74] The remaining notes reference "Proverbs, sentences, and proverbial phrases; from English writings mainly before 1500" by Whiting and Whiting, which confirms "sixes and sevens" as a proverb, and another note that I have been unable to understand the inclusion, which is "Isaacs AmN&Q 5, 1967, 85-86."
[75] Chaucer, *The Book of Troilus and Criseyde*, 512.
[76] Chaucer, 511–12.
[77] "Six, Adj. and n."

Even if the exact connotation of "set" in line 622 does not imply cheating, Troilus choosing to depend on the roll of the dice is a risky gamble. However, the use of the verb "set" does imply placing either his faith in chance or setting his faith metaphorically and setting the dice literally to ensure a winning roll. When viewing the line with the rest of the stanza, the connotation of "set" as cheating follows the logic of choosing to take matters into his own hands and out of the hands of Fortune. Within this discussion between Pandarus and Troilus, then, Troilus is given a clear chance to choose to force Criseyde to stay with him by cheating or "setting" the dice roll. If he does not choose to force or ravish her, his other option is to allow events to fall as they will. Troilus chooses to rely upon Criseyde and her desires rather than his ability to act. While Troilus is actively resisting Pandarus's suggestion to run away with Criseyde,

> it is our melancholy providence to know that precisely by attempting to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, Troilus will doom both himself and his city. If he were less aware, if he were to ''ravyssh'' Criseyde like a Paris or a Telamon—or, alternatively, if they were to run away, ruining their honor but saving themselves—then Antenor would not return and, for all we know, the Palladium would remain and Troy would still stand. Only because he is concerned with historical precedent, Troy will be redestroyed.[78]

Troilus knows the cost of absconding with a woman is war, yet if he had absconded with Criseyde, he might have prevented the fall of Troy.

With the reference in line 623 understood as a direct reference to a challenging roll to win in Hazard, the audience is reminded by Pandarus of the stakes at play in Troilus and Criseyde's romance. The audience knows the result of the roll that Pandarus offers Troilus: Troilus and Criseyde's love will end whether or not he risks ravishing her. Their love story will never end happily. Troy will fall and Criseyde will abandon and betray him. However, Pandarus's offer is not just the suggestion of a meddling third party in the game of love. Pandarus's suggestion

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[78] Giancarlo, "The Structure of Fate and the Devising of History in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde," 251.

directly evokes the audience's knowledge of the future and their anxiety about the events unfolding before them. It is tempting to play with the idea of Troilus running away with Criseyde, somehow preventing the re-entry of Antenor and saving Troy by stealing a Trojan woman from the Greeks. It is a hard future to imagine and a hard roll to achieve, yet, within Book IV, it seems possible. Troilus has begun to ponder his ability to act and his role as a player within the story. He can choose to abandon the skill-based pursuit of love and rely on chance. Yet, ultimately, he chooses not to engage with chance and not to act.

Cheating, within the game of Love, could even be excusable since it would be in service to Love rather than motivated exclusively by Troilus's base desire. However, Pandarus's suggestion inherently complicates the rules and methods of the game of Love. Love as a game, until this point in the work, has been a game of skill with various things he must do and say to receive and serve Love. Pandarus now suggests completely changing the rules of Love, moving it from skill and strategy to, instead, chance. While Troilus does not want to steal her for his own desires or ill wishes, he would be stealing her to preserve their love and protect it from the ill wishes and desires of others, but there is a risk. If he should die in his attempt, he would be a martyr for Love rather than a villain kidnapping the object of his desire regardless of her "entente." But, he would be dead. Nevertheless, according to Pandarus, it would be the knightly and manly thing to load the dice in this game of chance with Fortune and cheat the law of his family and land. Pandarus has once again twisted the languages of love, virtue, and honor into a paradoxical knot. To honor Love, Troilus must forsake all he is: prince, soldier, man, lover, and abandon Love as a game of skill and rely fully upon chance.

Troilus, questioning the role of determinism and eternity, can understand his problems as both minuscule in the universe but extremely pressing since he must participate in the cause-and-

effect order of the social world. After Troilus ponders free will, fate, and determinism a few hundred lines later, Pandarus again enters. Troilus has been confronted with a choice to act himself or to allow others to act, and his "perplexity over the causality of God's knowledge mirrors and sublimates the even more perplexing questions about the order of causes in his social world, as his fears make increasingly clear."[79] Troilus seems to reach a conclusion to his confusion about possibilities for "things that comen to be" and appeals to Jove through his prayer for his preferred options: death or salvation for his relationship with Criseyde.[80] Troilus fails to reach the Boethian resolution achieved in *Boece,* that one should place their faith in God with the understanding that he controls and orders Fate,[81] and instead comes to "the false conclusion of fatalism."[82] However, as Murton explains, Troilus does not abandon his philosophical adventure with his conclusion; rather, he prays "for a change in his situation" even after he concludes that "divine knowledge imposes a fixed order on the course of events."[83] According to Murton, Troilus, makes a conscious turn in that prayer since "his very petition refers to the divine knowledge that, according to his speech, makes his prayer pointless."[84] Troilus's prayer for either death or salvation is a petition to a God that already knows what will occur. By offering that petition, Troilus maintains faith in the possibility of happiness within that fixity while he is actively choosing not to act to secure his own interest. Troilus's Boethian resolution, therefore, includes not only his speech at the temple but also his discussion of Fortune and his refusal to rely on chance.

[79] Giancarlo, 253.
[80] Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde," 2019. IV. 1046, 1081-2
[81] Chaucer, Bk IV. Pr 6.
[82] Murton, "Praying with Boethius in Troilus and Criseyde," 298.
[83] Murton, 299.
[84] Murton, 299.

Troilus's prayer is both an action and an inaction. He appeals the divine sentence he has yet to receive but, through appealing, does nothing to influence the outcome. The prayer to Jove to either save his relationship or end his life[85] has been placed between philosophy and reality. Troilus's prayer is "presented not merely as a transaction between God and humanity that is potentially invalidated by determinism, but also as a mutual and intimate form of communication."[86] Troilus's god, be it Jove, Love, or the Christian God, is accessible. While he may or may not have true faith in a positive outcome for his current situation, Troilus appeals through prayer rather than acting as an agent of his future or a free agent of Love. Troilus has rejected Pandarus's suggestion to attempt to play the game of love as a game of chance and, through his rejection, has effectively removed himself as a player from the game. He does not accept any of Criseyde's suggestions for saving their relationship and allows their relationship ends without him continuing his previous engagement as a skilled lover.

Where before Pandarus suggests cheating at dice and winning the game of Love or dying as a martyr for the cause, he has accepted Troilus's choice to allow the dice to fall rather than set them. After Pandarus hears Troilus's whole soliloquy and the final prayer, his response to Troilus's appeal is for Troilus to recall his life and happiness before Criseyde since "That in the dees right as there fallen chaunces,/ Right so in love ther come and gon plesaunces."[87] After Troilus comes to his conclusion about his ability to act, Pandarus can read the roll of the dice. If Troilus had run away with Criseyde, he would have guaranteed love in his roll, but with this uncertainty, he could still roll a chance in this relationship or, possibly, another. Even after hearing Troilus' shift from philosophy to faith, Pandarus returns to the connection with dice and

[85] Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde," 2019. IV. 1046, 1081-2
[86] Murton, "Praying with Boethius in Troilus and Criseyde," 301.
[87] Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde," 2019. IV. 1098-99.

chance. Pandarus is not only referencing the concept of chance itself but also the Chance roll, a number or number(s) a Hazard player could roll to win that has not fallen. Troilus will not secure his win, nor does it seem he will win, as the dice are allowed to fall as they will. Since Troilus will allow chance or God to decide what will befall Criseyde and himself, Pandarus adjusts his tactic to encourage Troilus instead to be fortified by his memory of life before Criseyde to allow him to envision a future without her or even a future at all.

While Pandarus's appeals change in response to Troilus's verbalized concerns and plans in Book IV, Troilus himself does not truly allow himself to consider future action other than death. While Troilus does not truly seem to consider it, "Chaucer's added detail [of Troilus debating running away with Criseyde] thus resonates into the prophetic future as much as it does in the historical past, but in both directions the order of things appears both inevitable and maddeningly causeless," which mirrors Troilus's own solution to his ruminations on free will.[88] Pandarus offers ways to not only view what is to come by considering what was done before but by encouraging Troilus to act and change his future, which he ultimately refuses to do.

Within the game of love, Troilus is caught between choosing to repeat the abduction of Helen or choosing to risk losing Criseyde and his own happiness by shifting the game of love from skill to chance. As Pugh and Green both address in their articles, Troilus must choose how to play the game of Love, though they find different faults in his execution of the available moves he is able to make. Both Pugh and Green characterize the game of Love as one with set rules and set steps and strategies the players must follow and, ultimately, either fault the game of Love or Troilus's understanding of it as the reason for Criseyde's departure. However, the reference to Hazard in Book IV shifts love to a new genre of game, or at least expands it to

[88] Giancarlo, "The Structure of Fate and the Devising of History in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde," 251.

include two games simultaneously. Pandarus, the one controlling and moving the two players of love, suggests to Troilus to change the game and the method of play to increase the odds of his victory. Troilus and his love would then rely on chance rather than skill.

With the suggestion of Hazard, both Troilus and the audience are reminded that the game of war has been caused by a choice made in Paris and Helen's game of love. The relationship between chance, love, and war within *Troilus and Criseyde* is highlighted in Troilus's crisis. Here he must choose what game he is to play and how he is to play it. He cannot know the outcome of any of his moves, only the consequences of previous games of love and war played. Pandarus cannot persuade Troilus to attempt to spite Fortune in favor of Love, instead Troilus accepts the decision of the parliament of Troy to send Criseyde away, allowing the dice to fall as they may. Rather than ensure his victory in any capacity, he is content to rely upon Fortune and luck to decide whether he will have a winning roll or even a chance.

Where Troilus does not know the future, the audience knows that his love will leave, and his city will fall. Chaucer's narrator claims not to tell the story of the fall of Troy, yet any story placed within the Trojan War ultimately does contribute to its fall. The audience is able to wonder at Troilus's choices yet know that any choice they witness will always result in the fall of Troy. Troilus will never be able to escape his heartbreak and death. The audience and Pandarus can wonder about his ability to gamble or cheat the set singular future through chance, but they cannot witness it since his story will never truly change.

Chapter 3: What Comes Next: Troilus and Present Action

Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* is considered a problem play.[89] The play contains elements of the comedic and the tragic that many Shakespearean scholars have worked on at length without reaching a consensus on its genre. The generic instability allows for a multiplicity of focal points within the play: love and war, comedy and tragedy, Greek and Trojan. The scholarly inability to assign the play to a fixed genre creates instability within the interpretation of the other binaries contained within the play. Marina Ansaldo argues that "a sense of arbitrariness pervades the motions of plot and characters. One gets the impression that no superhuman power or force presides over the world in which the play is set."[91] There is no apparent order to the world presented, and the presence of both Trojans and Greeks further stretches and distorts the experience of the play. The world of *Troilus and Cressida*, as outlined by the Prologue is arbitrary, as Ansaldo suggests, but it is the arbitrary nature of the play's action owes to the presence and possibility of chance.

As a play, *Troilus and Cressida* has two distinct types of audiences: those who attend the play and those who read it. While the experience of a play within a theatre space and when reading is quite different, for this analysis the audience engagement being analyzed does not shift significantly. While in a theatre or while reading the audience of *Troilus and Cressida* would still likely possess foreknowledge of the story and be experiencing the action of Shakespeare's telling in a chronological manner, witnessing the events of the play as they unfold either on stage or page. While the theatre space does introduce a level of meta-theatricality and play, the printed text still portrays the lines and characters in a way that allows for the reader to separate and

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[89] The Arden Edition addresses the various classifications of the play as comedy, history, and tragedy. Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 3.
[91] Ansaldo, "'Tis but the Chance of War," 29.

understand the action of the characters and the order of events as a play rather than another genre. Therefore, since the specific aspect of experience being discussed in this chapter is one of witnessing events leading toward the known end, the audience can be both the reading audience and theatre audience.

Where Chaucer was not telling the fall of Troy and its destruction, Shakespeare places Troilus and Cressida into the larger Trojan War, which increases the stakes of their romance while drawing attention to the relationship's impending doom. While he adds much to the story, none of Shakespeare's alterations and additions change the fate of Troy. Instead of having both the Greeks and their future victory exist outside of the story of *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare's play establishes the players of all the games present in the story. *Troilus and Cressida* builds layers of games. Troilus and Cressida play at love, with Pandarus also in their game. Troilus fights the Greeks with his brothers, and the larger armies fight each other. The skill-games of war and love make up the content of the play while the characters attempt to do their best in love and war. A sense of chance hangs over the characters, first introduced in the Prologue and reinforced by Troilus as Cressida leaves the city of Troy in Act 4. The sense of chance complicates the audience's ability to interpret the skill-based games presented to them in the game being played between the audience and the play.[92] The game between the audience and the play is concentrated in the action of the play since the audience already knows what will occur at the end: Cressida will leave, Troilus will fight and likely die, though the play ends with him still alive, and Troy will fall. The "magic circle" that the audience and the play occupy is a space of the possibilities within the Troy story, layered over the real history and the action on the stage. There is not a presiding force ruling over the world of the play; instead, there is an

[92] Following Gina Bloom's understanding of the Elizabethan stage audience in *Gaming the Stage: Playable Media and the Rise of English Commercial Theater*

audience to witness and experience the action in the play while always knowing the outcome of the play. The audience's knowledge of the Trojan story ensures the ending while the introduction of chance through Hazards complicates the actions of the play. The characters will reach a set end as the play's action is subject to chance as the characters progress towards their known fates. The specter of chance hangs over all games that Troilus plays within the play, shifting them from games of skill to games that also include chance, yet he can only able to identify it once he has begun to lose.

The study of play and games has garnered interest within Shakespearean studies through the work of scholars such as Gina Bloom, Tom Bishop, and others. The larger early modern period experienced an increase in concern over gaming practices, treatises, sermons, and laws concerning games and play in the period.[93] The relationship between the theatre and illicit activities is nearly as old as the English theatre scene itself[94] and games and playing have proved to be productive areas for scholarship. In 2021 *Games and Theatre in Shakespeare's England* was published with the explicit goal to "explore the social and cultural dynamics…between games and theatre in early modern England, and the analytical leverage offered by approaching theatre as a game."[95] Theatre as a game or as a version of play, expands the realm of possibility within the action by the theatre-players[96], and the interpretative capabilities of the audience. The various chapters within the work explore games of skill, economics, and games of chance, specifically, Hazard.

[93] As Bloom, Bishop, Brokaw, and others have noted.
[94] Brokaw, "The Roll of the Dice and the Whims of Fate in Sixteenth-Century Morality Drama," 94–95.
[95] Bishop, Bloom, and Lin, "Introduction," 13–14.
[96] For ease of comprehension and in the interest of following previous scholars who have worked with play in the theatre, I will be referring to those acting in the play as "theatre-players" so that player will be limited to other types of games mentioned, namely love, war, and chance.

Where *Games and Theatre in Shakespeare's England* purposefully omits war as a game and war games, *Games and War in Early Modern English Literature from Shakespeare to Swift*, published in 2019, focuses exclusively on war and war as a game. Sean Lawrence's chapter in the work examines the stakes of war, play, and games in *Troilus and Cressida* and, by doing so, situates his chapter within the binaries present in the work through games. Both collections are filled with compelling examples of the cultural and social elements of games and play present within the period and the importance of continuing to develop cultural and historical understandings of the practices of the period that informs the literature.

As established in Chapter 1, dice games and games of chance have long-held associations with immoral behavior and sin. Katherine Steele Brokaw's chapter "The Roll of the Dice and the Whims of Fate in Sixteenth-Century Morality Drama" examines the language of Hazard as morally questionable when it appears in three early Tudor morality plays. Brokaw, using *Nice Wanton, Impatient Poverty*, and *Misogonus,* traces the theological, moral, and social ramifications that dice and dice games of chance are used to imply. She argues that "staged games also comment on and reflect growing epistemic crises regarding eschatology."[97] Her argument is not strictly religious since she also incorporates the economic aspect of risk, following Adam Zucker, creating a larger analysis of both "the religious and economic implications of risk-taking."[98] Brokaw's work in the chapter works to bridge two spheres of early modern life as presented in three plays and, ultimately, establishes the language of Hazard as both flexible and applicable beyond just games and gambling.

Brokaw's understanding of Hazard comes from Delmar E. Solem's 1954 "Some Elizabethan Game Scenes," which uses Charles Cotton's 1674 *The Compleat Gamester.* Solem's

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[97] Brokaw, "The Roll of the Dice and the Whims of Fate in Sixteenth-Century Morality Drama," 91.
[98] Brokaw, 92.

explanation of Hazard, among other Elizabethan games, is centered on the ability to present games being played on stage.[99] Brokaw, using Solem's article as a foundation, then develops the conversation from what is possible to present on stage to the impact of the game language and presence in plays. Brokaw's analysis of the language of Hazard in the plays reveals that almost a century before *The Compleat Gamester*, the version of Hazard portrayed in the Tudor morality plays was likely played with two dice and utilized Nick roll rules.[100] Brokaw's analysis blends the theatrical effect of games on stage with the audience's game knowledge, though she does not extend the gamification to move between audience and play.

Where Brokaw's chapter in *Games and Theatre in Shakespeare's London* focuses on Hazard and morality plays, Patricia Badir's chapter within the same work is on linguistic games in *Troilus and Cressida.* Badir's essay focuses on Patroclus, and she uses the "b" version of the 1609 quarto for her reading. She begins with a reading of the epistle, which she argues creates "an intimate and private bond between clever readers who will, in turn, take no small pleasure in the drama's contempt for the witless, particularly those who have shown disdain for playing….those who….think of play as a counterproductive, backward-looking indulgence."[101] The epistle, for Badir, introduces the linguistic game that the audience and the theatre-players will play.[102] Their game is fueled by the linguistic games played between the characters, and the characters and the audience though the epistle states that the play was not performed.[103] Badir's reading moves between audience and work in a way that Brokaw's does not, as Badir's audience plays a game where Brokaw's audience recognizes a game.

[99] Solem, "Some Elizabethan Game Scenes," 20–21.
[100] Brokaw, "The Roll of the Dice and the Whims of Fate in Sixteenth-Century Morality Drama," 94.
[101] Badir, "Playing with Paradoxes in Troilus and Cressida," 140–41.
[102] Badir, 139–40.
[103] Badir, 139.

The epistle creates a frame for the audience while emphasizing the plays comic status.. For Badir, the play of language in the play "directs our attention to an idea of 'play' that, in opposition to the teleology of war, brings history to a grinding halt."[104] Ulysses's linguistic games, in one instance, pause the war and creates a "magic circle" that cannot be broached by war. However, Badir's larger argument is that the "tonal ambiguity [of *Troilus and Cressida*] is a function of writing that understands comedy as a form of play whose pleasures are explicitly non-aesthetic and non-cathartic."[105] The role of comedy within the history or tragedy, following Badir's argument, would either actively contradict the traditional goals of the genre or, at least, create enough tension to disrupt the enjoyment of the aesthetic or the achievement of catharsis. Badir frames this as a paradox and locates other moments of linguistic and thematic tension within the play as spaces of her comedy in the moments of "truth" found in the "rift between what is spoken and what is seen."[106] Badir's play is similar to Kendrick's reading of *The Canterbury Tales* as both focus on textual irony and paradox to fuel the enjoyment of the audience and, with the focus on text as a game, their games lack clear rules and boundaries. While Badir's definitions of play and game are much broader than those used in this analysis, both the framework of the play as a game established at the opening of her essay and the spaces opened within the play between audience and stage and word and action are all integral to this work's reading of the Folio edition.

Where Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* opens with an invocation and an emotional disclaimer, the Folio version of Shakespeare's play begins with a Prologue. Both openings

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[104] Badir, 141.
[105] Badir, 141.
[106] Badir, 153.

preface action and characters, first introducing the audience[107] to the tale and its interpretation rather than those whose stories will unfold. Following Badir's analysis of the play through the lens established by the epistle, this reading utilizes the Prologue instead. For *Troilus and Cressida*, the Prologue's function is a performance and a guide for the audience. Just as the narrator in Chaucer exists between Chaucer and the audience as a quasi-independent third voice, so the Prologue exists between Shakespeare's play and the audience to orient the audience of the play. Unlike the narrator, this guiding voice exists only in the beginning, and its words are left to echo through the work. While the Prologue only appears in the Folio printing and its authorship is an active matter of debate, it offers a framework that establishes both a game and a reading for the audience that was deemed useful for the reader's comprehension and reading of the work, even if it was to avoid censure.[109] The play's audience knows how the story will end and has therefore been placed in a quasi-omnipotent state, left to observe the player's actions that will, ultimately, have no impact on the final outcome of the war. The characters' actions before the end might as well be random and at the whim of chance as they exist suspended before the known result.

After explaining the status of the Trojan War, the Prologue states that expectation, at this moment during this war, "Sets all on hazard."[110] Chaucer's reference to the dice game of Hazard appears at a pivotal moment in Troilus and Criseyde's relationship that ultimately results in the fall of Troy, and *Troilus and Cressida*'s Prologue references the same dice game of chance before their relationship or the play has begun. Troilus, in Chaucer, is the one who would roll the

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[107] For the prologue analysis audience can be taken to mean both theatre and reading audience or, depending on scholarly stance, only reading audience.
[109] Ready, "A Prologue Arm'd: The Printing of Troilus and Cressida in the First Folio." Even without the Prologue, Troilus and Cressida is the story of failed games of skill (love and war) with a predetermined result.
[110] Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 1.1.22.

dice and risk chance; he is the one playing Hazard. In the play, however, the players are not individual characters who play the game of Hazard. Instead, expectation in the war itself is set on Hazard. The fate of the war, the two sides, and Troilus and Cressida have “all” been set on Hazard. Hazard is a game of chance where, unless one cheats, the outcome cannot be altered through skill or practice, unlike a game of war or a game of love. The Trojans and the Greeks, therefore, at the inception of the play’s action, have an equal opportunity to win the game/war through chance.

The Prologue situates the audience within the war, between the sides. The Prologue comes to present the story that is “beginning in the middle,”[111] as it states, “Now expectation, tickling skittish spirits,/ On one and other side, Trojan and Greek/ Sets all on hazard: and hither am I come.”[112] The audience’s expectation for the story is that Troilus will be betrayed, Cressida will leave, and Troy will fall. That expectation is “set” on Hazard. The roll of the dice will read the same as they always do in the Trojan myth, but this telling might hazard to show something new. When the play begins it is balanced between the two armies as the war is at a stalemate. Not only is there a stalemate, but the Prologue credits the stalemate for its appearance. That is, since the war can apparently go either way, is needed and the Prologue provides it to the audience. However, the Prologue, unlike Chaucer’s narrator, comes “armed, but not in confidence/ Of author’s pen or actor’s voice but suited/ In like conditions as our argument.”[113] The Prologue is not the author’s voice, nor does it possess the foreknowledge of Chaucer’s narrator or even an author conceiving their work.[114] The Prologue is likewise not an actor’s voice

[111] Shakespeare, 1.1.28.
[112] Shakespeare, l.1.20-22.
[113] Shakespeare, 1.1.23-25.
[114] Even if the prologue was written by another, Jonson, for instance, the prologue still functions as the framing means of the play. While this work relies on the prologue to name Hazard, the analysis of Shakespeare’s Troilus and his view of his agency does not completely depend on the prologue for a foundation. The prologue reading, however, does clarify and reinforce the connections made.

attempting to masquerade as a character with set actions and motivations. Instead, the Prologue is "suited/ In like conditions as our argument,"[115] and, since the argument between the Trojans and the Greeks is in a state of suspension with two evenly matched players waiting for the next roll in Hazard, the Prologue is armed without a direct future or likely result. The Prologue, like the war and the unrolled dice in the game of chance, suspends the play for the audience since it intercedes before the action and exists within a suspension of the war that, through the play, is violently destroyed and decided.

After the stage has literally been set and the game of Hazard identified, the Prologue moves to directly address the audience of both the play and the game. The Prologue is neither the author nor an actor since it is outside the action and the well-known story. However, the audience of the play and the game of Hazard have no such limitation. The audience exists in a world full of stories and histories of Troy; therefore, they likely know the fate of Troilus and Cressida's love and the fate of the city. The Prologue does not address the audience's knowledge and instead commands the audience to "Like or find fault; do as your pleasures are."[116] The audience is confronted with another binary: to like or to find fault with the play. However, the audience's judgement immediately could fall into tension with any preexisting knowledge as they could find fault with the telling of the story or the aesthetic or entertainment value of the play. That tension is foregrounded as the Prologue ends, again forcing the audience to engage with the suspension of both time and action but also judgement and knowledge. To judge the play, one must experience the entire story, yet by beginning in the middle and already knowing the ending, only the middle can be "digested."[117] The answer, the Prologue seems to imply, is

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[115] Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 1.1.24-25.
[116] Shakespeare, 1.1.30.
[117] Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 1.1.29.

found within "the *chance* of war."[118] The moment of suspension that the entire play exists within, where the dice roll before they land, is where the judgement can be made, and a new experience of the story can be found.

The chance of war directly connects to setting all on hazard since, as discussed in Chapter 1, a Chance in the game of Hazard is one of the rolls that allow a player to win. In the game of Hazard, the Chance is established after the Main has been rolled, and it can result in an immediate victory if the player rolls a correct corresponding roll to the Main. The last line of the Prologue, "Now good or bad, 'tis but the chance of war," in the context of the game already referenced in the same Prologue, posits that war is a possible result of the roll, but it is only a possibility after another action (roll) has been made. The Chance roll in Hazard is only possible after the first roll, the Main, has been established because the Hazard number determines the possible Chance(s). This second roll can result in victory or loss for either side depending on whether it is a Chance or an out. There is the space of one roll and a few possible scores that stand between the possibility of war being the outcome of the roll. For good or bad, therefore, it is up to chance and that roll to determine whether the war will happen.

In the Prologue of *Troilus and Cressida*, the result of the war hinges on chance, but war itself can also be understood as a game of skill.[119] Huizinga dedicates a chapter in *Homo Ludens* to the play elements of war and, ultimately, believes that the constraint on behaviors and understood rules classify war as a version of play.[120] Sean Lawrence's chapter "Game Over: Play and War in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*" utilizes a range of both early modern and contemporary philosophical approaches to war and war-games to create his argument that while

[118] Shakespeare, 1.1.31.
[119] For the purposes of this paper, as established in Chapter 1, all games that do not exclusively rely on chance are classified as games of skill since they utilize human strategy, skill, and action.
[120] Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, 89–90.

"games of love and chivalry prove helpless to halt the fictive world's descent into total war" ultimately "the supposed opposition of play and war proves false."[121] The Trojan War looms over the play, yet, Lawrence and the Prologue argue that the play's action exists both during and outside of the war. The play exists in a magic circle of sorts, created both by the play and by the love story of Troilus and Cressida, yet the game and play will always move toward an inevitable end.

Shakespeare's Troilus, like Chaucer's, is challenged by what is possible for him to do. He seems staunchly tied to the present and what he observes, unable to remedy his worldview with an idea of futurity or consequences. He is not able to play "at subtler games,"[122] and his inability to fulfill his stated desires in love or in war highlights the theme of "inconstancy" E. Talbot Donaldson sees as inherent, as "the play is full of passionate statements of ideals which are then ignored by the very characters who stated them."[123] By examining Troilus's declarations about the skill-games of love and war, however, it seems that he is less an inconstant player and more that success in the game of love and success in the game of war is incompatible, and his dedication is inconsistent. The inconstancy that Donaldson finds in Troilus is less a fault of his decisions but instead the result of his ability to function in the games of skill being played. Troilus cannot be dedicated to love or war as he is divided between them. He dedicates himself to whichever game he is facing at the moment. Regardless of his dedication, the instability of his circumstances ultimately prevents his ability to remain constant in either love or war. The character Troilus will not be successful in love or war, and the play presents his failures as contrary to his stated desires. While he may not remain dedicated to succeeding in love nor war

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[121] Lawrence, "Game Over: Play and War in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida," 40.
[122] Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 4.4.84-86.
[123] Donaldson, *The Swan at the Well: Shakespeare Reading Chaucer*, 79.

consistently throughout the play, Troilus is dedicated to his ability to comprehend the state of the present. As Troilus works to succeed in the various skill-games he is playing, the audience always already knows how each of his games will end. His skill at love or war will never matter and the expectation of the audience is that he will always receive the same end. Troilus's struggles in love and war are compelling because they can only take place in the middle of the action. The audience can witness his struggles or his successes while already knowing that, ultimately, chance allows for variety in the middle but he will meet his destined end.

Troilus's descriptions of war and love define how he sees himself operating within the games. Shakespeare's Troilus does not regularly ponder the nature of things. Instead, he defends war to Helenus and love to Cressida in decidedly simple terms. The Trojan War, to Troilus, cannot be resolved through reason and the return of Helen, as he rebukes his brothers stating, "Here are your reasons:/ You know an enemy intends you harm;/ You know a sword employed is perilous,/ And reason flies the object of all harm…reason and respect/ Make livers pale and lustihood deject."[124] War is not reasonable, nor was the theft of Helen, yet theft and war are both the reality. War, is a threat that demands action, specifically, reaction. War as a game has defined turns, which follows the Prologue's set up of the war as a balance between two sides waiting for the next move. Troilus does not worry about what happened to cause the war, nor does he entertain the possibilities for peace in war or safety in his relationship if Helen is returned. Troilus is only worried about the move that he must make now. Troilus focuses on the present threat that demands a response rather than logic or debate. To Shakespeare's Troilus, war is a game of skill that cannot be reasoned out of; it must be won.

[124] Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 2.2.39-50.

Similar to his theory about war, Troilus defines love in terms of action. As Ansaldo points out, Shakespeare's Troilus as a lover has been understood in various ways: chivalric, idealistic, selfish, successful, unsuccessful.[125] Troilus's success as a lover, however, is challenging to gauge since he will always fail because Cressida will always leave. Troilus can never be a good lover, each telling must include some space for failure within the relationship because of the story's end. It does not matter if he is an ideal or failed lover; he will always lose. However, in the play, Troilus's theory of love is not particularly strategic or chivalric, though it is temporarily successful. Love, according to Troilus, is constructed similarly to the game of war. While heavily foreshadowing himself as the betrayed party in their relationship, Troilus actively pushes against the temptation of excess in love as he woos Cressida. Troilus states, "This is the monstruosity in love, lady, that the will is infinite/ And the execution confined; that the desire is boundless/ And the act a slave to limit."[126] Execution and the act of love are limited where the will and desire are not. Just as reason and respect do not impact fighting in a war, will and desire cannot yield results in love, according to Troilus. His love is found in what can be done rather than felt or thought. Troilus's love could be either an emotional love or a physical love act of consummation, but it is constrained by reality regardless Troilus will not play the game of love in the courtly sense. Rather, he will play honestly within the rules and bounds of possibility in the game of love as he encounters it.

Troilus's dogged devotion to his limited ability to act and his inability to face the future continues throughout the play. Shakespeare's Troilus can only look at the present until the game of love can no longer progress. The game progress halts when Cressida is forced to leave, and her departure shatters his understanding of the game. Troilus's inability to even comprehend the

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[125] Ansaldo, "'Tis but the Chance of War," 40–43.
[126] Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 3.2.77-80.

future is most poignant in his dismissal of Cassandra's prophecy where he says, "Why, brother Hector,/ We may not think the justness of each act/ Such and no other than th'event doth form it."[127] While Cassandra's prophecies are cursed to be unbelievable, Troilus's refusal is beyond denial. He is not dismissing the possibility of Hector's death in the future but instead reduces human action and agency to an action taken singularly in a sequence. Each action must be judged, but it can only ever be judged in and of itself as it occurs. Hector could die, or he could not, yet his death cannot be conceived until its event occurs.

Where Chaucer's Troilus chooses not to risk chance in the face of Criseyde's departure, Shakespeare's Troilus blames chance for Cressida's fate. Shakespeare's Troilus, "by using both the expressions 'injury of chance' and 'injurous time' to describe the present situation…clearly shows that he thinks of chance in terms of sequence of events in time,"[128] which, to Ansaldo, "is equivalent to speaking of Opportunity."[129] Ansaldo's analysis of Fortune and Opportunity in *Troilus and Cressida* is compelling, but the analysis of chance here is not only limited to chance as a concept. As he is faced with Criseyde's departure, Chaucer's Troilus begins his philosophical crisis that permeates Book IV. His crisis prompts Pandarus to suggest altering the skill-based game of love to one relying on chance through his reference to Hazard. Shakespeare's Troilus, as he is also faced with his lover's impending departure, also turns to chance.

Shakespeare's Troilus does not deeply embroil himself in contemplating the nature of free will and predestination; he is committed to his own ability to understand and act in his understood situation. Troilus rails against his situation, stating, "And suddenly, where injury of

[127] Shakespeare, 2.2.118-20.
[128] Ansaldo, "'Tis but the Chance of War," 45.
[129] Ansaldo, 45.

chance/ Puts back leave-taking, jostles roughly by/ All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips/ Of all rejoindure."[130] Troilus bemoans his separation from Cressida as an "injury of chance," which compliments Chaucer's Pandarus's comment on the state of Troilus and Criseyde's love, "that in the dees right as there fallen chaunces,/ Right so in love ther come and gon plesaunces."[131] Chaucer's Troilus chose not to introduce a game of chance after Pandarus's first reference to Hazards in lines 622-23 of Book IV. Chaucer's Troilus decides not to load the dice by cheating, nor does he risk ravishing Criseyde as a high-stakes method of preserving their love. With his choice not to gamble or engage with chance, he is left to read the roll of the dice as they fall without his intervention or action. Following his *modus operandi*, Shakespeare's Troilus does not contemplate his ability to influence the future or the futility of his actions. He does not turn from philosophy to faith when faced with his lover's departure; he never even wonders about philosophy. Instead, Shakespeare's Troilus can follow his advice to Hector, reading the dice after they fall and judging them the moment they arrive in his awareness. As he reads the result, he finds "injurious chance."[132] Shakespeare's Troilus receives the same roll that Chaucer's does as he finds that the Chance roll has not been made and he has not won. The dice, chance, and, according to Ansaldo, Fortune are against him.

Until Cressida's departure, Troilus has been pulled between love and war, unable to focus on either. As he realizes the state of his love affair, Troilus states that "All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips/ Of all rejoindure."[133] His game of love has been ended, and, according to him, so has the pause. He cannot reply to the pause, nor can he alter the result of chance. He is left only to act as he can. Lawrence argues that love and play suspend the war while also amplifying

[130] Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 4.4.32-35.
[131] Chaucer, "Troilus and Criseyde," 2019. IV. 1098-99.
[132] Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 4.4.32.
[133] Shakespeare, 4.4.34-5.

it[134] and, within these lines, Troilus expresses that same sentiment. The middle pause that the Prologue deemed digestible is moving toward its end. Neither the pause nor Cressida can be regained, and the game of love has ended, leaving only war.

Since chance has ruined the game of love, Troilus is left to respond to the sword at his throat. Once he has read the metaphoric dice, he returns to war, asking, "Who should withhold me?/ Not fate, obedience, nor the hand of Mars…should stop my way,/ But by my ruin."[135] After the loss of Cressida, Troilus turns to consider two concepts he has not yet engaged with: fate and the divine.[136] Yet, even his consideration contains a negation. Where he acknowledges fate, obedience, and Mars, he refuses their ability to influence his actions. Only the results of his action, his ruin, can withhold him. Troilus ends the pause and moves in war, ending his part in the Troy story.

Shakespeare's Troilus is not able to engage with chance or risk as he is always responding to it. He is not given the ability to deny or cheat chance. Troilus, in Shakespeare's play, is a player of multiple games and on multiple levels. Shakespeare's Troilus is left navigating not only love but war and the stage. Troilus defines war and love as reactionary games of skill while he is an actor performing a character to engage and persuade the audience. The play itself is set up by the Prologue as a layered presentation of games, starting with the play itself, moving into war, and finally introducing love. The games end in the reverse order that they appear since Cressida leaves Troilus triggering the battle as the play closes. With Cressida's departure Troilus is able to acknowledge chance, but at this point he has lost the game of love and Troy, with the trade for Antenor, will lose the war.

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[134] Lawrence, "Game Over: Play and War in Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida," 47–51.
[135] Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, 5.3.51-58.
[136] Ansaldo, "'Tis but the Chance of War," 44.

Troilus and Cressida is provoking because, even from the earliest printings, it has evaded classification. Like other Shakespeare plays set in the historical ancient world, *Troilus and Cressida* balances between two civilizations as well as two lovers all set on a known path of destruction while within the play there is a sense of abject futility. *Troilus and Cressida* begins in the middle and tells an established tale full of tension between audience expectation and audience foreknowledge and the players' actions. The players in the games of love and war make their moves, strategic or ill-advised, yet no matter what move they make, it will not alter the result of the play. *Troilus and Cressida* is compelling because it exists within the Trojan and Troilus traditions yet asserts itself as unique through the blend of both Greek and Trojan viewpoints and characters, as well as a variety of theatrical genres. *Troilus and Cressida* is not the only Shakespeare play that audiences would enter with knowledge of the outcome, however *Troilus and Cressida* is carefully crafted to exist within a suspension of the familiar. The suspension forces the audience to be excruciatingly aware of all tensions within the play and their own experience of the play. Like Boethius in his conversation with Philosophy, the audience is left pondering what action can be taken, or if it should be if the plural future is somehow always already set. Why should Troilus mourn Cressida if she was always to leave him? Why should one watch a play if you already know the story? To get to the end, one must move through the middle, and if one has already begun and the ending is known, the middle is where the most is possible.

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Appendix

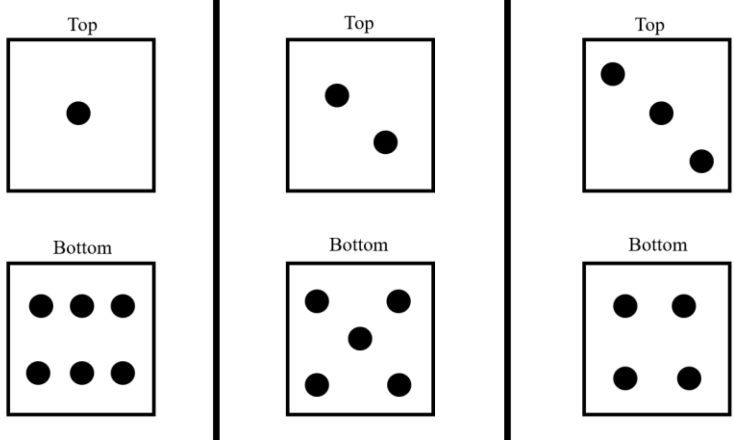

Figure 1

Table 1

Top of Dice (Visible)	Die #1	Die #2	Die #3	**Total: 6**
Bottom of Dice (not visible)	Die #1	Die #2	Die #3	**Total: 15**

Table 2

Main (Roll 1)	Chance (Roll 2+)	Nick (Roll 2+)	Outs (Roll 2+)
4	5,6,7,8,9,10	4	2,3
5	4,6,7,8,9,10	5	2,3,11,12
6	4,5,7,8,9,10	6, 12	2,3,11
7	4,5,6,8,9,10	7, 11	2,3,12
8	4,5,6,7,9,10	8, 12	2,3,11
9	4,5,6,7,8,10	9	2,3,11,12

Vita

Emma O. Corbin is originally from Georgia. She completed her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature with a minor in Medieval and Early Modern Studies at Auburn University in 2018. She will have completed her coursework at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, for a Master of Arts in English Literature in 2023.

During her time at the University of Tennessee, she has worked to develop a strong foundation as a medieval and early modern scholar by taking courses in Old English, *Beowulf*, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Medieval Latin. In addition to completing coursework, she received the Judith Anderson Herbert Writing Center Award for New Graduate Student Tutor for the 2021-22 year for her work as a writing tutor for undergraduates at the University of Tennessee.