

**‘The Law of a Commonweal’: The Social Vision of Hooker’s  
*Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* and Shakespeare’s  
*The Taming of the Shrew***

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In the first book of *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Richard Hooker offers the following account of the origins of human sociality, the moment when the individual, upon the discovery of personal insufficiency and the advantages of cooperation, makes the transition from a state of nature to social compact:

But forasmuch as we are not by ourselves sufficient to furnish ourselves with competent store of things needful for such a life as our nature doth desire, a life fit for the dignity of man; therefore to supply those defects and imperfections which are in us living single and solely by ourselves, we are naturally induced to seek communion and fellowship with others. This was the cause of men’s uniting themselves at the first in politic Societies, which societies could not be without Government, nor Government without a distinct kind of Law from that which hath been already declared. Two foundations there are which bear up public societies; the one, a natural inclination, whereby all men desire sociable life and fellowship; the other, an order expressly or secretly agreed upon touching the manner of their union in living together. The latter is that which we call the Law of a Commonweal, the very soul of a politic body, the parts whereof are by law animated, held together, and set on work in such actions, as the common good requireth. Laws politic, ordained for external and regiment order amongst men, are never framed as they should be, unless presuming the will of man to be inwardly obstinate, rebellious, and averse from all obedience unto the sacred laws of his nature; in a word, unless presuming man to be in regard of his depraved mind little better than a wild beast, they do accordingly provide notwithstanding so to frame his outward actions, that they be no hindrance unto the common good for which societies are instituted: unless they do this, they are not perfect. It resteth therefore that we consider how nature findeth out such laws of government as serve to direct even nature depraved to a right end. (1.10.1)<sup>1</sup>

The passage is an intense parabolic assertion of a principle that is central to Hooker’s argument: human beings are by nature simultaneously sociable and anti-social. They deeply need and desire social affiliation, yet they reflexively and perversely subvert their own best interests because “the will of man . . . [is] inwardly obstinate, rebellious, and averse from all obedience unto the sacred laws of his nature.” Thus, a secondary order of law – “Laws politic” – is needed, not merely to restrain anti-social violations of the common good but also, over the course of time, to transform the will, redirecting “nature depraved to a right end.” This vision of human nature and the social order undergirds the polemical project of the *Laws*: the refutation of the Puritan dissidents, led by Thomas Cartwright, who are urged to abandon their destructive attempts to impose a Presbyterian “discipline” on the Church of

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<sup>1</sup> All references to Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* from The Everyman’s Library Edition, (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1907). All references to *The Taming of the Shrew* are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, eds. G. Blakemore Evans et al., 2d ed., (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997).

England and instead embrace the Elizabethan settlement on the basis of the laws of nature and reason. Hooker's appeal is inclusive; he wishes to absorb his opponents rather than isolate or exclude them. In doing so, he argues on pragmatic rather than idealistic grounds: the English state church is not perfect but rather sufficient, and there is no reason the "private discretion" of his opponents should preclude submission to "that way...the public judgment of the Church hath thought better" (1.16.7). *The Taming of the Shrew* contains a parallel argument: Petruchio refutes Katherine's 'heretical' non-conformity by staging a persuasive demonstration of the benefits of married mutuality – material security, social esteem, love, and happiness – thereby reconciling a hostile, dissenting subject to an imperfect but necessary social order. In Petruchio's successful persuasion of his wife, the comedy portrays the result for which Hooker strives: the re-socialization of the polemical opponent and her rational, willing reintegration into a harmonious communal body.

While the intellectual and literary influence of the *Laws* on Shakespeare's histories, tragedies, and problem plays has long been established,<sup>2</sup> little has been said about its relevance to the comedies, and nothing, to my knowledge, about *The Taming of the Shrew*. The two works are almost exactly contemporary. Hooker published the first four books of the *Laws* in 1593, and the writing of *Shrew* has been dated between 1590-1594, so it is possible that Shakespeare read Hooker's work prior to or during composition. I am not expressly concerned, however, about proving direct literary influence. Rather I treat these texts as analogous treatments of the same issue – the problem of dissent in early modern England<sup>3</sup> – which both pose the problems and resolve them in strikingly similar terms. By employing Hooker's *Laws* as a kind of interpretive key to *Shrew*, I hope to illuminate the play in a variety of ways but particularly to show that its treatment of conjugal strife has broad implications which transcend the more limited contexts of "early modern marriage" or the "woman question"; indeed, in the politically loaded language of her final speech, Katherine herself constructs a powerful analogy between dissent within the family and rebellion within the state:

Such duty as the subject owes a prince,  
Even such a woman oweth to her husband;  
And when she is forward, peevish, sullen, sour,  
What is she but a foul contending rebel,  
And graceless traitor to her loving lord?  
I am asham'd that women are so simple  
To offer war where they should kneel for peace,  
Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,  
When they are bound to serve, love, and obey.

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<sup>2</sup> See Virgil K. Whitaker, *Shakespeare's Use of Learning: An Inquiry into the Growth of his Mind & Art*, (San Marino, Cal.: The Huntington Library, 1953), 206-208. See also Eileen Cohen, "The Visible Solemnity: Ceremony and Order in Shakespeare and Hooker," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 12 (1970): 181-195.

<sup>3</sup> While it is clear that Hooker is engaged with this issue, it is perhaps less clear that Katherine's shrewishness constitutes social dissent. But many readers of the play have come to this conclusion. For example, George Ian Duthie, in *Shakespeare*, (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), argues that Katherine is a super-individualist who attempts to make a law for herself, thereby violating the orthodox Elizabethan doctrine of order, hierarchy, and degree: "In refusing to accord her husband implicit obedience, Katharine is offending against the divinely established order of things-- her conduct is unnatural...It is as if in the little kingdom of Petruchio's family there had been a civil war...An insubordinate wife corresponds to a rebellious subject" (43, 53, 57, 58, 59). Unless, this underlying conception of hierarchical order is kept in mind, he argues, we are apt to misread the play (57).

I also hope to demonstrate that the play is more intellectually coherent than its critics routinely suggest<sup>4</sup> and to counter several common streams of interpretation which fail to do the play justice: that *Shrew* is a brutal chauvinistic spectacle in which the male protagonist intimidates and brainwashes his female counterpart into submission;<sup>5</sup> that it is a satirical subversion of patriarchal ideology<sup>6</sup>; that it is the product of radical ideological ambivalence or schizophrenia.<sup>7</sup> Such readings tend to be more concerned with either dismissing or valorizing the work on the basis of contemporary ideological orthodoxies than with understanding it on its own terms and in its historical setting. The same is true of interpretations of Hooker that portray him as an arch-conservative propagandist justifying an evil *status quo*.<sup>8</sup> As C.S. Lewis argued long ago, we don't read Hooker today because we accept his ecclesiology as authoritative, nor is his work a failure because he didn't happen to foresee the advent of the modern secular state; Hooker answers his own age, and it is absurd to expect him to answer ours.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, I hope to demonstrate that *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, products of the same historical moment, articulate a common social vision which is of enduring value and permanent interest.

### The Grounds of Sociality

Hooker's conception of sociality is founded on a profound tension between two distinct explanations for the origin of the social order.<sup>10</sup> On the one hand, he affirms that

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, H.J. Oliver's Introduction to his edition of *The Taming of the Shrew*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) where he claims that the play has little social or intellectual substance: "If as Meredith said in his *Essay on Comedy*, the test of true comedy is that it should awaken thoughtful laughter, probably *The Taming of the Shrew* qualifies – but only just" (37).

<sup>5</sup> See Emily Detmer, "Civilizing Subordination: Domestic Violence and *The Taming of the Shrew*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48 (1997): 273-294; Katherine A. Sirluck, "Patriarchy, Pedagogy, and the Divided Self in *The Taming of the Shrew*," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 60 (1991): 417, 420; and Dorothea Kehler, "Echoes of the Induction in *The Taming of the Shrew*," *Renaissance Papers* (1986): 42.

<sup>6</sup> See Robert Ornstein, *Shakespeare's Comedies: From Roman Farce to Romantic Mystery*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1986), 68-72; Harold Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 70-71; Coppelia Kahn, "The Taming of the Shrew: Shakespeare's Mirror of Marriage," *Modern Language Studies* 5 (1975): 88-102.

<sup>7</sup> See Richard A. Burt, "Charisma, Coercion, and Comic Form in *The Taming of the Shrew*," *Criticism* 26 (1984): 307; Thomas Moisan, "'What's that to you?' or, Facing Facts: Anti-Paternalist Chords and Social Discords in the *Taming of the Shrew*," *Renaissance Drama* 26 (1995): 106, 112, 122-123; Karen Newman, "Renaissance Family Politics and Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*," *English Literary Renaissance* 16 (1986): 99-100.

<sup>8</sup> See Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 272. Yet, as Conal Condren argues in "The Creation of Hooker's Public Authority: Rhetoric, Reputation and Reassessment," *The Journal of Religious History* 21 (1997), such terms as "status quo" and "conservative" are perilously applied to Hooker's thought, not least because they are anachronistic (36, 39).

<sup>9</sup> C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 458-459. Interestingly, Lewis makes a similar point about 'presentist' interpretations of *The Taming of the Shrew*. He argues that attempts to undermine the hierarchical doctrine in Katherine's final speech by suggesting that she is being tactical or ironical do not stand up to scrutiny: "The words, thus taken at their face value, are very startling to a modern audience; but those who cannot face such a startling should not read old books" (Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, [New York: Oxford University Press, 1942], 75-76).

<sup>10</sup> See William J Bouwsma, "Hooker in the Context of European Cultural History," in *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England*, eds. Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 144-145. See also John S. Marshall, *Hooker and the Anglican Tradition: An Historical and Theological Study of Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, (Sewanee, Tenn.: The University Press at the University of the South,

natural law impels human beings toward social affiliation and that this impulse is the ground of all "politic Societies." On the other hand, he doubts their ability to live in community without the intervention of coercive authority, in the form of "laws politic," imposed by rulers on unregenerate subjects for their own good. Or, to put it a different way, he recognizes a distinction between civil society and the state, though he does not define either term precisely, detail their historical development, or demarcate their functions.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, for Hooker, any participant in civil society is also subject to state authority, since politic societies "could not be without Government, nor Government without a distinct kind of Law from that which hath been already declared" (1.10.1). Civil society, the arena of social reciprocity, "doth more content the nature of man than any private kind of solitary living, because in society this good of mutual participation is so much larger than otherwise" (1.10.12), satisfying the needs of individuals. Yet this 'feel-good' aspect of social compact is not viable without subjection to a secondary order of laws which undoubtedly has a coercive aspect: "Jurisdiction is a yoke which law hath imposed on the necks of men in such sort that they must endure it for the good of others, how contrary soever it be to their own particular appetites and inclinations . . . jurisdiction bridleth men against their wills" (5.62.16). Hooker does not sentimentalize or idealize the state, but readily acknowledges that "external and regiment order" may at times exert painful restraint upon the personal liberty of subjects. Yet, he argues, even restraint and coercion are beneficial in ways of which the individual is often unaware.

The foregoing account of sociality corresponds closely to *The Taming of the Shrew*, first in its representation of the tension between social and anti-social impulses, between sociality as innate desire and as 'regimented' standard. On the one hand, the play affirms the universal desirability and abundant benefits of social affiliation: "Padua affords nothing but what is kind" (5.2.14). The male characters in particular enter enthusiastically into alliances and cooperative ventures: "this bar in law makes us friends" (1.1.135-136); "And do as adversaries do in law, / Strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends" (1.2.276-77). On the other hand, social life, particularly courtship, is portrayed as ruthlessly competitive, and cooperation itself a mask for undermining one's rivals: "See, to beguile the old folks, how the young folks lay their heads together!" (1.2.138-39). Moreover, the play depicts many violations of the cooperative ethic – deception, fraud, physical violence, ridicule, intimidation – and the distinction between the social and anti-social is often fuzzy. The Lord's manipulation of Sly in the Induction, for example, is ambiguous: potentially both generous and cruel, arguably an act of both inclusion and sharp social definition. But the precarious balance between the social and anti-social is registered most vividly in the interaction between its volatile protagonists. Petruchio's address to Katherine alternates between bullying and loving deference; he coerces her into experiencing the *via negativa* of physical privation and homeopathic therapy, all the while contending, quite plausibly, that "all is done in reverend care of her" (4.1.204).

Hooker and Petruchio both launch their 'arguments' by demonstrating that their polemical opponents are creatures subject to the various orders of law. Hooker's theory of law, as Damian Grace points out, is neither voluntaristic nor imperative, but rather "rational, a principle governing the motions of all things to their proper ends."<sup>12</sup> Law is "any kind of rule or canon whereby actions are framed" (1.3.1), and thus "all things therefore do work after a sort according to law" (1.2.2). Hooker argues in an Aristotelian vein that all created

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1963), 93, 105.

<sup>11</sup> Marshall, 103-106.

<sup>12</sup> Damian Grace, "Natural Law in Hooker," *The Journal of Religious History* 21 (1997): 11.

things “are somewhat in possibility, which as yet they are not in act. And for this cause there is in all things an appetite or desire, whereby they incline to something which they may be; and when they are it, they shall be perfecter than now they are. All which perfections are contained under the general name of Goodness. And because there is not in the world any thing whereby another may not some way be made the perfecter, therefore all things that are, are good” (1.5.1). For Hooker, there is a clear relation then between law and teleology; law, among other things, provides a measure by which rational creatures may determine their relative progress toward the goal of perfection: “For he that knoweth what is straight doth even thereby discern what is crooked, because the absence of straightness in bodies capable thereof is crookedness. Goodness in actions is like unto straightness; wherefore that which is done well we term right. For as the straight way is most acceptable to him that travelleth, because by it he cometh soonest to his journey’s end; so in action, that which doth lie the evenest between us and the end we desire must needs be the fittest for our use” (1.8.1).

Judged in this light, Hooker’s Puritan opponents can be both affirmed and criticized. On the positive side, he can say that they possess substantial goodness, both realized and potential, and that they have been endowed with a God-given purpose and the capability to fulfil it. Moreover, he notes approvingly their strong appetite or desire for rectitude as manifest in their “right well affected and most religiously inclined minds” (Pref.1.2), their “wonderful zeal and fervour” (Pref.1.2) and “fervent earnestness” (Pref. 3.10). On the negative side, he finds them “crooked” to the extent that they have misunderstood the nature of the good, the right, the fit, etc. and the means by which these ends might best be achieved. That they have “swerve[d] utterly from that which is right” (Pref.6.3) is revealed by their contempt for the very laws provided for their guidance and to which they have already given their tacit assent: “A law is the deed of the whole body politic, whereof if ye judge yourselves to be any part, then is the law even your deed also” (Pref.5.2). Another sign of the “crookedness” of the Puritan belligerents is their contrarianism and the manner in which they resist the claims of law. Hooker insist that “there is also in rectitude, beauty; as contrariwise in obliquity, deformity. And that which is good in the actions of men, doth not only delight as profitable, but as amiable also” (1.8.1). His opponents’ lack of amiability, their ugly irascibility, their “*disdainful sharpness of wit*” (Pref.2.10) and “marvellous exceeding severity and sharpness of reproof” (Pref.3.6) all indicate that they have departed from the “straight way.”

In their first encounter, Petruchio offers a comparable analysis of his prospective bride. Unlike the other wooers who have demonized her as a “fiend of hell” (1.1.88), Petruchio assumes that Katherine, as a rational creature, possesses both an ample share of natural goodness as well as a craving for perfection, however glaring her apparent faults:

Hearing thy mildness praised in every town,  
Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded,  
Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs,  
Myself and mov’d to woo thee for my wife.  
.....  
. . . . I find you passing gentle:  
‘Twas told me you were rough and coy and sullen,  
And now I find report a very liar;  
For thou art pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,  
But slow in speech, yet sweet as spring-time flowers.  
Thou canst not frown, thou canst not look askance,

Nor bite the lip, as angry wenches will,  
Nor hast thou pleasure to be cross in talk;  
But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers,  
With gentle conference, soft and affable.

(2.1.142-252)

These clever and partially ironic speeches simultaneously serve as an affirmation of Katherine's manifest qualities (e.g. beauty, gamesomeness, verbal fluency), an incitement for her to cultivate a number of latent virtues (e.g. sweetness, mildness, gentleness, affability, courtesy), and an implied critique of her anti-sociality (e.g. roughness, sullenness, frowning, perverse pleasure in contradiction). Somewhat presumptuously to be sure, Petruchio distinguishes between what he considers her essential character and mere transitory behaviour; in Hooker's terms, he depicts a Katherine who is "somewhat in possibility," whetting her desire to "incline to something which [she] may be" (*Laws* 1.5.1). As Ruth Nevo observes, Petruchio manages to speak simultaneously to the person Katherine has been and the person she would like to be, "the self she has made of herself and the self she has hidden":<sup>13</sup>

Why does the world report that Kate doth limp?  
O sland'rous world! Kate like the hazel twig  
Is straight and slender, and as brown in hue  
As hazel-nuts, and sweeter than the kernel.

(2.1.253-

256)

Characteristically equivocal, in a single passage he both reminds her of her egregious and "crooked" public reputation, while affirming her potential for "straightness" or goodness.

Petruchio also presumes to discern the ends Katherine most deeply desires and the most direct path to them. Just as all things pursue "general perfection . . . in desiring the continuance of their being" through "offspring and propagation" (*Laws* 1.5.2), Katherine, he insists, is designed by nature to participate in sex and procreation: "Women are made to bear, and so are you" (2.1.200). Nature, he argues further, has designed them as ideal mates for one another; in Hooker's terms, they are mutually suited to help each other achieve "such a life as our nature doth desire, a life fit for the dignity of man" (*Laws* 1.10.1):

Now, Kate, I am a husband for your turn,  
For by this light, whereby I see thy beauty –  
Thy beauty that doth make me like thee well –  
Thou must be married to no man but me.

(2.1.272-

75)

Though fully aware of her intense anti-sociality, Petruchio assumes that she also possesses a natural inclination toward cooperation and civility. And he affirms the crucial agency of social structures and institutions, particularly love and marriage, in reinforcing this natural proclivity:

"'tis a world to see / How tame, when men and women are alone, / A meacock wretch can

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<sup>13</sup> Ruth Nevo, *Comic Transformations in Shakespeare*, (London: Methuen, 1980), 48-49.

make the curstest shrew" (2.1.311-13). It is futile to resist this process of socialization, he argues, because of the array of forces, both innate and extrinsic, which support it:

Thus in plain terms: your father hath consented  
That you shall be my wife; your dowry 'greed on;  
And will you, nill you, I will marry you.

. . . . .  
For I am he am born to tame you, Kate,  
And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate  
Conformable as other household Kates.

(2.1.269-71, 276-78)

While critics have typically seen in these lines mere chauvinistic bravado, viewed in relation to Hooker's thought, they carry a different charge. Generally speaking, the laws of sociality outweigh personal preferences, and Katherine, a member of the social body, is obliged to be "conformable" for the common good: "so likewise another law there is, which toucheth them as they are sociable parts united into one body; a law which bindeth them each to serve unto other's good, and all to prefer the good of the whole before whatsoever their own particular" (*Laws* 1.3.5). But, as Petruchio subsequently demonstrates, it is also in her own best interests for her excessive anti-sociality to be transformed into civility, and the institution best suited to reconcile her with the social order is marriage.

Like Hooker's *Laws*, however, the play acknowledges the genuine difficulty of transforming dissenting subjects into "conformable" ones. For Hooker half-measures will not do; he proposes to identify the root causes of his opponents' intransigence, proposing a return to first principles in order to achieve deep, constructive insight: "to see wherein the harm which they feel consisteth, the seeds from which it sprang, and the method of curing it" (5.1.1). He notes that, to the impatient mind accustomed to ordinary polemics, this search into roots and foundations will seem "dark, intricate, and unfamiliar" (1.1.2). To understand his argument requires sustained effort and concentration, a patient willingness to be led through a process of discovery by departing from beaten mental pathways (1.1.12). Indeed, the solution may at times appear superficially obscure, for, he maintains, "that which hath greatest force in the very things we see is notwithstanding itself oftentimes not seen" (1.1.2). Therefore, he urges his readers to withhold their judgment while he sets out the framework of general laws, for "what may seem dark at first will afterwards be found more plain, even as the later particular decisions will appear, I doubt not, more strong, when the other have been read before" (1.1.2).

Petruchio too recognizes that Katherine's situation requires deep insight and radical measures. Seeking to probe the source of her intransigence, he adopts the roles of educator and physician:

I tell thee, Kate, [the meat was] burnt and drived away,  
And I expressly am forbid to touch it;  
For it engenders choler, planteth anger,  
And better 'twere that both of us did fast,  
Since of ourselves, ourselves are choleric,  
Than feed it with such overroasted flesh.

(4.1.170-175)

Diagnosing her (and indeed himself) as naturally choleric, he prescribes a programme of privations aimed at eradicating marital hostility and aggression: "He kills her in her own humor"; "This is a way to kill a wife with kindness" (4.1.180, 208). Here, as elsewhere, his tactics are oblique, or to use Hooker's words, "dark, intricate." Indeed, at their wedding, Petruchio excuses his indiscreet behaviour in terms that are analogous to Hooker's defence of obliquity:

Tedious it were to tell, and harsh to hear --  
Sufficeth I am come to keep my word,  
Though in some part enforced to digress,  
Which at more leisure I will so excuse  
As you shall well be satisfied with all.

(3.2.105-9)

Like Hooker, Petruchio warns his audience against superficial judgments; they must "read" his "argument" in its entirety before assessing its relevance or efficacy. What may initially appear nonsensical or irrelevant will eventually be revealed as purposeful: "He hath some meaning in his mad attire" (3.2.124). Like the author of the *Laws*, Petruchio requests the freedom to pursue his seemingly obscure project without hindrance: "if you knew my business, / You would entreat me rather go than stay" (3.2.191-92). Throughout the remainder of the play, a process of negotiation and adjustment occurs in which the various claims of individuality and collectivity, public role and private reality, are worked out. This process can be characterized as rhetorical and polemical: Petruchio, like Hooker, methodically undermines his antagonist's objections, offering an alternative vision of society, marriage, and the good life.

### Assessing the problem

In many ways, Petruchio's attitude and approach to Katherine mirror Hooker's assessment of his Puritan opponents. Throughout the *Laws*, Hooker projects a sympathetic, conciliatory attitude toward them, addressing them as "beloved in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Pref.1.1) and defusing their hostility by disclaiming any hint of malice: "Think not that ye read the words of one who bendeth himself as an adversary against the truth which ye have already embraced; but the words of one who desireth even to embrace together with you the self-same truth" (Pref.1.3). Like any polemicist, Hooker is interested in winning the argument, though not at the expense of truth, whose pursuit requires a thorough, sympathetic, and unbiased sifting of opposing positions, followed by a rational adjudication between the conflicting claims: "But the manner of men's writing must not alienate our hearts from the truth, if it appear they have the truth. .... We being as fully persuaded otherwise, it resteth that some kind of trial be used to find out which part is in error" (Pref.2.10). We can see this concern in his detailed, even-handed account of the origins of Presbyterian polity in Calvin's Geneva.<sup>14</sup> Hooker contends that the Puritan polemicists have gained a popular following

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<sup>14</sup> Hooker speaks of Calvin as "the wisest man that ever the French church did enjoy" and acknowledges his "admirable dexterity of wit, together with the helps of other learning which were his guides" (Pref.2.1). He charts the historical evolution of Genevan polity, which he portrays as a sensible compromise wisely suited to "what the present estate of Geneva did then require" (Pref.2.4), but by no means universally authoritative. Indeed, Calvin, with his prodigious biblical knowledge, was able to "espy in the whole Scripture of God nothing which might breed at the least a probable opinion of likelihood, that divine authority itself was the same way somewhat inclinable" (Pref.2.7), certainly nothing to justify the Puritan censure of episcopacy. Calvin, a great man, was ultimately fallible: "But wise men are men, and the truth is truth. That which Calvin did for establishment of his discipline, seemeth more commendable than that which he taught for the countenancing of



largely by disseminating propaganda and exploiting mass emotion and public discontent: "certain general inducements are used to make saleable your cause in gross; and when once men have cast a fancy towards it, any slight declaration of specialties will serve to lead forward men's inclinable and prepared minds" (Pref.3.5). In contrast, he crafts an argument which is both rational and affective, appealing to "the force of their own discretion" and their "own secret judgment" (Pref.3.1), to the mind and the heart together (cf. Pref.1.3). His irenicism, then, is not merely strategic but is rooted in a respect for the inwardness – the "witness of the Spirit" to the heart – so highly valued by Puritans: "but my whole endeavour is to resolve the conscience, and to shew as near as I can what in this controversy the heart is to think, if it will follow the light of sound and sincere judgment, without either cloud of prejudice, or mist of passionate affection" (Pref.7.1). In the struggle to ascertain truth, the responses of the human heart cannot be ignored, yet the heart is not infallible or autonomous. Here, as elsewhere, Hooker distinguishes between mere subjectivism and a rightly ordered inwardness in which the heart submits to reason: "Neither wish we that men should do any thing which in their hearts they are persuaded they ought not to do, but this persuasion ought (we say) to be fully settled in their hearts; that in litigious and controverted causes of such quality, the will of God is to have them do whatsoever the sentence of judicial and final decision shall determine, yea, though it seem in their private opinion to swerve utterly from that which is right" (Pref.6.3). Sincere religious conviction is good, but it must at times give way to this larger, more comprehensive social framework. Hooker's ultimate goal is a transformation of perspective which will facilitate the promotion of mutuality and social harmony. Striving to avoid the kind of acrimonious stalemate which had characterized the Admonition controversy,<sup>15</sup> Hooker professes his wish "to labour under the same yoke, . . . to be joined with you in bands of indissoluble love and amity, to live as if our persons being many our souls were but one" (Pref.9.3).

Yet Hooker's treatise is not universally irenic, for he frankly and pointedly identifies his antagonists' faults. It would be more accurate to say that Hooker achieves a judicious balance between conciliation and denunciation. The puritans, he argues, are good, sincere men with an erroneous view of law, rendering them well-meaning but dangerous rebels to the social order.<sup>16</sup> The fundamental problem, he argues, is miseducation. Ignorant of the various orders of law to which they are subject, they are ill-equipped to live in community: "Many men there are, than whom nothing is more commendable when they are singled; and yet in society with others none less fit to answer the duties which are looked for at their hands. Yea, I am persuaded, that of them with whom in this cause we strive, there are whose betters amongst men would be hardly found, if they did not live amongst men, but in some wilderness by themselves. The cause of which their disposition so unframable unto societies wherein they live, is, for that they discern not aright what place and force these several kinds

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it established" (Pref.2.7).

<sup>15</sup> In *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, C.S. Lewis offer a brief but useful summary of the polemical contest between the Puritans – John Field, Thomas Wilcox, Thomas Cartwright, Walter Travers, William Fulke, John Udall, "Martin Marprelate" – and the Anglicans – John Whitgift, John Bridges, Thomas Cooper, and eventually Richard Hooker (441-463). For a more detailed account of the controversy, see Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterian and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker*, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988).

<sup>16</sup> See A.S. McGrade, "Hooker's *Polity* and the Establishment of the English Church," in *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity. An Abridged Edition*, eds. A.S. McGrade and Brian Vickers, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), 11-40; W.D.J. Thompson, "The Philosopher of the 'Politic Society': Richard Hooker as a Political Thinker," in *Studies in Richard Hooker: Essays Preliminary to an Edition of His Works*, ed. W. Speed Hill, (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University, 1972), 15; Brian Vickers "Hooker's Prose Style," in *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity. An Abridged Edition*, eds. A.S. McGrade and Brian Vickers, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), 54.

of laws ought to have in all their actions" (1.16.6). Inordinately individualistic, Cartwright and his colleagues have raised private judgment to an idolatrous level: "By following the law of private reason, where the law of public should take place they breed disturbance" (1.16.6). Hooker argues that his opponents have made superficial judgments in religious matters, based on "some show of probability, and what seemeth in that sort convenient" (1.16.6). Yet these common errors can take on a socially and politically subversive aspect, for "except our own private and but probable resolutions be by the law of public determinations overruled, we take away all possibility of social life in the world" (1.16.5). Here as elsewhere, he tries to demonstrate to his opponents that they have no autonomous interests, that they are contingent members of a larger social body, essential to its completeness.

One of the notable features of Hooker's *Laws* is his insightful exploration of what might be called the "psychology of error." He seeks not merely to demolish his opponents' position but to understand their errors from the "inside," as it were. Although he considers reason a generally sufficient guide for human conduct, he must concede that frequently the will declines from reason – through custom, prejudice, or sheer laziness<sup>17</sup> -- and, once this occurs, error becomes exceedingly difficult to uproot. The core problem is pride. Human beings hate to admit they are wrong; when challenged, they respond combatively, clinging stubbornly to erroneous views and resorting to desperate evasions: "so hard [is it] to wrest from any man's mouth the plain acknowledgement of error, that what hath been once inconsiderately defended, the same is commonly persisted in, as long as wit by whetting itself is able to find out any shift, be it never so sleight, whereby to escape out of the hands of present contradiction" (3.5.1). Moreover, "when men's affections do frame their opinions, they are in defence of error more earnest a great deal," and mere emotional intensity and sincerity are taken as sufficient guarantees of truth (Pref.3.10). Rational appeal in such cases becomes futile: "let any man of contrary opinion open his mouth to persuade them, they close up their ears, his reasons they weigh not" (Pref.3.14).

In *Shrew*, Katherine's "problems" are assessed in analogous terms, not least in the sympathetic treatment of her situation. Her resistance to the familial and social world in which she is entrenched is in some respects valid, as are her objections to the reductive label of "shrew." The play legitimates her protest in a number of ways, particularly in its satirical exposure of courtship among the mercantile classes: "I pray you, sir, is it your will / To make a stale of me amongst these mates?"<sup>18</sup> Indeed, to a certain extent, we, like Petruchio, delight in Katherine's "shrewishness," partly because many of the objects of her scorn deserve it, and partly because her verbal and physical violence reveal an active, spirited, and energetic personality. Moreover, as has often been pointed out, Katherine's circumstances are extenuating, and her intense irascibility is at least partially explained by the fact that her father openly favours her manipulative, two-faced younger sister: "Nay, now I see / She is your treasure, she must have a husband; / I must dance barefoot on her wedding-day / And for your love to her lead apes in hell" (2.1.31-34). At various moments in the play, particularly in Katherine's grief, we catch glimpses of an inwardness at variance with, and much richer than, the shrew stereotype: "T'is it is not half way to her heart" (1.1.62); "Talk not to me, I will go sit and weep, / Till I can find occasion of revenge" (2.1.35-36); "I must forsooth be forc'd / To give my hand oppos'd against my heart" (3.2.8-9); "Would Katherine had never seen him though!" (3.2.26); "she, poor soul, / Knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak, / And sits as one new risen from a dream" (4.1.184-186); "My tongue will tell

<sup>17</sup> See Hooker, *Laws*, Pref. 3.9; 1.1.1; 1.7.6-7.

<sup>18</sup> Many critics have explored Katherine's status as a daughter in a patriarchal culture and a mercantile household and her defiance of gender norms. See, for example, Newman, "Family Politics," 86-100.

the anger of my heart, / Or else my heart concealing it will break" (4.3.77-78). In Hooker's terms Katherine's hostility is a "pardonable" error which "moveth compassion" because it is the product of aggravation and not fully volitional: "What we do against our wills, or constrainedly, we are not properly said to do it, because the motive cause of doing it is not in ourselves, but carrieth us, as if the wind should drive a feather in the air, we no whit furthering that whereby we are driven. In such cases therefore the evil which is done moveth compassion; men are pitied for it, as being rather miserable in such respect than culpable" (*Laws* 1.9.4).

Petruchio, particularly in the initial stages of courtship, assesses Katherine along similar lines. It is important to see the non-conventional character of this assessment in that he affirms and embraces that which others take to be mere shrewishness. For example, in contrast with her censorious family and community, he trivializes or denies her aggression, insisting that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with his prospective bride: "I hear no harm" (1.2.188); "And now I find report a very liar" (2.1.244); "yourself and all the world / That talked of her have talked amiss of her" (2.1.290-91). He even excuses her violence as misunderstood virtue. For example, when Hortensio returns with a lute broken over his head, Petruchio praises her energy and wit: "Now, by the world, it is a lusty wench! / I love her ten times more than e'er I did. / O, how I long to have some chat with her!" (2.1.160-62). Like Hooker, Petruchio persistently addresses his opponent with courtesy, expressing his physical attraction ("The prettiest Kate in Christendom" [2.1.188]), loving regard ("To this most patient, sweet, and virtuous wife" [3.2.195]) and solicitude ("Come, Kate, and wash, and welcome heartily" [4.1.154]). He likewise achieves a balance of conciliation and denunciation in his address to Katherine. Even before he has met her, he recognizes the need for an unconventional polemical strategy which will assure her of his good will:

Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her plain  
She sings sweetly as a nightingale;  
Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear  
As morning roses newly wash'd with dew;  
Say she be mute, and will not speak a word,  
Then I'll commend her volubility,  
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence . . . .

(2.1.170-176)

By countering Katherine's hostility with compliments, he employs, like Hooker, almost inhuman tolerance and affability, a constitutional inability to take offence.

While there is much to be said on Katherine's behalf, her outlook and behaviour are nevertheless defective in certain respects and stand in need of correction. From the standpoint of Hooker's *Laws*, the root of Katherine's misery is an erroneous view of the social order and her place within it. Basically, she fails to perceive the reciprocal and cooperative nature of social relations. She is, for example, individualistic to a fault, as indicated by her refrain at the wedding: "till I please myself" (3.2.209, 212). She is also peremptory, rude, and aggressively self-seeking, readily abrogating the desires of others in her "mad and headstrong humor" (4.1.209). Wilful, proud, and imperious – "I will be angry. What hast thou to do? / . . . Father, be quiet. He shall stay my leisure" (3.2.216-17) – she is also acutely sensitive to criticism, as illustrated by her violent response to 'Litio's' attempts to correct her fingering in the lute lesson. In Hooker's terms, even when justly opposed or rebuked, she is one who "doth not stomach at such contradiction, storm[s] at reproof, and hate[s] such as would

reform [her]" (*Laws* 1.10.7). Even her admirably passionate defence of her right to self-expression is tainted by solipsism:

Your betters have endured me say my mind,  
And if you cannot, best stop your ears.  
**My** tongue will tell the anger of **my** heart,  
Or else **my** heart concealing it will break.  
And rather than it shall, **I** will be free  
Even to the uttermost, **as I please**, in words.

(4.3.75-80; **my emphasis**)

Katherine physically intimidates those who are weaker and, when faced with superior force, secures her will through non-cooperation: "I see a woman may be made a fool / If she had not a spirit to resist" (3.2.220-221). She clings tenaciously to this stance, projecting hostile motives onto the people around her (2.1.31-34), though naturally such behaviour simply reinforces her isolation. Hooker's assessment of Calvin's behaviour in justifying Genevan discipline might justly be applied to Katherine: "Nature worketh in us all a love to our own counsels....Our love set on fire to maintain that which once we have done, sharpeneth the wit to dispute, to argue, and by all means to reason for it" (Pref. 2.7).

## Education

In the *Laws*, Hooker strives not merely to refute but to teach his opponents. Education should not merely indoctrinate the subject but awakening her critical capacity, and end of education is the result of a gradual, arduous process: "The soul of man being therefore at the first as a book, wherein nothing is and yet all things may be imprinted; we are to search by what steps and degrees it riseth unto perfection of knowledge" (1.6.1). As John S. Marshall argues, one of the cornerstones of Hooker's position is that human beings are "hylomorphic," i.e., creatures who learn not merely through intellect but also the testimony of the senses.<sup>19</sup> Education then must begin with the sensuous and rise by degrees to the spiritual, or, to put it a different way, move from external regiment to habit, and finally to internalisation. Hooker himself gives the example of food which illustrates the various orders of law in which humans participate (1.16.7). Along with clothing and shelter, food is not to be despised as merely "sensible," not least because, in sustaining human life, it makes the pursuit of higher values possible. Indeed, the good things we pursue in life are "linked and as it were chained one to another; we labour to eat, and we eat to live, and we live to do good, and the good which we do is as seed sown with reference to a future harvest" (1.11.1).

Petruchio leads Katherine through a comparable process calculated to provoke self-reflection. Despite its superficial arbitrariness, his method is a rational appeal, provoking her "natural thirst after knowledge" (*Laws* 1.7.7). Brian Morris notes that Petruchio's tactics invite active learning in that Katherine must "work out, incident by incident, the significance of the instruction she is being given."<sup>20</sup> He begins his demonstration with "lower" matters of common experience and moves progressively toward "higher" truths. First, he forces Katherine to acknowledge her physical vulnerability by temporarily depriving her of food, sleep, and (new) clothing. Hooker argues that "Goodness doth not move by being, but by being apparent; and therefore many things are neglected which are most precious, only because the value of them lieth hid. Sensible Goodness is most apparent, near, and present;

<sup>19</sup> Marshall, 93.

<sup>20</sup> Brian Morris, "Introduction," in *The Taming of the Shrew*, (London: Methuen, 1981), 131-132.

which causeth the Appetite to be therewith strongly provoked" (*Laws* 1.7.6). Petruchio's privation strategy secures Katherine's complete attention by appealing both literally and figuratively to her appetites: "starv'd for meat, giddy for lack of sleep" (4.3.9). In so doing, he renders the value of common necessities "apparent"; indeed, the absence of food and clothing "is such an impediment, as till it be removed suffereth not the mind of man to admit any other care" (*Laws* 1.10.2).

This strategy is further calculated to show Katherine that her access to physical necessities is a blessing bestowed by her Creator and derived specifically through participation in the social order she scorns. As a woman from a wealthy mercantile family, she has come to expect material benefits as her due, for Baptista, whatever his failings as a father, has always provided his daughters with the best: "I will be very kind, and liberal / To mine own children in good bringing up" (1.1.98-99). Yet, according to Hooker, human beings err when they claim material necessities as an inalienable right, for "when we come to consider of food, as of a benefit which God of his bounteous goodness hath provided for all things living . . . the law of Reason doth here require the duty of thankfulness at our hands, towards him at whose hands we have it" (*Laws* 1.16.7). The sin of unthankfulness, in fact, undermines genuine enjoyment of material things in the impious "because they receive it not as at God's hands, which only consideration maketh temporal blessings comfortable" (*Laws* 5.76.4). Petruchio attempts to teach Katherine, "who never knew how to entreat" (4.3.7), this principle of thankfulness in both the saying of grace at the table (4.1.159) and his demand that she acknowledge the human source of the benefit: "The poorest service is repaid with thanks, / And so shall mine before you touch the meat" (4.3.45-46).

Inferior goods, argues Hooker, must never be pursued as ends in themselves, but rather ordinally within a normative hierarchy of value: "As things of greatest necessity are always first provided for, so things of greatest dignity are most accounted of by all such as judge rightly" (1.10.2). Hooker does not despise material wealth (neither, of course, does the prudently acquisitive Petruchio), but rather insists that the good life is a synthesis of the material and the ideal: "Unto life many implements are necessary; more, if we seek (as all men naturally do) such a life as hath in it joy, comfort, delight, and pleasure" (1.10.2). Comparatively speaking, though, "the graces of the Spirit are much more precious than worldly benefits; our ghostly evils of greater importance than any harm which the body feeleth" (5.35.2). Even such unequivocally desirable ends such as health, virtue, and knowledge are insufficient as ultimate values (1.11.1). Conversely, when human desire is rationally ordered and healthy, we prefer greater goods to the lesser and experience satisfaction, the perfection of life.<sup>21</sup> For Hooker, this balanced, integrated life is available only within a stable social order, which provides us with the necessities but also encourages us not to overvalue them.

Petruchio's pedagogy is similarly calculated to expose Katherine's disordered, solipsistic values. Without, for example, some reference to a natural end, her desire for a cap that "doth fit the time" (4.3.69) or a "quaint" dress (4.3.102) is superficial and materialistic. Katherine, it would seem, demands the material benefits of social participation without accepting the "yoke" of civility and mutuality. This is suggested by her testy remark, "Love me, or love me not, I like the cap, / And it I will have, or I will have none" (4.3.84-85), signifying that she values fashion more than her conjugal love (her trampling of the cap under foot in 5.2. is in part a demonstration that her values have been transformed). Petruchio

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<sup>21</sup> Marshall, 95-96, 99.

insists that fashionable caps are fine if material sophistication is properly subordinated to the cultivation of virtue: "When you are gentle, you shall have one too"; "'tis the mind that makes the body rich"; "honor peereth in the meanest habit" (4.3.71, 172, 174).

The privation strategy is also calculated to make Katherine dissatisfied with her emotional isolation. It establishes a stark contrast between antithetical modes of living – bare subsistence and fullness – for the misery produced by irascibility implies its opposite: "thou false deluding slave, / That feed'st me with the very name of meat" (4.3.30-31). Through deprivation she comes to realize that she is not only famished for food, but longs for other, less tangible goods such as familial love and public esteem, which cannot be experienced if she persists in anti-sociality. This process of self-discovery can be explicated in reference to the law of moral reciprocity dramatized by Hooker: "if I cannot wish to receive all good, even as much at every man's hand as any man can wish unto his own soul, how should I look to have any part of my desire which is undoubtedly in other men, we all being of one and the same nature? To have any thing offered them repugnant to this desire must needs in all respects grieve them as much as me: so that if I do harm I must look to suffer; there being no reason that others should shew greater measure of love to me than they have by me shewed unto them. My desire therefore to be loved of my equals in nature as much as possible may be, imposeth upon me a natural duty of bearing them-ward fully the like affection" (1.8.7). The good life, insists Hooker, can only be achieved through the practice of the second great commandment.

Like Petruchio, Hooker persistently strives to engage the rationality and will of his readers. He does not wish to effect in them a "captivity of judgment," so that the "authority of men should prevail either against or above Reason" (2.7.6). Rather, a polemical victory is only authentic when, the alternatives being clearly delineated, one's opponent assents through free rational choice: "To choose is to will one thing before another. And to will is to bend our souls to the having or doing of that which they see to be good" (1.7.2). Yet, in the real world, all choices entail undesirable consequences, and any particular object will have "the show of some difficulty or unpleasant quality annexed to it, in respect whereof the Will may shrink and decline it" (1.7.6). When reason is properly exercised, however, the alternatives are weighed in reference not simply to superficial difficulties but to higher ends like the attainment of happiness.

At the same time, argues Hooker, education is not exclusively rationalistic, nor is the end of education mere self-interest, for no one can rest satisfied "either with fruition of that wherewith his life is preserved, or with performance of such actions as advance him most deservedly in estimation" (1.11.4). The best kind of education is motivated by the subject's intuition of a supreme good (i.e., God) beyond empirical or rational inquiry. We covet, he argues, "that which exceedeth the reach of sense; yea somewhat above capacity of reason, somewhat divine and heavenly, which with hidden exultation it rather surmiseth than conceiveth; somewhat it seeketh, and what that is directly it knoweth not, yet very intente desire thereof doth so incite it, that all other known delights and pleasures are laid aside, they give place to the search of this but only suspected desire" (1.11.4). Clearly, Hooker's praise of rationality does not preclude his appreciation for visionary and mystical modes of apprehension. The undoubted earthly goods of "beauties, honours, sciences, virtues, and perfections" point toward a "last and highest state of perfection" which is "sought and earnestly thirsted for" (1.11.4-5).

A similar balance of rational and visionary apprehension is evident in Petruchio's

pedagogy. Although at times he seems to disregard Katherine's volition by abrogating or wilfully misunderstanding her wishes,<sup>22</sup> his methods are directed primarily toward her voluntary assent. She must choose him clear-sightedly, fully aware of his imperfections. This is one way of understanding his raucous behaviour in Acts Four and Five. Rather than constructing an artificially harmonious atmosphere or projecting an idealized image of himself as in the 'Petrarchan' wooing of the Lucentio-Bianca plot, Petruchio openly displays, exaggerates even, his worst traits: insensitivity, imperiousness, violence. Nor does he disguise the fact that there are clear disadvantages in submitting to him, not least that she must relinquish the sheer pleasure of "crossing" him. Not surprisingly, then, Katherine withholds her assent throughout most of Act Four, though the text does not clearly specify the reason. Possibly, the full meaning of his demonstration eludes her, or dropping her habitual irascibility proves too difficult. Hooker notes that "custom inuring the mind by long practice, and so leaving there a sensible impression, prevaieth more than reasonable persuasion" and that even though "Reason . . . may rightly discern the thing which is good, . . . yet the Will of man may not incline itself thereunto" (*Laws* 1.7.6). The stasis of her will is implied in Curtis's description of the bride on her wedding night: "she, poor soul, / Knows not which way to stand, to look, to speak, / And sits as one new risen from a dream" (4.1.172-174). When she finally does submit to Petruchio, however, she does so on rational and practical grounds, for assenting to his absurd assertions about the sun and the moon brings about the concrete result of forward progress:

Hor. Say as he says, or we shall never go.

Kath. Forward, I pray, since we have come so far.

(4.5.11-12)

Yet Petruchio's demonstration also transcends rationality in some respects, leading Katherine toward a visionary apprehension of her place within the cosmic order. The solar/lunar imagery prominent in the scene is reminiscent of Hooker's famous description of cosmic interdependence: "For we see the whole world and each part thereof so compacted, that as long as each thing performeth only that work which is natural unto it, it thereby preserveth both other things and also itself. Contrariwise, let any principal thing, as the sun, the moon, any one of the heavens or elements, but once cease or fail, or swerve, and who doth not easily conceive that the sequel thereof would be ruin both to itself and whatsoever dependeth on it?" (1.9.1). To endorse Petruchio's nonsensical assertions about the heavenly bodies, Katherine must temporarily suspend her rationality and symbolically relinquish her autonomy for interdependence. Once she does so, however, her vision is transformed vision and her condition altered: "Pardon, old father, my mistaking eyes, / That have been so bedazzled with the sun, / That every thing I look on seemeth green." (4.5.45-47). In words which echo the marriage vows, Katherine accepts the condition of interdependence -- "Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me"; "And so shall it be so for Katherine" (4.5.15, 22) -- and the immediate result is a flowering of affection and humour between the partners. If, in Hooker's terms, Katherine's refusal of social integration constitutes a "swerving" from the natural order, the restoration of this order is conveyed in Petruchio's benediction: "Well, forward, forward. Thus the bowl should run, / And not unluckily against the bias" (4.5.24-25).

The entire pedagogical process results in intellectual and moral growth for Katherine. The "tamed" woman of the final scene exhibits newfound flexibility, perceptiveness, poise,

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<sup>22</sup> See *Shrew*, 2.1.271, 275; 3.2.202-203; 4.3.81-83.

and eloquence: "she is chang'd, as she had never been" (5.2.115). In her final speech, Katherine confesses to having allowed pride and peevishness to distort her judgment: "My mind hath been as big, as one of yours, / My heart as great, my reason haply more, / To bandy word for word and frown for frown" (5.2.170-72). This is precisely the sort of self-evaluation which Hooker hopes his opponents will undergo: "The best and safest way for you therefore, my dear brethren, is, to call your deeds past to a new reckoning, to reexamine the cause ye have taken in hand, . . . to lay aside the gall of that bitterness wherein your minds have hitherto over-abounded, and with meekness to search the truth. Think ye are men, deem it not impossible for you to err; sift unpartially your own hearts, whether it be force of reason or vehemency of affection, which hath bred and still doth feed these opinions in you. If truth do any where manifest itself, seek not to smother it with glosing delusions, acknowledge the greatness thereof, and think it your best victory when the same doth prevail over you" (Pref.9.1).

### Order and Mutuality

In an age when the 'marginal' and 'transgressive' are valorized, the unsympathetic treatment of dissent in *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* and *The Taming of the Shrew* – by religious minorities and women, respectively – cannot help but come off badly. Critics sometimes under-value these works because allegedly they celebrate the dominant ideologies of patriarchal and political absolutism. Undoubtedly, both works appear, from a contemporary standpoint, politically conservative, affirming the primacy of order, continuity, and obedience, and manifesting a corresponding anxiety about the chaotic effects of dissent. The *Laws* and *Shrew* also insist on the necessity of social discipline and coercive force, a sore point for several critics who argue that the presence of coercion in any form or to any degree cancels out considerations of mutuality.<sup>23</sup> However, such reductive readings fail to do justice to the two texts. Hooker, for example, defends the Elizabethan social order by placing the issues of conformity and obedience in a broad teleological context,<sup>24</sup> and in so doing de-emphasizes but does not deny their hierarchical and coercive aspects. As Debora Shuger points out, Hooker observes in a clear-eyed way that all societies "are maintained by power, not *philia*," the more so when they are inclusive societies.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, as Charles Watterson Davis argues, Hooker's political position cannot be labelled either royal absolutism or Enlightenment individualism, for neither law nor individual rights are primary; there is rather an insistence on interdependence within hierarchy.<sup>26</sup> Further, as A.S. McGrade contends, Hooker's preference for stability does not preclude a positive appreciation for actions, processes, and constructive change.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> W. Speed Hill, for example, laments the "repressive and authoritarian bias" in Hooker's thought which renders Hooker's terms for reconciliation with the non-conformists "illusory" ("Evolution," 152-153), while MacDonald makes a similar point in reference to *Shrew*, arguing that, for all its gestures toward playful mutuality, the play can never "entirely escape the shadow of coercion," for "we cannot have play and reciprocity on the one hand and coercion on the other" (*Comedies*, 19).

<sup>24</sup> Paul E. Forte, "Richard Hooker's theory of law," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 12:2 (1982): 141.

<sup>25</sup> Debora Shuger, "'Society Supernatural': the Imagined Community of Hooker's *Laws*," in *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England*, eds. Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 128.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Watterson Davis, "'For conformities sake': How Richard Hooker Used Fuzzy Logic and Legal Rhetoric against Political Extremes," in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, ed. A.S. McGrade, (Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1997), 338, 345-346. See also Philip B. Secor, "In Search of Richard Hooker," in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, ed. A.S. McGrade, (Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1997), 21-37.

<sup>27</sup> McGrade, "Establishment," 17.



Hooker's conception of the social order can be characterized as anti-utopian and anti-idealist,<sup>28</sup> as McGrade argues, he defends neither a utopian ideal nor the English *status quo* but rather a "set of actually promulgated public norms."<sup>29</sup> For Hooker, ideologues who argue for a return to either Edenic or apostolic purity are unrealistic and irresponsible: "to bring things unto the first course they were in, and utterly to take away all kind of public government in the world, were apparently to overturn the whole world" (1.10.4). While Hooker admits that, theoretically, "men might have lived without any public regiment," he insists that we cannot now turn back the clock, ignoring either historical change or our self-evident need for some form of government in a fallen world. Yet he is not dogmatic with respect to the particular form of social regiment: "the kinds thereof being many, Nature tieth not to any one, but leaveth the choice as a thing arbitrary" (1.10.5). All political authority is based on consent and is therefore socially legitimated,<sup>30</sup> while laws of descent like primogeniture are often based on mere probability, fitness, convenience, or expediency (1.10.10-11). Moreover, Hooker argues that many "truths" considered absolute in a given time and place are in fact a matter of probability rather than certainty. Since "proof infallible" is not available in many instances (notably in the correct form of church polity), we must be content to make decisions on the basis of incomplete or ambiguous evidence: "As for probabilities, what thing was there ever set down so agreeable with sound reason, but some probable shew against it might be made?" (Pref.6.6).

Constructed, imperfect, and mutable as it is, argues Hooker, the social order as it currently exists is essential to human welfare, conferring inestimable benefits for those who render themselves "conformable" to it. We should pay close attention to the voice of tradition and custom which are often valuable guides: "The most certain token of evident goodness is, if the general persuasion of all men do so account it . . . . The general and perpetual voice of men is as the sentence of God himself" (1.8.3). Undoubtedly, human traditions and institutions deteriorate, and abuses necessitate innovations such as the Protestant Reformation. Yet, since "corporations are immortal," legitimate reform can only occur through a rational process of consultation and persuasion, and the consent of our ancestors to a particular rule of law continues in force until amended by universal consent (1.10.8). Short of such consensus, subjects are morally obliged to conform to the established order: "sith equity and reason, the law of nature, God and man, do all favour that which is in being, till orderly judgment of decision be given against it; it is but justice to exact of you, and perverseness in you it should be to deny thereunto your willing obedience" (Pref.6.5).

The social vision in *Shrew*, like that of Hooker, is not easily categorized as either conservative or subversive. As Graham Holderness argues, it is as implausible to force the play into the mould of modern progressive or feminist thought as it is to dismiss it as "a 'barbaric and disgusting' relic of medieval misogyny," for the play contains elements of both hierarchical social doctrine and subversive, anti-paternalist discourse.<sup>31</sup> Like the *Laws*, for example, the play frankly accepts the necessity of coercive authority, rationalizing and contextualizing it on the same grounds that Hooker does in the *Laws*. For example, the

<sup>28</sup> Rowan Williams, in "Hooker: Philosopher, Anglican, Contemporary," *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community*, ed. A.S. McGrade, (Tempe, AZ: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1997), argues that Hooker employs a radical apologetic in defence of a conservative position (377-378). Bouwsma comments on Hooker's subversive anthropology, pragmatism, and historicism, which place him "in opposition to idealist Christian thought" (Bouwsma, 152).

<sup>29</sup> McGrade, "Establishment," 18.

<sup>30</sup> See Bouwsma, 152.

<sup>31</sup> Graham Holderness, *The Taming of the Shrew*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 22-23.

prevalence of animal-training metaphors implies that punitive discipline is sometimes necessary and beneficent: "He that knows better how to tame a shrew, / Now let him speak, 'tis charity to shew" (4.1.210-211). Yet, as a number of critics have persuasively argued, the play effectively synthesizes hierarchical doctrine with a discourse of mutuality.<sup>32</sup>

Petruchio manifests a somewhat ambivalent attitude toward the social order. At times, he speaks like an avatar of patrilineal authority. For example, he presumes that his wooing of Katherine will thrive on the basis of patriarchal affiliation (1.2.100-101; 2.1.116). Later, he reassures Vincentio that, despite appearances to the contrary, his son Lucentio has flouted neither patriarchal authority nor mercantile prudence:

Happily met, the happier for thy son.  
And now by law, as well as reverend age  
I may entitle thee my loving father.  
The sister to my wife, this gentlewoman,  
Thy son by this hath married. Wonder not,  
Nor be grieved. She is of good esteem,  
Her dowry wealthy, and of worthy birth;  
Beside, so qualified as may beseem  
The spouse of any noble gentleman.  
Let me embrace with old Vincentio. . . .

(4.5.59-68)

Strangely, Petruchio is quick to adopt Vincentio as a surrogate father, as he does earlier with Baptista (2.1.130). As the sole heir to the estate of old Antonio (2.1.117) with no living father to gainsay his choices, Petruchio enjoys an enviable level of autonomy and financial security.<sup>33</sup> This makes his voluntary identification with the fathers in the play all the more striking. It would seem that Petruchio, one of many young men blown seed-like through the world to seek their fortunes (1.2.49-50), is anxious about his isolation and seeks social affiliation through marriage and the acquisition of capital.

Yet, at other times, Petruchio's stance toward civil society seems subversive. His hasty manner of wooing, for example, can be seen as an intentional mockery of bourgeois social propriety; Katherine speaks of him, with justification, as "hiding his bitter jests in blunt behavior" (3.2.13). Even when contextualized as part of his "male shrew" guise, his behaviour at the wedding -- refusing to be questioned or entreated, cuffing the priest, throwing the sops in the sexton's face -- suggests contempt for authority: "Go to the feast, revel and domineer, / Carouse full measure to her maidenhead, / Be mad and merry, or go hang yourselves" (3.2.224-226). Petruchio's unruly behaviour seems part way between the strategic and the temperamental; perhaps his zest in flouting convention is partially driven by hostility toward the "system." Clearly, both partners possess wilful, anti-social tendencies: "By this reckoning he is more shrew than she" (4.1.85-86).<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, Petruchio recognizes that he and Katherine, "two raging fires" (2.1.132), must voluntarily subject

<sup>32</sup> John C. Bean, in "Comic Structure and the Humanizing of Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew*," in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, eds. Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely, (Urbana: University of Southern Illinois Press, 1980), contends that the play advocates a "nontyrannical hierarchy informed by mutual affection" (70). Mikesell calls the play a vision of mutuality within hierarchy (143, 154). See also George Walton Williams, "Kate and Petruchio: Strength and Love," *English Language Notes* 29 (1991): 19-21.

<sup>33</sup> Moisan, 113.

<sup>34</sup> See Peter Saccio, "Shrewd and Kindly Farce," *Shakespeare Survey* 37 (1985): 33-40.

themselves a disciplinary regime if they are to avert mutual destruction:

I tell thee, Kate, 'twas burnt and dried away,  
And I expressly am forbid to touch it;  
For it engenders choler, planteth anger,  
And better 'twere that both of us did fast,  
Since of ourselves, ourselves are choleric,  
Than feed it with such overroasted flesh.

(4.1.170-175)

*The Taming of the Shrew*, like Hooker's *Laws*, manifests a sustained tension between conservative precept and radical methodology.<sup>35</sup> Marianne Novy contends that Petruchio's methods mediate between the poles of hierarchy/coercion and play/mutuality, and in so doing combine in a compelling way "the rhetoric of order and the energy of disorder, while removing the dangers of both poles."<sup>36</sup> This tension is evident in Petruchio's equivocal approach to material wealth and commodities. On the one hand, his blunt pursuit of a wealthy wife (1.2.75-76) and his shrewd calculations throughout the play (1.2.214-15; 5.2.111-18) indicate his acceptance of mercantile values. On the other hand, his use of commodities, clothing in particular, suggests otherwise. At Petruchio's instigation, clothing is soiled in the mud (4.1.74-80), the tailor's work disparaged (4.3.86-168), and caps trodden under foot (5.2.121-122). Tranio says, "oftentimes he goes but mean-apparell'd" (3.2.73), and this flouting of sartorial codes reaches its zenith when Petruchio arrives at the wedding in outlandish, mismatched attire (3.2.42-48). His motley ensemble is at least in part a defiance of the codes of bourgeois respectability, a fact not lost on Baptista: "Fie, doff this habit, shame to your estate, / An eyesore to our solemn festival" (3.2.100-101). More importantly, it is an oblique message to Katherine, and invitation for her to see social conventions *qua* conventions. As Martha Andresen-Thom argues, Petruchio satirically attacks "those arbitrary rules and roles of social appearance and behavior that so drastically shrink expressiveness and limit insight into ourselves and others," separating "person from clothing, character from role, gentleness of spirit from gentility of birth and class."<sup>37</sup>

Yet Petruchio's violation of convention, as Carol Heffernan contends, does not appear to signify permanent rebellion against the values of his society and caste.<sup>38</sup> His behaviour suggests, not a rejection civil society, but a neat balancing act, by which he treats the patriarchal social order with both positive appreciation and ironic detachment. Just as Hooker tries to convince sensitive puritans that Christians "may lawfully doubt and suspend our judgment, inclining neither to one side nor other" (*Laws* 2.7.5) even in matters divine, Petruchio obliquely suggests to Katherine that masculine dominance in marriage may be considered one of those matters of which "we may very well retain an opinion that they are probable and not unlikely to be true" (*Laws* 2.7.5). He demonstrates to her the value of being outwardly compliant or "conformable," adhering to cultural forms based on probable rather than certain authority. In so doing, he models for her a way of negotiating personal identity in

<sup>35</sup> Ann Thompson, "Introduction," *The Taming of the Shrew*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 37. See also Moisan, 120.

<sup>36</sup> Marianne L. Novy, "Patriarchy and Play in *The Taming of the Shrew*," *English Literary Renaissance* 9 (1979): 269, 279.

<sup>37</sup> Martha Andresen-Thom, "Shrew-Taming and Other Rituals of Aggression: Baiting and Bonding on the Stage and in the Wild," *Women's Studies* 9 (1982): 132.

<sup>38</sup> Carol F. Heffernan, "*The Taming of the Shrew*: The Bourgeoisie in Love," *Essays in Literature* 12 (1985): 11-12.

which the benefits of social participation can be enjoyed without surrendering or compromising the subjective inner space which Hooker calls "conscience."

This position is presented, obliquely but powerfully, in Act Four, scene five, during which the protagonists symbolically resolve their mutual ambivalence toward each other and the patriarchal social order. In the first part of the scene Petruchio persuades Katherine to accept his conjugal authority, but he does so in a way that ironically brackets this authority, implying that it is *adiaphora* rather than dogmatically true. Clearly, neither he nor Katherine believe sun and moon have literally changed places, but she finally accepts his assertions in a spirit of play:

Then God be blest, it is the blessed sun,  
But sun it is not, when you say it is not;  
And the moon changes even as your mind.  
What you will have it nam'd, even that it is,  
And so it shall be so for Katherine.

(4.5.18-22)

As Novy argues, Katherine discovers that the best way to deal with the arbitrary and irrational demands of patriarchy is to stop taking them so seriously, to view the assumptions of her culture with detachment, like the rules of a game.<sup>39</sup>

Yet Petruchio's demonstration also implies that, while patriarchal authority may not be objectively true, it is "that which is in being" (*Laws* Pref.6.5), an established order sanctioned by custom and "the general persuasion of all men" (*Laws* 1.8.3). Without a broad consensus for reform, one cannot defy it without seriously undermining peace and good order. One is therefore obliged, as Coppelia Kahn accurately observes of Katherine, to walk a tightrope between external conformity to the doctrine of male superiority and its interrogation through irony.<sup>40</sup> Petruchio models this position in his carnivalistic mockery of Vincentio, in which he and Katherine mutually participate. First, Katherine, at Petruchio's instigation, delivers a mock encomium on Vincentio's youthful, feminine beauty; then, Petruchio "corrects" her, pointing out, still rather disrespectfully, that Vincentio is "old, wrinkled, faded, withered" (4.5.43); finally, Katherine and Petruchio apologize in elaborate terms, asking, in an exaggeratedly abject manner, to be reconciled to patriarchal authority: "Now I perceive thou art a reverend father. / Pardon, I pray thee, for my mad mistaking" (4.5.48-49). This word game in which the taxonomies of youth and age, male and female, are inverted suggests the provisional and customary nature of social identities and distinctions, their dependence on convention and consensus. Further, as Andresen-Thom argues, the mockery of authority figures and institutions is an important dimension of social renewal, for traditional forms like courtship and marriage are best served when each generation "first reject[s], then invert[s], then make[s] these forms their own."<sup>41</sup>

Like Hooker's *Laws*, *The Taming of the Shrew* is anti-utopian in its treatment of the social order. This is evident in the play's final scene, which far from being a serene, festive conclusion, foregrounds the persistence of rivalry and hostility in Paduan society. At the beginning of the scene, Lucentio speaks as if all conflict has ceased: "our jarring notes agree, / And time it is, when raging war is done, / To smile at scapes and perils overblown" (5.2.1-

<sup>39</sup> Novy, 273.

<sup>40</sup> Kahn, 97.

<sup>41</sup> Andresen-Thom, 140.

3). But as the guests "sit to chat as well as eat" (5.2.11), the veneer of social harmony wears thin. Interpersonal tensions erupt as the "quick-witted folks / . . . butt together" competitively (5.2.38-39). The rhythm of aggression, kept in check by social tact, continues throughout the scene, culminating in the wager sequence and Kate's long speech on feminine duty, both of which refocus the hostilities onto Bianca and Hortensio's widow, the newly discovered "shrews."

As Hooker argues, there is little point in trying to eradicate aggression; if the book of Genesis demonstrates the inevitability of violence when only a single human family was present, we can expect no less in a world of many clans, communities, and nations: "how could it be chosen but that when families were multiplied and increased upon earth, after separation each providing for itself, envy, strife, contention and violence must grow amongst them? For hath not Nature furnished man with wit and valour, as it were with armour, which may be used as well unto extreme evil as good?" (1.10.3). As his last phrase implies, aggression is not wholly separable from admirable human qualities like wit and valour. Rather than try to eliminate aggression, the better solution is to contain it and channel it toward socially valuable ends. Such redirection of energies is arguably the precise achievement of Petruchio and Katherine at the end of *Shrew*. Frances Dolan contends that Katherine learns "how to assert dominance in more socially acceptable ways. . . not to be less violent, but to redirect her violence toward more appropriate targets."<sup>42</sup> Similarly, says David Daniell, the two of them "embrace and give form to violence" through acting, containing aggression and rebellion within the "mutual frame" of marriage.<sup>43</sup>

### **Marriage and Happiness**

Hooker is an eloquent proponent of human happiness as a natural end and normative standard for human life. In his view, the desire for happiness is universal: "Our felicity therefore being the object and accomplishment of our desire, we cannot choose but wish and covet it" (1.8.1). Though we never attain perfection in this life, we may enjoy relative happiness in the degree to which our desires are satisfied and our true end embraced: "Happiness therefore is that estate whereby we attain, so far as possibly may be attained, the full possession of that which simply for itself is to be desired, and containeth in it after an eminent sort the contentation of our desires, the highest degree of all our perfection" (1.11.3). He further argues that, despite its limits, social life is the necessary precondition for individual fulfilment, for civil society, with its interlocking constraints and privileges, provides the optimal environment for the perfection of persons. Conformity to natural and civil law issues in "our sovereign good or blessedness, that wherein the highest degree of all our perfection consisteth . . . and therefore with it our souls are fully content and satisfied, in that they have they rejoice, and thirst for no more" (1.11.1).

Paradoxically, though, individual fulfilment can only be realized when the members of a social body are willing to subordinate their individual interests to the common good. Indeed, he argues, only through such acts of trust can the social order, on which we all depend, be sustained. A clear illustration of this principle is provided by marriage, which Hooker defines as the permanent conjunction of man and woman, and the singular source of "propagation" which makes any society "durable" (5.73.1). Every other purpose must be subordinated to the principal end of "the having and the bringing up of children" (5.73.2),

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<sup>42</sup> Frances E. Dolan, *The Taming of the Shrew: Texts and Contexts*, (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1996), 24.

<sup>43</sup> David Daniell, "The Good Marriage of Katherine and Petruchio," *Shakespeare Survey* 37 (1985): 30.

including all considerations of happiness, personal fulfilment, and equality. Marriage is not, Hooker argues, an ideal state, for "choice seeketh rather proportion then absolute perfection of goodness" (5.73.2). Like all human institutions it consists of interlocking privileges and limitations, and the man or woman who enters into it can expect to experience "travail" as well as joy, freedom and the constraint of a "strait and insoluble knot" (5.73.2).

Hooker's view of marriage is far from equalitarian. On an ideal plane, implies Hooker, equality between the sexes might seem desirable, but in the larger scheme of things, this is not the case. Pragmatically speaking, marriages, like all social relations, function most harmoniously when hierarchical order is observed: "it was not possible they [men and women] could concur unless there were subalternation between them, which subalternation is naturally grounded upon inequality, because things equal in every respect are never willingly directed one by another" (5.73.2). Yet in Hooker's view inequality does not preclude mutuality but rather facilitates it. As Davis points out, Hooker draws the term "subalternation" from logic; it signifies a cooperative, though not equal, relation between the two parts of a proposition: *X and Y* together. Davis argues that Hooker envisions by the term not mere subordination but interdependence, complementarity of function, and cooperation.<sup>44</sup> Husbands and wives, like all members of the body politic, share significant common interests which may be realized through social participation. The wedding ring, he says, is an appropriate symbol for marriage because it speaks of mutual love and is "a pledge of conjunction in heart and mind agreed upon between them" (5.73.6).

For Hooker, male interests are by no means absolute but bounded by warrants and qualifications,<sup>45</sup> but he does not disguise the fact that marriage imposes greater restraint on women than men. In marrying, a woman relinquishes the relative autonomy of single life but gains in compensation a broadened sphere for personal fulfilment. Marriage not only confers important non-material social benefits like "dignity," "conjugal honour," "affection," and "worship," but legal and economic benefits as well: "her children became by this mean legitimate and free; herself was made a mother over his family; last of all she received such advancement of state as things annexed unto his person might augment her with, yea a right of participation was thereby given her both in him and even in all things which were his" (5.73.7). In short, marriage is a principal means to the good life for both women and men: "By good things temporal therefore we mean length of days, health of body, store of friends and well-willers, quietness, prosperous success of those things we take in hand, riches with fit opportunities to use them during life, reputation following us both alive and dead, children or such as instead of children we wish to leave successors and partakers of our happiness. These things are naturally every man's desire, because they are good" (5.76.2).

*The Taming of the Shrew* posits comparable assertions about the relation between individual happiness, marriage, and the social order. Petruchio, who "hope[s] good days and long to see" (1.2.191), grounds his hopes for felicity in marriage: "Marry, peace it bodes, and love, and quiet life, / An awful rule, and right supremacy; / And, to be short, what not, that's sweet and happy" (5.2.108-110). This is a clear expression of both hierarchy and subalternation, as is his statement to Baptista, which, though outrageous in context, is proleptically truthful:

Be patient, gentlemen, I choose her for myself.

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<sup>44</sup> Davis, 345-346.

<sup>45</sup> For example, Hooker repeats St. Paul's dictum that "parties married have not any longer entire power over themselves, but each hath interest in other's person" (5.73.7). See Davis, 347.

If she and I be pleas'd, what's that to you?  
'Tis bargain'd 'twixt us twain, being alone,  
That she shall still be curst in company.  
I tell you 'tis incredible to believe  
How much she loves me. . . .

(2.1.300-305)

Here, the emphasis is on pleasure, mutuality, and affect, though the prerogative of choice remains male. As Alexander Leggatt argues, although pleasure and pastime lie at the heart of the play's vision of social life, the play demonstrates that "our most pleasurable activities are organized, limited, bounded by rules; and Petruchio's ultimate lesson may be that order and pleasure are inseparable."<sup>46</sup>

But, if the husband enjoys "supremacy," he also bears significant responsibility for his spouse's welfare, and this can be seen as both a form of constraint and a demonstration of reciprocity. Throughout the play, Petruchio demonstrates diligence on Katherine's behalf, providing her with a generous marriage settlement (2.1.123-127), a music tutor (2.1.55-60), wedding apparel (2.1.314-317), and personally prepared meals (4.3.39-40). Moreover, during the honeymoon, he "fast[s] for company" (4.3.177), denying himself food and sleep in order to facilitate her transformation. Katherine also recognizes the value of such exertions in her final speech, where she preaches not only wifely submission, but it also masculine self-sacrifice:

Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,  
Thy head, thy sovereign, one that cares for thee,  
And for thy maintenance; commits his body  
To painful labor, both by sea and land;  
To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,  
Whilst thou li'st warm at home, secure and safe;  
And craves no other tribute at thy hands  
But love, fair looks, and true obedience --  
Too little payment for so great a debt.

(5.2.146-154)

Whatever its precise degree of sincerity, the speech clearly articulates a subalternate and reciprocal view of marital relations: solicitude and sacrifice are repaid with love and obedience. While marriage thus constrains both men and women, it confers an even greater range of benefits.

In the end, Katherine perceives that the marital state is the one best suited to fulfill her natural desires for happiness, since it coordinates the major aspects of her nature: "Man doth seek a triple perfection: first a sensual, consisting in those things which very life itself requireth either as necessary supplements, or as beauties and ornaments thereof; then an intellectual, consisting in those things which none underneath man is either capable of or acquainted with; lastly a spiritual and divine, consisting in those things whereunto we tend by supernatural means here, but cannot here attain unto them" (*Laws* 1.11.4). As Mikesell comments, "all the force of [Katherine's] personality initially absorbed in peevish misery is allowed to blossom in the end in joyful defense of patriarchal marriage. Thus, the play

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<sup>46</sup> Alexander Leggatt, *Shakespeare's Comedy of Love*, (London: Methuen, 1973) 59-60.

suggests, it is only the bridle and bit of patriarchy that can liberate women's power.'<sup>47</sup>

## Conclusion

The thematic parallels between *The Taming of the Shrew* and Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* are numerous. The two texts are informed by substantially the same assumptions about dissent and the nature of social affiliation. As McGrade says, Hooker was the "best sort of traditionalist", a writer whose emphasis on outward conformity and the requirements of peace and order constitute an admirable attempt to accommodate diversity within a social and ecclesiastical unity.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, *The Taming of the Shrew* articulates a broad, humane, and rational social vision in which reciprocity, mutuality, and community outweigh but do not negate the claims of individuality. Not only is Katherine reconciled to the social order through her recognition that marriage and communal life are superior to isolation, but the social order itself is enriched and renewed by its accommodation of her. In the end Petruchio and Katherine emerge as "winner[s]" (5.2.187), experiencing the "peace..., and love, and quiet life" (5.108) which are the fruits of sociality, without sacrificing the rich inwardness that makes them such vital and engaging personalities.

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<sup>47</sup> Mikesell, 159.

<sup>48</sup> McGrade, "Establishment," 26. Forte also argues that Hooker's approach constitutes a wise, humane, and forward-looking approach to religious differences, paving the way for religious freedoms in the following century (157).