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Humanist Reading and Interpretation
In Early Elizabethan Morality Drama
Kent Cartwright

One of the puzzles of sixteenth-century dramatic history is the surge of morality plays in the early decades of Elizabeth’s reign. Accounting for only 5% of interludes in the late Middle Ages, ‘moralls’ nonetheless grew in number through most of the sixteenth century, rising to over 20% of new plays by the 1580s before finally tapering off. That growth underscores the persistence and staying power of the morality form and tends to confirm its signal importance at the dawn of the Shakespearean era, as analyzed by David Bevington, among others. Yet the number of morality plays written during the first twenty-odd years of Elizabeth’s reign stands out as especially large. According to The Annals of English Drama, from 1558 through 1576, over 25% of the new vernacular plays were moralities. A form that we would associate with a popular, medieval, and Catholic tradition retains a surprising dramatic life, even as the culture that supports theater becomes increasingly cosmopolitan, humanistic, and Protestant. How do we explain this Indian summer of moral drama?

The accepted answer has been that the morality play’s dialectical model made it adaptable to a range of new social issues, especially Calvinism or economic populism. But a different kind of answer emerges if we approach the question of ‘why?’ through the question of ‘what?’: that is, what formal characteristics actually distinguish early Elizabethan moral drama? The moralities are infused, I would argue, with structural elements, aesthetics, and reading practices associated with humanism, so much as to reshape the nature and experience of morality drama in its early Elizabethan efflorescence. If that argument holds true, then the critical conclusion that the commercial playhouses inherited a largely intact popular tradition would require revision; rather, pre-playhouse drama might also significantly reflect a growing humanistic literary culture. If so, furthermore, we would have an example of humanism’s capacity to reach deeply into popular culture.

To summarize briefly, the medieval morality play was a dramatized allegory of the struggle for Christian salvation, often involving temptation, sin, and redemption, presented by means of abstract character types such as the human representative Mankind or the Virtue-character Mercy or the Vice-figure Mischief. The typical plot of the morality depicts a psychomachia, a contest for the soul of Mankind waged between the forces of godliness and the forces of evil who attempt, often comically, to seduce Mankind from his spiritual allegiance. In the case of the early Elizabethan moral play, according to most critics, the form shows its flexibility by absorbing new theatrical influences and airing new social concerns. In general, scholars emphasize a secularization of the moral play. The medieval interest in heavenly justice becomes displaced into Elizabethan calls for social justice, the medieval sense of an uncontestable religious truth gives way to
Protestant anti-Catholic polemics, and the medieval allegorical characters yield
to more individualized stage figures. The moralities' most noteworthy change,
reflective of Calvinism, becomes the "bifurcation of the central mankind figure"
into dual "godly and profane figures," as Bevington so lucidly describes it. In
these views, humanism - perceived in terms of the plays of Plautus, Terence, and
Seneca - exerts little influence, and the popular morality is reified as the era's
primary dramatic genre, made conformable to the interests of Protestantism. In
this conception, the moral play 'absorbs' or 'incorporates' or 'adapts itself to'
new concerns while remaining basically the same. As Robert Weimann puts it,
the morality play was flexible enough that it "adjusted to economic, social, and
political shifts... adapting itself to the new social milieu" (emphasis mine). Here
the morality resembles an elastic container that can be stretched or opened a
bit further to take in new items. Thus, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century allegorical
play emerges as "one of literary history's most static genres." The

Nonetheless, scholars continue to discover new dimensions and
complexities in early Elizabethan morality drama. For example, Greg Walker
has detailed Tudor drama's contributions to contemporary political debates; Paul
Whitfield White has demonstrated just how thoroughly and profoundly involved
mid-century drama was in Protestant advocacy; Dorothy H. Brown and Darryll
Grantely have emphasized humanist themes and humanist educational advocacy
in Tudor morality drama; Ineke Murakami has analyzed in William Wager's
morality as complex and detailed critique of the nascent capitalist state, personal
conformity, and the emerging bourgeois Protestant ethic; and Jane Griffiths
has found in some sixteenth-century allegorical drama a self-consciousness about the
limitations of the allegorical mode itself. Missing, however, is an understanding
of how much humanist readerly practices refashion the morality form itself, with
important implications for the history of Elizabethan theater. For this argument,
I would examine the "later moralities": early Elizabethan plays that, according
to Bernard Spivak, show the form's fully developed ability to absorb influences
without changing, before the advent of more "hybrid" drama. Rather than
remaining static, the late moralities reveal extensive alteration by presumably
alien humanist elements, a change that runs curiously parallel with the morality's
proliferation. Essentially, humanism imbues morality drama with a readerly, cross-
referencing habit of mind that restructures spectatorial response. The result is an
inter-penetration of the allegorical and the humanistic that is wholly new. This
change has three key aspects.

First, in late morality drama, the spectators' attention is often pulled
away from incidents, characters, or images and toward features that resemble
something similar in another play, toward conventions per se. The sheer number
of sixteenth-century moral plays, one drama developing in the context of another,
facilitates this capacity for allusion. The attention paid to allusion, citation, and
analogue in late moralls creates an unprecedented, self-conscious domain of

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Dramatic experience and pleasure that is fundamentally aesthetic. Thus, the new
allusiveness alters the teleological concentration of effect that had been typical of
earlier Tudor moralities, such as Youth (c. 1513) or Mundus et Infans (c.1515). In
late morality drama, aesthetics threatens to displace homiletics.

Second, humanism vastly expands the moralities' world of allusion and
proverbs, with destabilizing effect. Before 1500, morality plays cite the Bible and the
Church patriarchs almost exclusively, but Elizabethan moral plays lavish allusions to classical authors, mythological figures, Roman and Greek heroes, and other learned exempla. Humanist allusive practice imports a multiplicity of competing meanings that work against the possibility of synthesis, medieval or otherwise. Such contestation reflects a larger characteristic of Renaissance
reading practice, the humanist habits of cross-referencing and glossing. As Steven
N. Zwicker puts it, "To read with pen in hand... to gloss or interline with technical
or rhetorical terms or with translations and citations; to summarise and cross-refer;
to outline and paraphrase; to make synopses and provide interpretations; to extract
maxims... these indeed were the commonplace of Renaissance reading." Although
annotation and cross-referencing were practiced by medieval scribes,
"the powerful and regulated impulses of humanist education spread annotation
far beyond the professional class of readers," so that, concludes Zwicker, early
humanist readers were bound by a shared sense of "the importance of exemplarity
to their habits of reading." Exemplary reading involves "the careful study of texts
for patterns of virtue, the imbibing of classical wisdom, and the exportation of
models of conduct and expression." Yet drama is inherently multi-vocal and
contentious. In the late moralities, multiple examples yield conflicting authorities:
An amplitude of inconsistent proverbs generates tensions and ambivalences - as
indeed, also can happen in other humanist works (such as John Lyly's Euphues).
Thus, although many early Elizabethan dramas take their titles and narratives
from proverbs (for example, Like Will to Like; Enough is as Good as a Feast; The
Tide Tarrieth No Man; 'Tis Good Sleeping in a Whole Skin; As Plain as Can Be),
their implications become increasingly complex as the plays proceed. Dueling
proverb and exempla produce subversion and instability, such that the didactic
must be adjudicated by the experiential.

Third, humanism's tension with Calvinism works to aggravate instability
of interpretation. Humanist-influenced playwrights use the morall to stage
schoolboys, pedants, and educational issues, with the intention of advancing social
and individual reform through learning, as Brown and Grantley have argued. But,
as critics note, humanism's belief in the ameliorating power of education tends to
run afoul of Calvinism's belief in reparation (predestination). In that
regard, an Elizabethan morality play will sometimes offer alternative, sequential
interpretations of its action. The thematic tensions of these plays join forces with the
collective ambiguity of allusions and proverbs to underscore interpreative
instability as a key characteristic of late morality drama.
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The present essay will explore the impact of humanism, first, by using Ulpian Fulwell’s Like Will to Like (1568) to take the aesthetic temperature of late morality drama; second, by considering humanist readerly protocols and interpretive subversion in William Wager’s moralities, The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art (1569) and Enough is as Good as a Feast (1570); and third, by identifying in George Gascoigne’s humanist closet drama The Glass of Government (1575) the traces of the morality allegorical tradition and psychomachia. Gascoigne’s morality-like academic play rounds off the present argument by showing its obverse: The Glass of Government suggests how much, in early Elizabethan drama, humanist and popular traditions must be understood not in isolation but in relationship to each other.

The Aestheticism of Ulpian Fulwell’s Like Will to Like

Early Elizabethan moral drama introduces an overt aestheticism new to the form. The aestheticizing of moral drama derives from the humanist practice of cross-referencing, a development evident in Ulpian Fulwell’s Like Will to Like.19 The main business of Like Will to Like’s Vice, Nichol Newfangle, is to pair rogues — Tom Tossput with Rafe Roister, Cutbert Cutpurse with Pierce Pickpurse, Hance the drunkard with Philip Fleming — as companions in riot and crime and, ultimately, in beggary or hanging.20 Thus evil characters receive fittingly ‘like’ ends: “[S]o like with like reward obtain” (1347), as the concluding Song puts it, and as mid-century drama often demonstrates. In contrast to Nichol the Vice, the character Virtuous Living enters late in the play as the emblem of pious behavior leading to heavenly salvation; the other Virtue-figures — God’s Promise, Honour, and Good Fame — accumulate around him, until the whole entourage exits singing God’s praises and marching toward glory.

Like Will to Like thus offers little conflict or dramatic tension, so little that we might wonder, what drives this play? What gives it forward movement, theatrical energy, interest? Virtuous Living recoils from Nichol Newfangle as from a hot stove: no temptation, no attention-holding psychomachia or struggle with evil there. Indeed, as J. A. B. Somerset suggests, Nichol acts more like a master of ceremonies than a seducer.21 The play does contain some rudimentary irony, since the rogues paired by Nichol expect the opposite of their fates, a profitable plot of land rather than a place in the poor house or on Tyburn Hill — but those ironies introduce little suspense and are stated and re-stated to the point of exhaustion.22 Similarly, although Like Will to Like carries political content — for example, in its xenophobia toward immigrant Dutch workers — it works only incidentally to the play’s rush towards farce. Confusingly, too, Like Will to Like offers opposing themes of Calvinist reprobation and humanist amelioration that negate each other almost willy-nilly. Thus, notwithstanding its Calvinist division of mankind into ingrained evildoers and virtuous-livers who barely interact and “inevitably” pursue their separate paths,23 the play’s humanist admonitions argue, crosswise, that damnation can be avoided by means of education, parental discipline, and good company.24 Conflicts over the possibility of salvation generate some pathos but — as with oppositions of character, politics, or theme — no dramatic tension or suspense.

Dramatic interest arises, rather, from Like Will to Like’s very conventionalism, its utter absence of originality. The play rings all the familiar changes on early Elizabethan morality drama; it is the most conventional of theater pieces — making its title’s celebration of likeness especially apt. The delight of Like Will to Like is that it invokes the audience’s theatrical expertise by means of every device, formula, and bit of business known to the mid-century morall and proceeds to fulfill the spectators’ generic expectations with all the gusto and delight of a shaggy-dog story. The real subject of this play is the aesthetic pleasure of the form itself.

Nichol Newfangle constitutes a virtual encyclopedia of Vice-characteristics.25 He enters wearing the kind of fantastical clothing typical of characters such as Newguse in Mankind, taunting boys in the audience with an emblematic prop (the knave of spades, associated with the Vice),26 and uttering the Vice’s familiar suggestive remarks to women spectators. Altogether, Nichol performs an almost definitive inventory of mid-century Vice business. He presents himself using the Vice’s familiar laugh, embarks on an absurd soliloquy, talks continually to the audience, claims ancestry from the Devil, forgets his name, repeats the title proverb over and over, mocks other characters by mangling their phrases, makes scatological jokes, laughs and sings, alludes to locales of execution, brandishes the obligatory dagger of lath, engages in fisticuffs, hauls his pickpocket ‘cousin’, betrays his gulls, and rides off to Hell on Lucifer’s back.27 The features in this compilation allude to those of Vice-figures in a host of Tudor plays, including Nice Wanton (1550), Respublica (1553), The Repentance of Mary Magdalene (1558), Cambises (1561), King Darius (1565), Horsetes (1567), The Trial of Treasure (1567), The Longer Thou Livest, the More Fool Thou Art (1569), The Most Virtuous and Godly Susanna (1569), Enough is as Good as a Feast (1570), Appius and Virginia (1575), The Tide Tarieth No Man (1576), and All for Money (1577). With his richly conventional Vice-business, Nichol demonstrates how the Vice has morphed from the improvisational figure so central to the medieval morality tradition into a comprehensive embodiment of familiar clichés, rather like a department store Santa Claus.

We can catalog other conventions, too. Just as numerous early Elizabethan plays — such as Cambises or The Tide Tarieth No Man — begin with a Prologue citing a wise proverb or Latin injunction, so too does Like Will to Like, which credits Cicero with its title maxim; the phrase is also proverbial.28 Indeed, resembling other plays of the era, Like Will to Like is dense with Latin tags, adages, and epigrams; Somerset, for example, identifies some twenty-four references to
proverbs recorded in Tilley. The play’s justification for its mixture of serious and comic – “Some do matters of mirth and pastime require; / Other some are delighted with matters of gravity” (26-27) – invokes a formulaic apologia that had become a commonplace since Fulgens and Lucrex (c. 1490). In a more specific borrowing, Newfangle at one point initiates a gratuitous bit of action by offering himself as merry judge between Tosspot and Roister in a contest over which of the two exceeds the other as knave (see 313-438). This episode has its antecedent in John Heywood’s The Four PP (c. 1520), in which a peddler likewise serves as judge in a knavish lying contest. Indeed, Heywood’s dramaturgy also touches Like’s action, as characters of different humors march across the stage in pairs, with Nichol acting as master of ceremonies and arbiter, much in the manner of John Heywood’s The Play of the Weather (c. 1528); Heywood’s influence can be felt, as well, in Thomas Lupton’s All for Money29. The drinking songs of Like Will to Like, which invoke ale, toasted bread, and fellowship around the tavern fire, recall the Tudor stage songs epitomized by the famous “Back and sides, go bare, go bare,” of Gammer Gurton’s Needle (c. 1553). Again in common with Gammer and other early interludes from The Castle of Perseverance and Mankind onward, Like enjoys jokes about anal functions; in the manner of Gammer’s Hodge, Nichol Newfangle even points demonstratively to a revealing tear on the backside of his breeches (86-88; see also 151).31 Like Hodge, Newfangle fears the Devil so much that he almost befouls himself on stage (221-23), while his reference to feces as “buttons” (222) echoes terminology employed in Appius and Virginia (pub. 1575).32 Lucifer, for his part, may be wearing a bear costume, as was sometimes used in his stage representation, and here and in All for Money the Devil dances and cavorts grotesquely.33 Nichol refers to Lucifer as “bottle-nosed” (89), an epithet that also occurs in All for Money (e.g. 363) with variations elsewhere.34 In Like Will to Like, nose jokes, anal jokes, and scatological humor reinforce each other in a way that seems typical: Nichol calls the “hole” in his “behind” as big as Lucifer’s nose (86-89); he suggests that Tom Collier hold his nose in Nichol’s “lick-hole” (159), while Tom invites Nichol to place his tongue under Tom’s nose. In All for Money, Sin repeatedly calls Satan “Snottynose” (e.g. 401, 419, 443, 459, etc.), and also applies the nose-in-anus image when he says to Satan, “Then your nose I would have, to stop my tail behind” (467). Indeed, Sin and Nichol are both associated with flatulence and incontinence.35 Such correspondences suggest that early Elizabethan moralities had developed a set of familiar sight gags and scatological jokes: a codification of images, terms, and actions for body-function humor is manifesting itself on the mid-century stage.36

And there are more cross-references. The name Ralph Roister recalls the eponymous hero of Roister Doister (c. 1553), and “Cutpurse” figures in various interludes, such as Appius and Virginia and Cambises. The Flemish drunkard Hance, with his heavy northern accent, recalls a character of similar speech, Hance, from Wealth and Health (1554); such stage Flemings, Bevington

notes, had become something of a vogue.37 A particularly interesting case of interchangeable stock characters occurs with a devil-associated figure, Tom the Collier of Croydon, given that a contemporaneous play (now lost) was called The Collier (1575), a character named Grim the Collier figures in Damon and Pithias, and a further permutation results in Grim the Collier of Croydon (c. 1600). Fulwell also calls attention (through an interruption in the dialogue) to a quite specific allusion. Roister likens himself to “Haman that prepared / A high pair of gallows for Marocheus the Jew, / And was the first that thereon was hanged” (362-64). Those lines evoke the play that dramatizes that Biblical action, Godly Queen Hester (1527), which had just been published in 1561. Likewise, both plays refer proximately to the story of Philaras and the brass bull, as if Fulwell were consulting Hester as he wrote. Roister’s lament, “Time tarryeth no man, but passeth still away; / Take time while time is, for time doth flee” (1000-01), teasingly invites comparison to George Wapull’s staging of that very idea in The Tide Tarryeth No Man (although Wapull’s play was published later than Like). Suggestively, too, the judge Severity expatiates upon the importance of just judges untainted by envy or favoritism (see 1043-57); that speech, highlighted by references to Cicero and Isidore of Seville, establishes thematic kinship with various mid-century interludes, such as Respublica, Appius and Virginia, and Cambises, deeply troubled by corrupt judges. Finally, the speeches of Virtuous Life and the other Virtue-characters constitute a pastiche of the almost self-consciously naive platitudes found in any number of early Elizabethan plays.38

Like Will to Like, we might conclude, claims distinction paradoxically on the basis of its nearly total lack of originality. From its borrowed themes, through its formulaic Vice, to its stock characters, pat actions, familiar language, codified body humor, and stagey jokes, Like Will to Like is cobbled together almost entirely from the theatrical business of other plays. While some of its conventions derive from medieval drama, the interlude’s more pervasive references are to mid-century and early Elizabethan plays (including humanist ones). More homiletically foolish than some morals, the play maintains momentum through its comic focus on ringing the changes of mid-century stage convention. Indeed, the appeal of Like Will to Like is substantially amoral – a remarkable position for a morality play – since a good deal of that appeal arises from the cultivation of spectators’ purely formal expectations and is pointed up by the Vice’s frequent winks, nods, and metaphorical elbows-in-the-side.39 Like Will to Like is devoid of conflict, surprise, or suspense; it has nothing moving or particularly credible to say about salvation, politics, or human behavior; in the end, it lacks any dramatic raison d’etre except one: in its exuberant inventorying of interlude conventions, almost like ducks knocked over in a row, the play is enormous fun.

Like Will to Like, then, demonstrates the aestheticizing of political drama. Such aestheticizing becomes possible when the number of like plays reaches a certain critical mass, allowing attention to glide from tenor to vehicle, as if the
implicit subject were becoming imitation itself. This potential for aestheticizing separates early Elizabethan allegorical drama decisively from the medieval morality plays, which have less in common with each other than do their sixteenth-century successors. In this aesthetic dimension, early Elizabethan moral plays show themselves as more humanistic than they have appeared before, because their tacit of imitation, allusion, and cross-reference — like their tendency to invoke classical authorities and Latin maxims — suggests habits of mind associated with the rising tide of humanist education, humanist books, humanist marginalia, and humanist values in early Elizabethan England. Not all late moral plays are so evacuated of thought that they become only light shows for theatrical convention, but Like Will to Like identifies, nonetheless, a humanist infusion into the dramaturgical heart of the Elizabethan morality. The play’s conventionalism, furthermore, may even hold some political value. In an era when playing politics on the stage invited official repression and when a noticeable number of prologues took pains to warn the audience against misconstruing the play politically, the distancing power of humanist aestheticism surely helped to give political discourse its latitude.

Interpretive Instability and Humanism in William Wager’s
The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art
and Enough Is as Good as a Feast

Just as Like Will to Like displays a drift in emphasis from morality didacticism to aesthetic pleasure, William Wager’s The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art reveals a change from interpretive consistency to instability in meaning, a development again at odds with older morality didacticism. That new instability reflects the ironical and the enigmatical dimensions within humanist habits of thought. The Longer Thou Livest treats knowledge not as stable or universal but as cumulative, even dynamic; likewise, folly becomes ambiguous. Wager’s second play, Enough Is as Good as a Feast, identifies the turn of allegorical drama toward readerly interpretive strategies.49

The Longer Thou Livest stages the history of the fool Moros, who enters as a schoolboy instructed by Virtue-characters, succumbs to the diversions of the Vices, becomes in adulthood rich at the hand of Fortune, and refuses, as death approaches, to relinquish his materialism or ask for grace. Interpretive changeability informs the structure of the play, since Moros arrives as a witty and likeable fool (more delightful than the officious Virtues) but betrays, as the play proceeds, an inherent viciousness.41 According to R. Mark Benbow, Confusion’s judgment on Moros’s unresponsiveness to God’s offer of mercy makes clear that Moros’s innate depravity puts him beyond grace: “Thy malice will not let thee thy folly to see / So that thou hast not the grace thy life to amend” (1837-38).42 Here, that is, the interlude undertakes to alter the audience’s response to the playful schoolboy as the facts accumulate. But in doing so, The Longer Thou Livest puts itself on

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different interpretive grounds at different dramatic moments. Moros starts out not as Everyman but as a humanist schoolboy reminiscent of Wit in Wit and Science: impatient, frolicsome, unfocused, quick of body and of emotion, but amendable. At the beginning, the Prologue stresses the determinative power of education, and Discipline places responsibility for Moros’s recalcitrant behavior on his indulgent parents: “Let this ungracious and foolish person / Be as an image of such bringing up” (178-79).43 The action of the first major movement of the play (71-1005) depends upon the premise that the child can be saved by good training.44 That humanist tenet is repudiated, however, by the play’s closing claim for Moros’s reprobate nature. The difference between amelioration and reprobation cannot be easily squared, and, instead of attempting critical contortions to make them compatible, one might better acknowledge that at different times the play takes the measure of Moros by different, perhaps opposite, templates.45 The unifying allegory of the medieval morality has broken down, subdivided into humanist and Calvinist strains.

Politics further muddy the interpretive waters. The second section of The Longer Thou Livest (1201-1684) binds Moros to unregenerate Catholicism, as Fortune’s lines indicate: “A popish fool will I place in a wiseman’s seat” (1065).46 Human folly in general and Moros in particular are now associated with Marian persecutions: “May I hang, burn, head and kill?,” he asks (1362; see also 1218-20, 1370-72, 1523-24). In a further development, the third section (1685-1890) introduces Moros as a covetous and wicked rich man who oppresses all the people under his control (see 1685-1742). Interesting here is the way that humanist pedagogical polemics have metamorphosed into attacks on Catholicism and wealth (especially new wealth). Will all foolish students grow up to be Catholics and abusive landowners? This glib demonizing takes its power not from the universal truths of man’s relationship to God but from the local, mid-century anger about Marian persecutions and material gains to the unworthy.47 The tightly structured, intellectual and eschatological coherence of medieval morality plays such as The Castle of Perseverance has here been forfeited. The Elizabethan moral play – at least in the instance of Wager’s interlude – is becoming an interpretive congeries of episodic, allegorical, and topical elements whose shifting tectonics progressively alter the drama’s meaning. In such a play, truth is experienced as not static but dynamic, not metaphysically invariant but social, contingent, and progressive. That experience reflects the in utramque partem debating and the ongoing sifting out of meaning characteristic of sixteenth-century humanist drama. Indeed, the tension between didacticism and dynamism in The Longer Thou Livest may echo a tension that Joel Altman sees running through mid-century drama: a “moral commentary” that is “generalizing and reductive,” on the one hand, and a more rhetorical understanding of “the ironies of speech in view of past and future events, . . . and the subtleties of argument and judgment,” on the other hand.48

On at least three occasions, Moros himself behaves in an enigmatic
manner best associated with the rhetorical dimension, specifically humanist acting.40 By threatening him with beating, Discipline induces the schoolboy Moros to recite his lessons: "Upon your sides this scourge shall be worn / Except you will speak rightly after me" (337-38). Moros repeats his lessons dutifully, but when Discipline commands him to stop, "You may say no more as he did say . . ." (356), Moros continues to parrot back the words: "You may say no more as he did say . . ." (358). Is Moros dim-witted, or incapacitated from fright, or engaged in mockery? In the moments it takes for the answer to become apparent, the boy acquires a subtle dimension of subjectivity, enhanced by the laughter that may follow the audience’s recognition of Moros’s parody.41 A related impression comes soon after when Discipline harangues Moros with a long didactic speech purposed to “teach” him to “honor” Piety (432). Moros, however, turns out to be a risible ironist. Preceding Discipline’s peroration, Wager offers this stage direction: “Here let Moros between every sentence say, ‘Gay gear,’ ‘good stuff,’ ‘very well,’ ‘fin-ado,’ with such mockish terms” (at 432). As Moros makes these responses, Discipline, Piety, and Excitement fail to grasp their satiric nature. The episode will work best on stage if Moros’s interjections are straightforward enough for the Virtues to take them seriously but tinged with mockery enough for the audience to appreciate the gag. The discrepancy makes for one of the most hilarious moments in Elizabethan moral drama,42 and its effect is to confer on Moros the witty enigmaticalness – in the tradition of Heywood – that we associate with sophisticated drama. In this regard, Moros’s parody of the Virtues’ enlightenment might be said to constitute a satire on the medieval morality itself. In the traditional moralities, when the wishy-washy Mankind-figure is finally confronted by the representative of repentance or mercy, he turns instantly to God, thus demonstrating his essential receptiveness. In The Longer Thou Livest, however, the Virtues confront a character who is indifferent and ironic, so that the play eliminates the necessary condition of the moralities and then exploits the situation for comedic purposes.

The most poignant episode in The Longer Thou Livest comes as God’s Judgment threatens punishment on Moros, “strike[s]” him to his knees, holds out a last offer of mercy, and finally sends him to the Devil with Confusion (1759-1858). The scene recalls Mankind’s death in The Castle of Perseverance, but here the action introduces a theatrical question: Does Moros see and hear God’s Judgment? Moros notices him at first, for when God’s Judgment enters with “terrible visure” (s.d. at 1758), Moros responds with a defensive call for “clubs, bills, bows and staves” (1773). Yet when God’s Judgment strikes Moros to the ground with his “sword of vengeance” (1791), Moros mistakes the blow for “the falling sickness” or “the palsy” (1795, 1796). When God’s Judgment warns, “If thou hast grace for mercy now call out” (1799), Moros either does not hear or does not understand him: “It was but a qualm came over my heart” (1803), Moros says to himself. He recognizes an “ill-favored knave” (1811) in Confusion, but,

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being then despoiled of his rich array and dressed in a “fool’s coat” (1820), he responds uncomprehendingly, “Am I asleep, in a dream, or in a trance? / . . . I cannot stand on my feet for quaking” (1823-26). Do these figures exist within Moros’s comprehension or not? Although the evidence is ambiguous and the action theologically complex, to some degree Moros does not grasp what is being done to him, and in that discrepancy, with its hint of pathos, the dramaturgy invites spectatorly pity for Moros.43 Here Moros’s enigmatic psychological and emotional experience draws interest away from the righteousness of God’s Judgment. Such tension between didactic truth and contingent experience constitutes a feature of humanism and humanist drama in the sixteenth century.44

As the discussion of Moros suggests, in enumerating ways in which The Longer Thou Livest privileges differing responses and interpretations, we have also been tracing the humanist presence in the play. The interlude offers additional humanist features. Virtues, Vices, and other characters, for example, make noticeable recourse to Latin, some of it sophisticated and lengthy (speakers do paraphrase their words in English). Cicero’s famous “O mores, O tempora” is even alluded to (1177). At the conclusion, the Virtues expiate upon the typically humanistic contrast between Fortune and Wisdom, and they exhort youth to learn in two ways, scire and sapere: “To learn many things and many things to know, / Then to have wisdom the same to direct, / These be two disciplines, meet for high and low, / Which to all virtues do the mind erect” (1595-62). The figure of Fortune owes nothing to the tradition of morality drama, nor do the ruminations on scire and sapere, nor does the Roman contrast between Fortuna and Sapientia, nor, finally, does the causal connection of wisdom with virtue; rather, these elements emanate from humanism.

The distribution of acting parts on the title page of The Longer Thou Livest calls for Fortune to be played by the same actor who plays Moros. That assignment may provide an early instance of ‘thematic doubling’; here it suggests that behind the mask of Fortune stands Folly. The Renaissance, of course, loved phrases such as “Fortune’s fool,” with its implication that Fortune makes fools of those whom she favors and especially those who trust her. The doubling fits into the play’s overall humanist thematic and dramatic trajectory, the ever-deepening discovery of what it means to be a fool, a humanist strategy that will take us toward a consideration of Enough Is as Good as a Feast. “The longer thou livest the more fool thou art,” characters repeat to Moros (215, 945, 1577, 1759). His folly thus accumulates various meanings and implications: that foolishness constitutes an explanatory paradigm for the history of Marian persecution and financial exploitation; that to invest oneself in the external world, in Fortune, is to forsake knowledge and wisdom; that schoolboy fecklessness leads to evil and impiety; that folly deadens the heart to grace; that to indulge comedy is to invite tragedy. As more and more dimensions of folly are revealed, the apothegm comes to function not just illustratively but also dynamically, acquiring successive,
even unrelated meanings. That dimension of *The Longer Thou Livest* is largely alien to medieval morality drama. It reflects, instead, the new humanist readerly habit of mind, typified by Erasmus’s *Adagia*. Indeed, Erasmus’s *Apophthegmata*, translated by Nicholas Udall, was first published in 1542 and reissued in 1564; likewise Udall’s own *Flowers of Latine Spekenge* of 1534 was reprinted in 1568.

John Heywood’s *A Dialogue . . . of Proverbs* reached its fourth printing in 1561, and his ever-expanding collection of epigrams had become *A Four Hundred of Epigrams* in 1560. The era in which *The Longer Thou Livest* appeared is marked by the humanistic drive to index thought in terms of commonplaces, proverbs, and sententiae. That process is never innocent, of course, because proverbial maxims lead inevitably to different applications and come into conflict with each other. *The Longer Thou Livest* is infused with just such humanist dynamism and interpretive complexity.

In showing the humanist dynamics of the late moral plays, I have been stressing aestheticism and interpretive multiplicity. Wager’s second play, *Enough Is as Good as a Feast*, likewise reveals an infusion into morality drama of humanist reading practices and heuristics. The play tells the story of Worldly Man, who begins as materialistic and acquisitive, undergoes conversion to God by Heavenly Man, suffers a relapse into avarice orchestrated by the Vice, amasses riches by cheating the poor, and finally is struck down for his greed and cruelty by God’s Plague. With its allegorical hero, opposing Virtue- and Vice-figures, and salvific narrative, *Enough* resembles other medieval and Tudor moral plays. As with *Like Will to Like* and *The Longer Thou Livest*, the Vices in *Enough* radiate a vitality that spills well beyond their allegorical signification. Covetous, the Vice-leader, is proud, amusing, and multi-dimensional; he emerges on stage telling a showstopping tale of beguiling nonsense and proceeds to pass witticisms and playact grandiosely, all of which he performs with a gusto that transcends his narrative function—an effect typical of mid-century Vices.

Likewise, *Enough*’s political and economic concerns recall those of *The Longer Thou Livest*, but with the humanist perspective enlarged. The play identifies sins in ambition and greed, the first eventuating in the Marian burnings (see 240-49), the second in the economic dispossession of the poor (see, for example, 970-1050).25 Covetous’s liturgical references and especially his invocation of Catholic saints debunked by Protessants connect him firmly to Popery, while Worldly Man’s avarice and abusive economic practices demonstrate the play’s indictment of the predations of Protessants grown wealthy under the Edwardian and Elizabethan regimes. Like other plays in the tradition, *Enough* would correct economic problems with humanist moral solutions: here, empathy for the sufferers of the exploited prompts encouragement for individuals to curb their acquisitiveness in favor of the welfare of the commonwealth, a view evoked by the play’s motto, “Enough is as good as a feast,” with its corollary notion that amassing personal wealth prevents distribution to the needy.

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*Enough*’s politics finds its parallel in a humanist poetics. In a lengthy opening speech, the Prologue invokes the muses, asks for eloquence, and appeals for an English poetic meter that rejects all “grievousness and smart” and that, instead, makes itself “pleasant in every part” (33, 34). Referring to Orpheus’s music, the Prologue envisions a poetry that might make “stones to melt” (19) and sufferers to “forget their pains” (22). After a readerly, emblem-book exegesis of Mercury, the god of eloquence, the Prologue alludes to the explanatory sentences that begin Latin and Greek drama and offers up the play’s motto, enough is as good as a feast, which “rhetorically we shall amplify” (80). Striking here is the playwright’s assumption of wide-ranging humanist knowledge on the part of the audience, his repeated classical allusions, his humanist emphasis on eloquence, amplification, and rhetoric, and his theory of drama as a movement into a pleasurable world of the imagination. We are approaching the terrain of Sidney’s *Defense of Poesy*.

*Enough* presupposes a learned audience, a tribute to the growth of humanist education under the Tudors. Beyond its numerous Latinisms and proverbs, the play’s dialogue is saturated with bookish classical and Biblical references: to Orpheus, Mercury, Circe, Dionysus, Alexander, and Tarquin; to Seneca, Cicero, Caesar, and Bernard; to Solomon, David, Moses, and Saint Paul; to the Psalms and the Gospels. These references posit a reading audience, and they sometimes occur so cryptically as to assume spectators who are comfortable with filling out the details of an allusion, as in the reference to Martha and Mary (733). In contrast to a popular drama defined by its native and national elements, *Enough* offers an early Elizabethan theatrical experience infused with cosmopolitan humanist argumentative and interpretive techniques.

This readerly infusion can be demonstrated with a particular example, Covetous’s seduction of Worldly Man away from the godly company of Enough (747-866). Worldly Man had earlier given over his avaricious ways as a result of his encounter with Heavenly Man and Contention. His transformation there happened with the speed that we associate with the Mankind-figure’s final embrace of God in the medieval morality tradition.26 The subsequent undoing of Worldly Man’s acceptance of grace may comment, like Moros’s mockery, upon the anachronism of the medieval vision. In the debate between Covetous and Enough, the struggle for Worldly Man’s soul is conducted as a humanist battle of allusions and aphorisms; similar proverb-contests take place in *The Trial of Treasure* and *All for Money*.27 The Vices Covetous and Precipitation launch their argument, with Precipitation citing Seneca on wisdom as the way to avoid misery. Musing, Worldly Man picks up the theme of wisdom’s importance by alluding to Cicero. When he would introduce his new Vice friends to Enough, Enough recoils with his own reference: “Be not rash in taking of a friend, Aristotle doth say” (781). After Worldly Man objects, “Your parables truly I do not well understand. Except you mean I should have no friend but you by me to stand” (787-88), Enough

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25: The Marian burnings are a crucial moment in the history of religion in England, occurring in 1556 and marking the end of the Elizabethan era and the beginning of the Jacobean period. These events were significant in the development of the humanist perspective, as humanist scholars and thinkers sought to promote a more tolerant and enlightened society.

26: Sidney’s *Defense of Poesy* is a seminal work in the development of the humanist perspective in literature, arguing for the value of poetry and its role in the education of the English nation. The work is notable for its broad range of classical and medieval references, which Sidney believed were essential for a true humanist education.

27: In *The Trial of Treasure* and *All for Money*, the Vices Covetous and Precipitation engage in a series of debates and arguments, each employing a variety of humanist references and allusions to challenge the other. These debates are significant in demonstrating the humanist perspective's emphasis on eloquence, amplification, and the use of classical and biblical references in literary works.
replies laconically (and perhaps with unintended humor), “Enough is as good as a feast, well you wot” (789). Now the Vices take up the fight, with Covetous citing King Solomon who, despite his great wisdom, “ceased not daily to pray to God for more” (795), and with Precipitation recalling Cicero’s injunction to “Get thee store of friends” (797). Enough can only reply, elliptically and ineffectually, that “it is not all gold that like gold doth shine” (800). Worldly Man being now convinced that friends and wisdom are worth increasing, the Vices proceed by the same methods to argue that mere sufficiency inhibits generosity: “You have no more now than dostth yourself serve, / So that your poor brethren for all you may starve” (817-18). Enough argues back with Biblical and historical allusions, but then bolts the stage in something of a hull, “Well, choose you; I will let you alone, do what you will” (864). Enough’s moral critique of his opponents – “These words proceed from a covetous mind” (829) – is certainly right. But the field of conflict has been not psychologies but proverbs, and the argumentative model has been not sermonic exhortation but academic disputat. On those grounds Enough has been outflanked and out-adaged, forced into the odd and apparently anti-humanist position of attacking increased wisdom, new friendship, and charity. This is a deliciously ironic episode.

The play’s larger irony, of course, is that the proverb embodied by Enough proves true. Indeed, although the Vices are capable of appropriating “Enough is as good as a feast” for their own purposes, the motto acquires revelatory social and psychological meaning, as Worldly Man’s acquisitiveness dispossesses others of “enough,” and his contortions, at death’s door, concerning his will leave him almost literally choking on the name of God. We are challenged throughout to understand Enough’s action in terms of proverbs and allusions, to test its maxims against behavior and events, and to recognize its layerings of truth. This habit of allusion, cross-referencing, citation, probing, testing, and accumulating of meaning derives not from the morality tradition but rather from the exegetical practices and commonplace books of Erasmus and his heirs. It recalls the readerly distinction in The Longer Thou Livest between Moros’s capacity to learn by rote and his failure to “consider” the recitation’s “meaning” (352), as well as the learned distinction between scirens and sapientes culminating in that earlier play. With Wagner, the fire-power of the morality has been diverted from eschatology into the battle of the books.

Order against Chaos in George Gascoigne’s The Glass of Government

Gascoigne’s The Glass of Government would seem the opposite of Elizabethan moral drama. It is a pedagogical closet play, descended from Latin continental academic drama, and identified with “Christian Terence” and prodigal-son theater-pieces. It contains marginalia that cross-reference biblical passages and identify topics in long speeches, and the text itself is salted with

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lengthy didactic monologues, particularly from the schoolmaster Gnomaticus, that explain a schematized, detailed system of behavior for a virtuous life. In short, it would be hard to imagine a play more representative of what we think of as readerly, academic, humanist drama.\(^\text{18}\) Despite those elements, however, the worldview of morality drama, rather surprisingly, infiltrates The Glass of Government – the reverse situation to that of the moral plays. This example argues that early Elizabethan drama often displays an inter-penetration of presumably opposed traditions whose creative tension enforces a complex truth, neither tradition “absorbing” the other.

The Glass of Government attempts to establish a view of life that is methodical, hierarchic, and rational. Two fathers each have two sons whom they school: “The eldest being yong men of quike capacitie, do (Parrotte like) very quickly learn the rules without booke: the yonger beeing somewhat more dull of understanding, do yet engrave the same within their memories,” explains “The Argument.”\(^\text{19}\) The sons’ learning styles predict their careers, for the slow ones will prosper by their diligence while the elder sons, too clever for their own good, will seek amusement elsewhere, lend ear to parasites and sycophants, and fall into concupiscence and crime. The humanist zeal for order and rationality is blazoned in the outline of duties presented by The Prologue and elaborated in two lectures by Gnomaticus. These duties define a virtuous and profitable life, the essence of which is self-government. Gnomaticus expatiates upon obligations to God, King, magistrates, country, elders, and parents – in that order – and to their representatives. Each duty is highlighted conveniently by means of three imperatives: for example, one must fear, love, and trust God; and one must honor, obey, and love the king (lest anyone forget, Gnomaticus provides a handy chart at the end of II.i.). Likewise, in humanist fashion, Gnomaticus cites numerous classical and Christian authorities and anecdotes for each duty: fulfilling one’s obligations to country, for example, is illustrated by references to Cicero (both On Duties and Tusculan Disputations), Euripides, Plato, and Lycurgus, and to Trojan and Roman history. The schoolmaster’s lectures constitute a virtual primer in systematic, didactic, cross-referenced, and authorized humanist argumentation, the extreme realization of the developments that we have seen in morality drama.

In that spirit, Gascoigne undertakes to enumerate all the steps that the caring fathers take for their sons, yet also to elucidate the malfeasance of the two elder boys. As the four youths mature, the fathers hire the paternalistic schoolmaster to instruct them in virtue; as the two young sons grow in understanding and the two elders fail to develop, Gnomaticus recommends that the youths should be sent to university. When the older sons (Phylautus and Phylosarcus) abandon their university studies, the schoolmaster is about to urge the fathers to allow them to mature through travel, an apparently promising strategy nullified by the ignominious deaths of the two sons, one due to concupiscence, the other, thievery.
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These untimely events happen – despite the loving concern of the fathers and the pedagogue – because the clever sons have been led astray, first, by the panderer Eccho and, second, by the wicked servant, Ambidexter. Meanwhile, the younger, less quick-witted sons achieve success at university and advance to positions of authority and responsibility in church and state. Besides virtues rewarded, the play ends with an extended vision of vices punished, for the panderer, the prostitute, her aunt, and the corrupt servant have been arrested, the women to be set on the “Cucking stoole in publieque three market daieis,” the men to be “whipped about the Towne three several market daies,” and all banished upon pain of death (V.i.x, p. 87).

The Glass of Government trumpets the humanist and late Protestant mania for moral system, order, and explanation. But, problematically, the hermeneutics do not work, and the play’s ending is left hinting at certain emotional deficits and compensations. In explaining the successes of the two younger sons and the moral collapse of the elder, Glass migrates from rationality to arbitrariness. To attribute the moral decline of Phylautus and Phyllosarcus to their extreme quick-wittedness makes little serious sense, even for Tudor pedagogy. Oddly, despite the ubiquitous love, nurture, careful attention, and kind guidance of the fathers, the schoolmaster, and various good servants, nothing can divert the headlong charge of the two older brothers toward self-destruction. Beneath the struts and girders of the play’s social engineering, the two sons emerge as beyond the reach of humanist reform. For those reasons, the dialogue’s vengeance toward Eccho, Lamia, and Ambidexter bespeaks overkill: “Nay surely thou rather deservest death . . . such lewe serveantes as thou are, are the casting away of many toward young personages,” says Severus to Ambidexter (V.i.x, p. 87). The emotional compensation for the sorrowful loss of the two elder sons takes its form less in the comfort of the younger brothers’ successes than in the arrest, humiliation, and anticipated punishment of the lower class figures. Indeed, the vengefulness and recourse to class blame suggest a nervous effort to manage emotions aroused by the utter inexplicability of the elder sons’ ruination: scapegoating.

Underneath the Glass of Government’s lattice of humanist rationalism lies potential chaos. The humanist intellectual insecurity at that prospect appears in the play’s over-determination, its tendency to offer up an excess of causes. Thus the play postulates various possible explanations for the failure of the elder sons. They are too quick-witted, for they grasp concepts with facility but not depth; they are deceived and corrupted by bad friends (to make the charge plausible, the insignificant servant Ambidexter must be promoted to the level of influential friend when the sons go to university); they are too lustful by nature; or, alternately, they yield too easily to their lusts and desires; finally, they “lacke of God his grace” (IV. Chorus, p. 71). Just as no causal agent finally explains the deviance of the elder sons, so, too, no proposed or attempted remedy has the potential to succeed. This pedagogical play poses – intentionally or not – the dilemma that the most sensitive and sophisticated of educational offerings fail to lead Phylautus and Phyllosarcus to virtue. In that regard The Glass of Government joins with numerous early Elizabethan plays, such as The Longer Thou Livest and Cambises, which intimate the failure of humanist training to guarantee the development of moral character. In Glass nothing works to reform the would-be reprobates, not paternal care, high-minded siblings, pedagogical prowess, university stimulation, or (prospectively) foreign travel. The failure of all successive efforts to save the elder boys and the overabundance of weak causal agents have thematic and emotional implications. Most evidently, of course, humanism’s encyclopedic moral systematizing appears flawed and ineffectual, closed to the possibility of a behavioral randomness whose acknowledgment would radically alter the rationalist equation. The Glass of Government’s humanist method cannot bring itself to accommodate the aleatory or reprobat, while its exhaustiveness about human behavior cannot suppress them. The negative forces at work in the play are spontaneous, destructive, and uncontrollable; indeed, they represent a psychomachia and a world-view expressive more of the medieval morality tradition – with its allegorical structure, irresistible Vices, and sudden transformations – than of the new learning. In this context, Gascoigne’s decision to name his duplicitous servant Ambidexter, a name identified generically with the Vice-figure, sounds like the return of the repressed. The Glass of Government’s ineffectual humanist methodology and its irrepressible principle of disorder explain the emotional imbalance of the ending, for Eccho, Lamia, and Ambidexter become the convenient fall-guys for displaced frustrations over the perverse, medieval penchant of mankind to ignore grace.

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I began this essay by deferring the question of why, ‘Why the Indian summer of moral drama?’, in favor of the question of what, ‘What is the nature of that drama?’ With Fulwell’s and Wager’s plays, we can now answer that the didacticism and unity of the older morality form have been displaced in early English drama by humanist aestheticism, interpretive multiplicity, and bookishness. The morality form has not simply “absorbed” humanist themes while remaining the same; rather, it has changed. Advocates for the primacy of the morality tradition have argued that early Elizabethan morality drama was untouched by the formal influences of Plautus, Terence, and Seneca – but that conviction has allowed them to overlook the subtle and pervasive influence of humanist habits of reading and thinking. I would conjecture that the rise in the number of morality plays in the early Elizabethan decades reflects the success of this transformed genre in appealing to an increasingly humanistic culture. While the notion of an uncontaminated morality form was, by the 1560s, largely a fiction, humanist drama had also deepened, reciprocally, from its contact with the moralities. Gascoigne’s Christian Terence play cannot hide its medieval allegorical worldview, just as

Conclusion

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Fulwell’s and Wager’s moral interludes radiate humanist elements. We are left, if not with the intact morality tradition celebrated by critics, then, perhaps, with something better.

Renaissance literary historians have considerable trouble making order of, or finding a place for, early Elizabethan drama. While it has been argued effectively that the stage practices and ways of seeing of the commercial playhouses descend from those of this early drama, we still lack a view of the interludes that connects them fully to the ambitions and dynamics of the subsequent drama. To that end, I would suggest that many of the creative tensions of late Renaissance theater find their antecedents in those between humanism and popular morality drama that reconfigure early Elizabethan interludes—tensions implicit in the aestheticizing of the political, the instability of proverbial wisdom, the appeals to readership within the medium of performance, and the irrepressibility of both the contingent and the aleatory. Given these antinomies, Elizabethan culture might be said to create a vision of itself through inclusiveness of representation. If multiple influences could reformulate the nature of moral and even pedagogical drama, then that process displays Elizabethan culture not foundering upon diversity but rearticulating its conflicts within a fertile matrix of checks, balances, compensations, and alternatives. In that dynamism may lie some of the magic of the great drama that will follow.

University of Maryland

NOTES
1 This essay is dedicated to the memory of Thomas Moisan; it is a privilege to be part of a collection honoring him. Tom did not write on early Elizabethan drama, but he loved irony and ambiguity, convention as play, and humor in unexpected places—humor, especially that. Tom’s unflagging joy for life continues to inspire all of us who had the privilege of knowing him.
2 Howard B. Norland, Drama in Early Tudor Britain, 1485-1558 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 37-38. Alan C. Dessen favors the term “morall” over “morality play” because the former was used late in the sixteenth century, while the latter was invented in the eighteenth century; see Shakespeare and the Late Moral Plays (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 10-15; the terms “morall,” “morality plays,” and “morality plays” are used here interchangeably. Distinguishing “kinds” in the corpus of Tudor drama is an ongoing problem. The terms “interlude,” which has come into recent use, tends to delimit itself by reference to performance conditions, but also to be a more inclusive term than “morality play”; on the meaning of “interlude” see Jean-Paul Deax, “Complicity and Hierarchy: A Tentative Definition of the Interlude Genus,” in Interludes and Early Modern Society: Studies in Gender, Power and Theatricality, eds. Peter Happé and Wim Hüsken (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 23-42.
3 David M. Bevington has argued compellingly that the morality play reflects

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an authentic, popular, and native tradition that provides the backbone of English drama through the sixteenth century; see From “Mankind” to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).
6 Bevington, From “Mankind” to Marlowe, 152; see 152-69.
7 See, for example, Dessen, 3-8.
8 See, for example, Robert Weimann, Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition of the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function, ed. Robert Schwartz (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 98; see also Spivack, 227 and passim.
9 Weimann, 98. Weimann sees humanistic formal influence on morality drama manifested as a general concern about propriety, symmetry, decorum, and form itself (104).
10 Watkins 767. According to Robert Potter, “the morality play appeared to the Elizabethans as a set of traditional stage conventions of plot and character that could be put to many useful and contemporary theatrical purposes in the emerging popular drama” (105).
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12 Spivack, 227; see also Bevington, *From “Mankind” to Marlowe*, 161. On the “hybrid” play see Spivack, 251-414; and Bevington, *From “Mankind” to Marlowe*, 170-98.


14 Spivack, 214.

15 The contrast, implied above, between medieval synthesis and Renaissance multiplicity has been recently contested by James Simpson, who argues that in the sixteenth century, simplification and centralization of authority in literature replaced a medieval heterogeneity; *The Oxford English Literary History*, Vol. 2: 1350-1547: Reform and Cultural Revolution (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).


19 For a discussion emphasizing humanist pedagogy in *Like Will to Like*, see Brown, 53-68.


22 By Brown’s calculation, Fulwell repeats the title adage some thirty times (52).

23 See Bevington, *From “Mankind” to Marlowe*, 155. Somerset notes that “No repentance is possible for the evil-doers” and that the play seems “forbiddingly deterministic” (21). The sinners are also sometimes treated as reprobate by nature: “A knave thou was born and so thou shalt die,” says Nichol to Tom Tosspot (373; see also 371); “Thus thou may’st be called a knave in grain,” he adds (414).

24 “If my parents had brought me up in virtue and learning,” laments Tom Tosspot, “I should not have had this shameful end” (1014-15); “Flee from evil company,” adds Cutpurse, “as from a serpent you would flee” (1138; see also 480-86, 1002-04, 1010-20, 1137-46). See Brown’s attempt to resolve the play’s incompatible visions of reprobation and amelioration (53-68). The Prologue begins the play by citing Cicero’s *De Amicitia*, the classic humanist treatise on friendship, with the effect that *Like Will to Like*, in emphasizing evil companionship, might be understood as a morality corollary to humanist plays, such as *Damon and Pithias* (1565), that promote social reform through the virtues represented by true friendship.

25 Somerset argues that “by 1525 a recognizable body of comic devices existed,” enough so that “they apparently came to be elaborated for their humour alone” (5).

26 The Vice’s knave of clubs seems to be traditional; Dessen cites an allusion to it in Jonson’s *The Staple of News* (1626), 138.


29 For various examples, see Spivack, 114-15.

30 Regarding Heywood’s influence on *All for Money*, see Spivack, 233-35.

31 That scatological humor extends back to the earliest moralities, *The Castle of Perseverance and Mankind*.


33 When Lucifer appears, Nichol wonders if the figure might be “Tom Tumber or else some dancing bear” (72). T. W. Craik says that Satan’s was typically costumed “in leather skins, or in a hairy pelt, or in feathers” (*The Tudor Interlude: Stage, Costume, and Acting* [Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1958], 50).


35 See *Like Will to Like*, 221-23; and *All for Money*, 478-80.

36 Spivack also notes that Vice-figures in the late moralities repeatedly use the word *gear* to refer to their stratagems and devices (190-91).
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38 Virtuous Living’s statement that “virtue and fortune be not at strife. / Where virtue is, fortune needs must grow, / But fortune without virtue hath soon the overthrow” (770-71) suggests a fantasy of wish-fulfillment that separates *Like Will to Like* from the realm of serious social inquiry.

39 My sense of the sixteenth-century Vice as a sometimes amoral figure has been influenced by Ágnes Matuska, *The Vice-Device: logo and Lear’s Fool as Figures of Representational Crisis*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Szeged, Hungary, 2005.


43 Quotations from Wager’s plays follow Benbow’s edition, cited above. For a biography of Wager and corrections to Benbow’s edition, see Mark Eccles, “Wiliam Wager and his Plays,” *English Language Notes* 18, no. 4 (June 1981): 258-262.

44 This designation of three major sections of the play follows Benbow, “Introduction,” xiii.

45 As Dillon observes, “The play insists simultaneously that education is of value and that it can do no good for those already consigned to damnation” (139).

46 On the anti-Catholic aspect of *The Longer Thou Livest*, see Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics*, 131-33.

47 On mid-century “money plays,” concerned with usury and economic oppression, see White, 94-99.

48 Altman, 145.

49 On enigmatic humanist acting, see Cartwright, 25-48. David Bevington argues interestingly that Moros’s role is so lengthy and theatrically demanding that it was likely intended for a professional stage fool; “Staging the Reformation: Power and Theatricality in the Plays of William Wager,” in *Interludes and Early Modern Poetic Drama: 400 Years to London’s Stage*, ed. J. J. Lawton. (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 167-93.

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Society: *Studies in Gender, Power and Theatricality*, eds. Peter Happé and Wim Hüsken (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 353-80, esp. 358-60.

Wager has taken the school-lesson convention from plays such as *Wit and Science* and turned the tables by making the figure of presumed ignorance more clever than his schoolmaster. On Wager as exploring “psychological” characterization beyond the “traditional methods” of the moralities, see Murakami, 317.

51 Perhaps inspired by the humor here, Lupton in *All for Money* has Sin engage in a similar a bit of mockery by repetition, even seeming to echo the stage direction (905-14).

52 See Benbow, “Introduction,” xiv.


54 On political aspects of *Enough*, see Benbow, 91 n. 244, 92 n. 245, 117 n. 847-852, 117-18 n. 855-860, 123 n. 985, 126 n. 1065-1070; Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics*, 131-33; and White, 93-98.

55 On the authenticity of Worldly Man’s surrender, see Craik, 102.


As Murakami puts it, Worldly Man falls not through the sins and frailties of “older moral drama” but “through an error in judgment” (316).

58 For an excellent essay on the humanist and anti-humanist strains in the play, as well as in Tudor educational theory in the 1570s, see Christopher Gaggero, “Pleasure Unreconciled to Virtue: George Gascoigne and Didactic Drama,” in *Tudor Drama before Shakespeare, 1485-1590: New Directions for Research, Criticism, and Pedagogy*, eds. Lloyd Kermode, Jason Scott-Warren, and Martine Van Elk (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 167-93.