

The Harrowing of Malvolio: The Theological Background of *Twelfth Night*, Act 4, Scene 2

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There is no need at this date to make a laborious case for Shakespeare's knowledge of the Harrowing of Hell play from the medieval mystery cycles. Over thirty years ago, Glynne Wickham showed that the Porter scene in *Macbeth* draws on the iconography of that episode.¹ I wish to suggest that Act 4, scene 2 of *Twelfth Night*, in which Feste as Sir Topaz visits the imprisoned Malvolio, contains some oblique theological allusions which are partly to be understood in terms of the Harrowing and partly in terms of Reformation theological debate. I accept the view, now academically quite respectable, that Shakespeare was at least brought up as a Catholic,² and will suggest that this may colour the tone of the later part of the scene.

It is an article of the Apostles' Creed, inserted by the fourth synod of Sirmium in the middle of the fourth century, that Christ *descendit ad inferos*. The translation of these words which was included in the English Prayer Book from 1549 onwards—"he descended into Hell"—misrepresents the Latin, which actually means "to the people in the lower place," that is, Limbo, the borderline state (*limbus* is Latin for "edge"), neither Hell nor Heaven, in which the holy souls of Old Testament times awaited their redeemer. (The mistaken translation is repeated in the fourth of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.) The crucial proof-text of this doctrine in the canonical New Testament is 1 Peter 3:18 which states that after his death Jesus preached "unto the spirits that are in prison," a text quoted by the Duke in *Measure for Measure* (2.3.1-5). The story is elaborated in apocryphal writings. For instance, in the fragmentary *Gospel of Peter* (not by the Apostle) the resurrection appearance of Jesus is

accompanied by a cross, and a voice is heard from the sky saying, "Hast thou preached unto them that sleep?" to which "an answer was heard from the cross, saying: Yea."³ The fullest surviving treatment occurs in the *Gospel of Nicodemus* (otherwise known as the *Acts of Pilate*), which exists in one Greek and two Latin texts and also in a Middle English version.⁴ In the Latin text the story of the visitation of Jesus to the infernal regions, his defeat of Satan, Death and Hell, and his liberation of the souls of patriarchs and prophets, is narrated by the two sons of Simeon, Karinus and Leucius, who have been raised from the dead for this purpose. Remarkably, although they can speak, they ask for paper in order to write their story down (we are irresistibly reminded of Malvolio's request to Feste). Naturally, the contrast between the darkness of Hell and the brightness of Christ's coming is stressed, similarly to the contrast in *Twelfth Night* 4.2, and interestingly Satan is called "the prince of Tartarus" (p. 130), which reminds us of Sir Toby's undertaking to follow his "most excellent devil of wit," Maria, "to the gates of Tartar" (2.5.195-96). Significantly, in the play which in so many ways anticipates *Twelfth Night*—*The Comedy of Errors*—Antipholus of Syracuse is said by his servant Dromio to be "in Tartar limbo, worse than hell" (4.2.32).

The Middle English poem has one or two touches which may or may not be significant in a Shakespearian context: for instance the couplet "Long is o and long is ay / Tille þat comeþ domesday" (MS Bodl. Digby 86, ll. 247-48), which reminds us of the play with the letters "M.O.A.I." in *Twelfth Night* (2.5.115-30). It is tempting to take "A" and "O" in the Middle English poem as Alpha and Omega, and at least one critic has detected the same symbolism in Maria's letter.⁵ It is also interesting that, while in the Digby MS of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* the keeper of Hell-gate calls himself a "zatewarde" (l. 132), in the Auchinleck MS he says, "Ich haue herd wordes hard / whi y no may be no steward" (ll. 145-46, my italics).⁶ There is, further, the enigmatic Syriac "Hymn of the Pearl" in the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas*; this has been connected, on rather flimsy evidence, with the Harrowing, but it mentions, among other items of interest to a reader of *Twelfth Night*, Egypt, a change of clothing, a pearl, and a magic letter, and contains these remarkable verses:

But suddenly, when I saw the garment made like *unto me* as it had been in a mirror.

And I beheld upon it all myself [*or saw it wholly in myself*], and I knew and saw myself through it,

that we were divided asunder, being of one; and again were one in one shape.⁷

—which cannot help reminding us of the meeting of Viola and Sebastian. There is no evidence that Shakespeare had read these apocryphal books, but it may be that he and they share some traditions whose origin and transmission are now lost to us. Certainly the correspondences are striking.

The Harrowing was selected early for dramatic representation; the earliest surviving play on the subject—which is also the earliest known liturgical play—dates from the eighth century,⁸ and it is included in all the extant mystery cycles.⁹ At Chester the pageant was presented by the Cooks and Innkeepers, at York by the Saddlers. The Chester assignment shows an ingenious grim humour, since the cooking-pot or cauldron is a common feature of the iconography of Hell, the “Devil’s kitchen” (the popular imagining of the story must have blurred the distinction between Hades and Limbo).¹⁰ The reformist dramatist, and Bishop of Ossory, John Bale, by his own account, wrote a play on the Harrowing, now lost, which apparently drew on the popular iconography of the event.¹¹ The basic pattern in all the cycles is the same: Jesus approaches the gates of Hell, demanding entrance; the initial incredulity and scorn of the devils gives way to fear and terror, and, in Satan’s case, to indignation at this invasion of his territory; Jesus enters unopposed and preaches salvation to the patriarchs, who acclaim him and are then led off to Heaven.

There are other liturgical reasons why the Harrowing of Hell should be relevant to a play entitled *Twelfth Night*. “A silly play,” wrote Samuel Pepys in his diary for 6 January 1663, “and not relating at all to the name or day.”¹² He could not have been more mistaken. The appropriateness of the feast of the Epiphany to the play has been demonstrated by a number of critics.¹³ The lessons appointed for the feast—from Isaiah 60, Ephesians 3 and Matthew 2, but especially the first two—have strong thematic connections with the play in their emphasis on the dispersal of darkness (and “mist” in Isaiah) by light. This, which reads like a metaphor for

intellectual and spiritual illumination, is echoed in Feste's "There is no darkness but ignorance, in which thou art more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog" (4.2.43-45) and in Malvolio's requests for light. The "Egyptians in their fog" is a reference to one of the plagues in the book of Exodus (10:21-23), and the Exodus was established as a type of the Harrowing of Hell. In the Epistle passage from Ephesians, St Paul writes as "a prisoner of Jesus Christ";¹⁴ this connects with Malvolio's imprisonment, and the fact that the Epistle is sent to the Ephesian church is particularly noteworthy, given that Ephesus is the location of *The Comedy of Errors*, which, as I mentioned earlier, is extensively drawn on in *Twelfth Night*.¹⁵ Furthermore, if one looks beyond the feast of the Epiphany itself to its subsequent season, one finds repeatedly that the liturgical readings strike familiar notes. For the First Sunday after Epiphany the Epistle is from Romans 12, in which St Paul warns his readers "that no man stand high in his own conceit, more than it becometh him to esteem of him self: but so judge of him self, that he be gentle and sober"; for the Second Sunday, from the same chapter, "Bless them which persecute you: bless, I say, and curse not"; for the Third Sunday, from the same chapter, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. For it is written: vengeance is mine, I will reward, saith the Lord."¹⁶ All these are pieces of advice which the proud and vengeful Malvolio might well have taken to heart.

What is the connection between the feast of the Epiphany and the Harrowing? Here we must look, not to scripture or doctrine but to tradition and social custom. The festive dimensions of *Twelfth Night* have been thoroughly investigated by C. L. Barber and, more recently, François Laroque,¹⁷ and we now take for granted the play's subtext of festive licence, the anarchic reign of lords of misrule, and the battle of Carnival and Lent. In pre-Reformation England Epiphany or Twelfth Night marked the conclusion of the Yuletide revels, although their "festive emblems and decorations (ivy, holly and the Yule log) were not taken out of the houses until Candlemas,"¹⁸ that is to say 2 February—interestingly, the date on which the only recorded production of *Twelfth Night* in Shakespeare's lifetime occurred.¹⁹ Laroque observes:

Twelfth Night does convey the general atmosphere of the "misrule" that was latent during the Christmas cycle of festivities and that made it possible to turn the world upside-down. That is why the themes and images connected with the idea of reversal are so important to the play. . . . This was indeed a crossroads in the year, when night won out over day and the interplay of misunderstandings brought forth a comedy of errors and metamorphoses.²⁰

In such a context, we would not look to Shakespeare for a straightforward allegory of the Harrowing of Hell, but rather for a kind of parody of it, and that is what we are given, together with a parody of an exorcism, the ritual which re-enacted the incursion into diabolical territory of the saving power of Christ.

To turn now to 4.2 itself, we should note that the tone of the scene is by no means easy to determine. Warren and Wells describe it as an "extraordinary episode" and infer from the Folio stage direction "*Malvolio within*" that Malvolio was placed under the stage, the traditional location for Hell (as in *Doctor Faustus* and, less certainly, *Hamlet*). Perhaps he was under the trapdoor on which the cauldron in *The Jew of Malta* or *Macbeth* must have stood. Warren and Wells are willing to allow an element of sadistic cruelty and torment to the scene.²¹ By contrast, J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik in their edition detect a slackening of intensity at this point,²² while Joost Daalder in a recent article finds the scene merely farcical, adopting the view that Elizabethan audiences would have found Malvolio's insanity amusing.²³ However that may be, he is clearly not amused, but rather distressed. Perhaps the most subtle reading comes from Alexander Leggatt, who contends that "Malvolio in his dark room is the play's most vivid image of the trapped isolated self. . . . Egotism and loveless solitude are a kind of damnation, and the imprisoned Malvolio is our clearest image of this."²⁴

Glancing at Shakespeare's treatment of a parallel sequence in *The Comedy of Errors* may be of assistance here. The originally comic mistakes of identity in the earlier play result in a degree of psychological disorientation and estrangement on the part of Antipholus of Ephesus which darkens the tone considerably. Ephesus, more blatantly but no less truly than Illyria, is "full of cozenage, / As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye, /

/ Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind" (1.2.97-99),²⁵ a place where people "wander in illusions" (4.3.43). Eventually Antipholus concludes that he has been bewitched. Thereafter he increasingly resembles Malvolio. His companions, thinking him mad and possessed, attempt to pacify him (4.4.48-60); the more he declares "I am not mad" (4.4.59) the more this is taken as proof of his insanity, and Pinch's suggestion that he and his servant Dromio "must be bound and laid in some dark room" (4.4.95) is followed, as he later complains in seeking redress from the Duke (5.1.246-54).

Shakespeare's adaptations of this sequence of events in *Twelfth Night* are revealing. Antipholus's friends sincerely believe him to be insane and undertake what they assume is the standard treatment in such cases, whereas Toby, Maria, Fabian and Feste deliberately set out to "make [Malvolio] mad indeed" (3.4.128). Furthermore, Malvolio, unlike Antipholus, has no companion in his incarceration, and is tormented by a visitor who makes light of (and brings light, but no illumination, to) his predicament. (Is Feste, then, a kind of Lucifer—the light-bearer?²⁶) Shakespeare, then, recast his original idea in such a way as to make the supposed madman's plight more stark and desperate. The callousness with which Malvolio is treated is underlined by the detached attitude taken by the tricksters. Sir Toby envisages the imprisonment as a "pastime" and a "device" (3.4.133-34), and his unease as "this knavery" and "this sport" (4.2.68, 70) proceeds is due not to moral scruples but results from a selfish anxiety not to get into further trouble with Olivia. At the end of the play Feste describes the encounter as an "interlude" (5.1.63)—a game which is also his revenge for Malvolio's contemptuous treatment of him. This gives it a more personal and pointed character, heightened by the absence of Sir Toby and Maria for much of the scene.

This is not to say, of course, that Malvolio is entirely correct in believing himself to be sane. The "self-love" of which Olivia accuses him (1.5.85) is a severe limitation, isolating him in the world of his own mind; his physical imprisonment, as Leggatt's comments, quoted above, imply, is merely the symbol of his psychological and spiritual imprisonment. He becomes narcissistically enslaved to his own image, as constructed in

Maria's letter, "practising behaviour to his own shadow" (2.5.14-15).²⁷ He is no more "free" than Orsino, Olivia, or Viola, all of whom are to varying extents trapped by their own *idéés fixes*; and no more temperate than the revellers whom he detests. He speaks the simple truth when he tells Feste "I am no more mad than you are" (4.2.48-49), although he might equally have said "no less." Irrational extremism is one of Shakespeare's targets in this comedy. Malvolio is not the only character whose "devils" require to be exorcised: arguably he is the only character for whom the attempted exorcism fails. Orsino hopes to "entreat him to a peace" (5.1.370), but there is no certainty that he will be softened. As Marion Bodwell Smith well says, at the end of the play he "only knows that he has been made a fool of, not that he has been a fool."²⁸

Feste's opening words as Sir Topaz, "What ho, I say, peace in this prison" (4.2.19), echo, as has often been noted, the formula for the Visitation of the Sick, and also recall the fact that the blessing of houses was traditional at Epiphany.²⁹ Feste is disguising his voice (cf. "to him in thine own voice," 66), and Malvolio is initially perplexed: "Who calls there?" (21). In character, Feste utters an exorcism formula—"Out, hyperbolical fiend" (26), pretending to address, not Malvolio, but the "dishonest Satan" (32) who possesses him.³⁰ He sets out to "prove" Malvolio's insanity by disturbing his confidence in the evidence of his senses, denying the darkness of the prison; then, when invited to engage in logical dispute, puts the question "What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wildfowl?" (50). Lothian and Craik note the link with *Doctor Faustus*, 5.2.107,³¹ and whilst it would be unreasonable to put too much weight on a glancing allusion, given *Faustus's* subject of enslavement to devils it cannot be wholly ignored. There is also an Ovidian reference, as Jonathan Bate has noted: instead of the "constant question" (49) of "formal rational discourse" which Malvolio requested, he is offered "a question that leads to the inconsistencies of Pythagorean metempsychosis,"³² a question, in other words, about a form of dualism, aptly posed to one who is "sometimes . . . a kind of puritan . . . The dev'l a puritan that he is" (2.3.130, 136). In that connection we should consider the possibility that, when Sir Toby accuses Malvolio of opposition to "cakes and ale" (2.3.108)

Shakespeare may be glancing at Puritan opposition to the Catholic understanding of the Mass as a sacrifice.³³ Equally, Feste's Pythagorean question probes Malvolio's reluctance to admit the scholastic distinction between essence and accident upon which the doctrine of transubstantiation rested.³⁴

In the second "visitation" of 4.2, when Feste appears *in propria persona*, Shakespeare evokes the world of Reformation controversy. Feste enters singing a song, "Hey Robin, jolly Robin, tell me how thy lady does," which is based on a poem by Wyatt which also exists in a shorter, probably earlier, version in the so-called *Henry VIII's MS*.³⁵ Like the lady in the song, Olivia is "unkind" and "loves another"; this lady may also be England, whose attachment to the Protestant religion has resulted in spiritual darkness. (Compare Bale's use of the character Widow England for the opposite polemical point in his *King John*.) Feigning sudden recognition of Malvolio, Feste asks pityingly, "Alas sir, how fell you besides your five wits?" (86). As Lothian and Craik note in the New Arden edition, Five Wits was a character in the play *Everyman* (c. 1495). His function there is to insist on the sacred character and spiritual power of the priest, and to expound the Catholic doctrine that there are seven sacraments, rather than the two which Protestantism taught. In the ensuing dialogue Malvolio, the Puritan, is made to ask repeatedly for "a candle," "some light," "light" again (82, 106, 111), so that he may communicate with "my lady" (111, picking up the phrase from the song), who was "Madonna" to Feste (1.5.38-65) when he "catechized" her as he has catechized Malvolio. Malvolio is effectively driven to confess that he is in spiritual as well as physical darkness, and Feste makes his final exit with a piece of doggerel typical of a morality Vice, in which he addresses Malvolio as "goodman devil" (132). The Folio draws increased attention to the contradiction by printing two words, "good man," but according to *OED* the word can also mean the head of an establishment (so a kind of steward—with reference to "stews" as a brothel?) and the keeper of a prison. All this suggests how the puritan has been unmasked for the fiendish hypocrite that he really is.

The "harrowing" depicted in this scene does not correspond point by point to that of medieval tradition. Shakespeare is characteristically elusive

and allusive, working on several levels simultaneously. He presents Malvolio as a soul enslaved to spiritual darkness, who fails to recognise his visitor's true character, while Feste's ministrations only add to his victim's confusion and bewilderment. The tradition of the Harrowing is turned upside-down, not to deny that its liberation is possible, but perhaps to suggest that those who make themselves outcasts set in motion their own exclusion from paradisaical harmony. The name "Malvolio" may then suggest not only ill-will but mistaken faith. After all, when his letter is finally delivered to Olivia, Feste warns that "a madman's epistles are no gospels" (5.1.281).³⁶

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NOTES

All quotations from *Twelfth Night* refer to the edition by Roger Warren and Stanley Wells (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994); other Shakespeare plays are quoted, unless otherwise specified, from the one-volume *Complete Works*, ed. Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988).

¹Glynne Wickham, "Hell-Castle and its Door-Keeper," *Shakespeare Survey* 19 (1966): 68-74, rpt. in *Shakespeare's Dramatic Heritage* (London: RKP, 1969) 214-24.

²See E. A. J. Honigmann, *Shakespeare: the "Lost Years"* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985) 114-25, and, most recently, Richard Wilson, "Shakespeare and the Jesuits," *TLS* (19 December 1997) 11-13.

³*The Apocryphal New Testament*, tr. M. R. James (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924) 93.

⁴*The Middle English Harrowing of Hell and Gospel of Nicodemus*, ed. W. H. Hulme, EETS Extra Series 100 (London, 1907). Page references are inserted in my text. M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* 94-95, considers that the Gospel cannot be earlier than the fourth century but that the Harrowing episode, which contains material two centuries older, was attached to the rest of the text in the fifth century.

⁵Inge Leimberg, "'M.O.A.I.': Trying to Share the Joke in *Twelfth Night* 2.5 (A Critical Hypothesis)," *Connotations* 1 (1991): 83-84, suggests the letters are an anagram of "[I] [M] A[alpha] and] O[mega]," with reference to Revelation 1:8. (See also the comment by John Russell Brown, and Leimberg's rejoinder, in *Connotations* 1 [1991]: 187-90, 191-96.) It is worth noticing that God's self-naming, "I am that I am," is from Exodus 4:14, a biblical book with much relevance to the prison scene.

⁶*OED*, s.v. "Steward (*sb.*)" section 4, cites "Steward of Helle" as a figurative phrase from a poem of c. 1436; conversely, section 6 cites "Loue is heouene stiward" from the *Ancrene Riwe*.

⁷*The Apocryphal New Testament*, tr. James, p. 414, verses 76-78. The hymn is discussed in J. A. MacCulloch, *The Harrowing of Hell: A Comparative Study of an Early Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930) 302-04.

⁸Richard Axton, *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages* (London: Hutchinson, 1974) 61-62.

⁹In the N-Town cycle (nos. 33 and 35) the Harrowing is, exceptionally, performed by *Anima Christi*, a separate character from Jesus, and, in a striking structural effect, the episode is interrupted by the Deposition from the Cross: see *The N-Town Play: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8*, ed. Stephen Spector, EETS Supplementary Series 11 (Oxford: OUP, 1991). *Anima Christi* also appears in the Greban and Rome Passion plays (Lynette R. Muir, "The Trinity in Medieval Drama," *Comparative Drama* 10.2 [1976]: 124).

¹⁰We may remember not only the Porter in *Macbeth* ("here you may roast your goose") but also the denouement of *The Jew of Malta*.

¹¹Bale mentioned the play when being interrogated for heresy in 1536, and accused of denying this article of the Creed. See Greg Walker, *Plays of Persuasion: Drama and Politics at the Court of Henry VIII* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991) 192.

¹²Quoted by Warren and Wells p. 2 and n. 1.

¹³Barbara K. Lewalski, "Thematic Patterns in *Twelfth Night*," *Shakespeare Studies* 1 (1965): 168-81; Marion Bodwell Smith, *Dualities in Shakespeare* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1966); R. Chris Hassel, Jr, *Renaissance Drama and the English Church Year* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1979) 82-85; Donna B. Hamilton, *Shakespeare and the Politics of Protestant England* (Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 1992) 86-110. Warren and Wells caution that "perhaps the permissive *What You Will* is intended to qualify too rigorous an insistence upon *Twelfth Night* and its associations of misrule" (6); but those are not its only associations.

¹⁴The Biblical readings are quoted from the Prayer Book of 1559 (the rite of the Church of England throughout Shakespeare's lifetime) as printed in *Liturgies and Occasional Forms of Prayer set forth in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. for the Parker Society by W. K. Clay (Cambridge: CUP, 1847): here, 88.

¹⁵See the New Arden edition of *Twelfth Night* by J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik (London: Methuen, 1975) xlvii-xlix, and Leah Scragg, *Shakespeare's Mouldy Tales: Recurrent Plot Motifs in Shakespearean Drama* (London: Longman, 1992) 12-36.

¹⁶*Liturgies*, ed. Clay, 89-91.

¹⁷Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relation to Social Custom* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1959), esp. 240-61; Laroque, *Shakespeare's Festive World: Elizabethan Seasonal Entertainment and the Professional Stage*, tr. Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: CUP, 1993) 227-28, 254-56 (it should be said, however, that Laroque's general survey of festivity is more valuable than his somewhat superficial comments on this play specifically: and his statement that the title "probably owes more to the occasion on which [the play] was performed than to the themes of the play and its internal symbolism" [227] is quite erroneous). See also Warren and Wells 4-8. Illuminating background is also provided by Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (London: Methuen, 1985), esp. 202-04, and Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: the Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994).

¹⁸Laroque 153.

¹⁹This was the performance witnessed and commented on by John Manningham (see Warren and Wells 1), and the play was also presented on 2 February 1623 (Warren and Wells 4). Although the use of the name "Candlemas" survived, the Catholic liturgical ceremonies associated with it had been forbidden in 1548 and the feast itself was omitted from the Edwardine prayer books, although pockets of clerical resistance remained into the 1560s and 1570s; see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1992) 459, 589. Leslie Hotson's attempt, in *The First Night of Twelfth Night* (London: Hart-Davis, 1954), to establish the first performance of Shakespeare's play as occurring on 6 January 1601 "has not won general acceptance" (Warren and Wells 4).

In the light of Feste's would-be Pandarism (3.1.50-51) it is interesting to note that a lost play, *Troilus and Pandar*, was performed at Court on Twelfth Night 1516 (Seth Lerer, *Courtly Letters in the Age of Henry VIII: Literary Culture and the Arts of Deceit* [Cambridge: CUP, 1997] 30, 34-35). Pandarus was, we recall, the letter-bearer between the lovers, another link with Feste's role in the prison scene. The first masque of Elizabeth's reign took place on Twelfth Night 1559, with "crows, asses, and wolves dressed as cardinals, bishops, and abbots" (Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1923] 1: 155)—a Pythagorean metempsychosis? Lyly's *Midas*, another play concerned with magical transformation, was acted at Court on Twelfth Night 1590, according to its title-page. See further note 27 below.

²⁰Laroque 227.

²¹Warren and Wells 58.

²²Lothian and Craik lxxv.

²³Joost Daalder, "Perspectives of Madness in Twelfth Night," *English Studies* 78.2 (1997): 109-10.

²⁴Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love* (London: Methuen, 1974) 244.

²⁵This picture of Ephesus derives from New Testament sources. In Acts 19 it is depicted as a place populated by sorcerers, amateur exorcists, and idolaters. The use of St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians for scripture readings at Epiphany has already been noted.

²⁶And is Shakespeare remembering the climactic scene in Marlowe's *Edward II*, the visit of the murderer Lightborn to the imprisoned king?

²⁷For some applications of the Ovidian story of Echo and Narcissus to the play, see D. J. Palmer, "Twelfth Night and the Myth of Echo and Narcissus," *Shakespeare Survey* 32 (1979): 73-78; Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 145-51; Anthony Brian Taylor, "Narcissus, Olivia, and a Greek Tradition," *Notes and Queries* 242 (1997): 58-61. Tantalizingly, court records document the presentation of a play (or two plays) called *Narcissus*, now lost, on Twelfth Night 1572 and 1603 (Chambers 4: 36, 87, 146).

²⁸Smith, *Dualities in Shakespeare* 119. Malvolio's proud refusal of grace is examined by R. Chris Hassel, Jr., "Malvolio's Dark Concupiscence," *Cahiers Elisabethains* 43 (1993): 1-12.

²⁹Lothian and Craik, in their note ad loc., quote from the 1559 Prayer Book: "The Priest entering into the sick person's house, shall say, Peace be in this house, and to all that dwell in it" (ed. Clay 225; cf. Hassel, *Renaissance Drama and the English Church*

Year 84). It might be added that, in the First Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549) the priest then recites Psalm 143, including the words, "For the enemy hath persecuted my soul: he hath smitten my life down to the ground: he hath laid me in the darkness, as the men that have been long dead" (*The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI*, Everyman ed. [London: Dent, 1910] 259, spelling modernised). This Psalm was dropped from the Second Prayer Book of 1552, and from that of 1559.

³⁰Donna B. Hamilton (above, note 13) unconvincingly argues that the episode is related to contemporary interest in the case of John Darrell, a Puritan imprisoned for exorcism in 1598.

³¹Reference to the Revels ed. by David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993). I wonder whether the famous strikes of the clock which punctuate Faustus's last speech could be one reason why a clock strikes in *Twelfth Night* 3.1, causing Olivia to say that "the clock upbraids me with the waste of time" (128).

³²Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* 148.

³³The phrase is tantalizing, but the eucharistic associations are unmistakable. In the mid-15th century Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, the Jews refer disparagingly to the consecrated Host as a "cake" which they attempt to cook in a cauldron (see *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, ed. Norman Davis, EETS Supplementary Series 1 [Oxford: OUP, 1970], Text VI, ll. 285, 495, 700), while in January 1548 the reformer Anthony Gilby disparaged the Catholics for believing that "a vile cake" could be "made God and man" (quoted by Aidan Cardinal Gasquet and Edmund Bishop, *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer*, 3rd ed. [London: Sheed & Ward, 1928] 91). In the Injunctions issued for the "suppression of superstition" in 1559, Elizabeth required the communion bread to resemble "the usual bread and water, heretofore named singing cakes" (quoted in William P. Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation* [Cambridge: CUP, 1968] 112). The medieval practice of choosing the King of the Bean to preside over the Twelfth Night revels, by dropping a bean into cake mix and electing the person who found it in his slice (Hutton, *Rise and Fall of Merry England* 60), re-surfaced once under Elizabeth in 1566 (Chambers 1: 19, 4: 82).

³⁴For a recent brief account of this see David Luscombe, *Medieval Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 1997) 42-43.

³⁵Wyatt, *Collected Poems*, ed. Joost Daalder (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975) 47, no. LV; John Stevens, *Music and Poetry at the Early Tudor Court* (London: Methuen, 1961) 405, no. H49.

³⁶I cannot end without thanking my colleague Martin Cawte for many hours spent in discussing the material in this article. I owe numerous insights to him.