

# Logic and Flesh: Richard Hooker's Sacramental Social Body

by

Lucas Simpson

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We acknowledge and respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

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Supervisory Committee

Dr. Gary Kuchar  
Department of English

Dr. David Scott  
Department of Philosophy

## Abstract

This thesis argues that the scope of Richard Hooker's critique in his *Laws of Ecclesiasticall Politie* extends beyond its ostensive target of Elizabethan presbyterianism to what he saw as a more general dissolution of a framework of human self-understanding rooted in Christian metaphysics and sacramental polity. The foundation of Hooker's revision of the conformist case, I argue, is not a critique of presbyterianism or Calvinism themselves but of their 14<sup>th</sup>-century nominalist roots. Whereas recent scholarship has focused on the extent of Hooker's consistency with the magisterial reformers, I aim to situate Hooker within the broader intellectual developments, beyond merely doctrinal-confessional concerns, that would come to characterize modern thought. Such a broadened approach offers valuable insight into the competing tensions in the intellectual climate of nascent modernity and, more importantly, situates Hooker within the context of the epoch-level stakes that, as I argue, he himself envisioned for his project. I develop this line of interpretation with two case studies—the first on Hooker's critique of newly developing reforms in logic, the second on his sacramentology. In both cases, Hooker adopts a position whose metaphysical-theological foundations are an explicit departure from the Calvinist-derived consensus framework of the Admonition Controversy.

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## Introduction

In the opening sentence of the first volume of Richard Hooker's *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* (1593), the author states the central aim of his eight-volume project:

Though for no other cause, yet for this; that posteritie may know we have not loosely through silence permitted things to passe away as in a dreame, there shall be for mens information extant thus much concerning the present state of the Church of God established amongst us, and their carefull endeavour which woulde have upheld the same.<sup>1</sup>

Any interpretation of Hooker's project must decide what Hooker means by these "things" that he, in this prophetic mood, predicts will pass away. Are they the doctrine and discipline of the Elizabethan Church? The established tradition of the Church of England and English common law? The progresses of the European Reformation? Scholarship of the last two decades has tended to take some variation of these as a starting point. Recent debate, for example, has centred on whether Hooker's defence of the Elizabethan order is rooted in the major tenets of the magisterial reformers or is an explicit departure from these roots towards an explicitly pre-Reformed style of piety. According to these approaches, what is "passing away" at the hands of presbyterian radicals might be the achievement of a broadly conceived European Reformation going back to Luther and Calvin or, alternatively, the perfect blend of Reformed doctrine and

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<sup>1</sup> *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Polity* I.1. Citations to Hooker's *Lawes* are from *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker* (henceforth *FLE*). Remaining citations to *Lawes* appear in the main text in parentheses. I retain the old spelling of *FLE*. The roman numeral refers to the book number (not the *FLE* volume number). The second refers to Hooker's original chapter numbers. The third number refers to the subsection numbering from the Keble edition (reproduced in *FLE*). In some cases, I also cite the line numberings unique to *FLE*. These appear as a fourth number. Citations to Hooker's works other than *Lawes* cite volume and page number of *FLE*. Hooker's style demands that he be quoted at length. Throughout *Lawes*, Hooker uses superscripts that point to citations in the margins. I exclude these unless I consider them significant, in which case the relevant citation information is discussed in square brackets, a footnote, or in the main text.

traditional piety encapsulated in the Elizabethan settlement and Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer*.

I suggest that such approaches confine Hooker's project too narrowly. What Hooker means is not a specific set of disciplines and doctrines or ideological allegiances but, rather, a living framework of human self-understanding rooted in Christian metaphysics and sacramental polity. What is passing away at the hands of presbyterian reformers is something like what Louis Dupré describes as the "ontotheological synthesis" that reaches its zenith in the works of Thomas Aquinas. Such a framework envisions a divine order (*kosmos*), whose order is not arbitrarily derived (or imposed) by an intellect separate from it but received from a divinely transcendent ordering principle. The entities of this order receive their being from form, and thus their being is inseparable from their intelligibility. As this is a framework rather than a set of doctrines (hence the differences across the work of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Aquinas), this ontotheological synthesis defies summary, but this idea of the intelligibility of being by virtue of its consistence of substantial form will be a recurrent theme over the course of unfolding Hooker's conception and application of this framework.

Ultimately, my aim in this thesis is to reorient the conversation surrounding Hooker so that the epoch-level tensions addressed in his work may be situated in the context of both the rise of anti-Calvinism in the 1590s and the course of English political and religious life between then and the outbreak of civil war in the 1640s. Hooker's intuition, I suggest, was that the mainstream of Elizabethan Reformist thought was contributing to a larger disruption of the ontotheological synthesis and that the effects of this disruption would be a European social life incapable of communicating and resolving its differences, at interpersonal and international levels. In suggesting that Hooker envisioned his project in terms of these epoch-level stakes, I do not make

the further step of evaluating Hooker's effort vis-a-vis other conformists or his presbyterian opponents. As tempting as it is to offer more charity to my central figure than to his opponents (i.e., Thomas Cartwright and his followers), I strive to be strictly descriptive on this front. Many excellent books have followed a narrative of modernity that begins with Franciscan critique of Aquinas culminating in the work of Ockham and carrying over into both Luther and Calvin. My aim is more modest. I want to show that Hooker himself was diagnosing such a fissure, albeit from a perspective on modernity much different from the one available to us now. I will bracket the question of whether Hooker is right and whether puritanism and its legacy are as damnable as many of these critics of modernity suggest.

Even if I avoid making an evaluation of its legacy, I take as my starting point this fracturing that begins with Franciscan critique of Aquinas and culminates in the work of Ockham before carrying over into both Luther, Calvin, the Reformation, and the subsequent course of modernity.<sup>2</sup> The Franciscan critique held that the Aristotelean-Christian picture of a world following a natural order set out by God had to be rejected on the grounds that it detracted from God's omnipotence. As Ockham writes, "God cannot be bound to any act and, precisely for this reason, what God wills is the same as what is just [*Deus autem ad nullum actum potest obligari, et ideo eo ipso quod deus vult, hoc est justum fieri*]."<sup>3</sup> The nominalists' God is not bound by divinely ordained patterns of substantial form and can therefore intervene in any particular entity. One result of this is the rejection of universals. For if God has the power to apply his will to any entity, regardless of the relation it may bear to other entities, then each entity must be radically individual, partaking in no universal whatsoever. Accordingly, the entire Aristotelean-Thomistic

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<sup>2</sup> Dupré *The Passage to Modernity* especially ch. 5, Taylor *A Secular Age* 90–99, Gillespie *The Theological Origins of Modernity* Ch. 1, Pfau *Minding the Modern* ch. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Sententiae*, IV Q9, quoted in Pfau 162.

project of understanding God and creation through contemplation of essences is rejected. In the Aristotelean-Thomistic picture, form gives substance its being, and therefore the very stuff of thought is also the *sine qua non* of being. The intellectual movement away from the object in its particularity towards its more general, abstract, or universal features does not detract from the being of the object but approaches it by situating it within a larger framework of formal and final causes. In the nominalist picture, contemplation is already at a remove from the object's immediacy, and any further reasoning in abstraction only widens this gap. The being of the object does not depend on any intelligible form but simply on divine will, which could alter its being at any time. These forms through which contemplation proceeds, therefore, have only a conventional or constructed bearing on their object. This leaves knowing and being at a fundamental disjunction that approaches or foreshadows the stark separation between mind and real so characteristic of modern thought.<sup>4</sup>

Hooker's *Lawes* is premised on a rejection not simply of presbyterianism but of a more fundamental philosophical principle regarding the unboundedness of God's will. Hooker is taking issue with a framework that is broader than both presbyterianism and the Elizabethan Calvinist framework held in common between conformists and presbyterians. Although Hooker's rejection of the voluntaristic picture of the unboundedness of God's will certainly has an anti-Calvinist dimension, to see it exclusively as such is to miss the more fundamental, world-picture significance of Hooker's intervention in the conformist-presbyterian debate. That is, the difference between the voluntarist and Thomistic frameworks here is not merely a matter of philosophical principles but of the most fundamental questions concerning the whole framework of our lived experience. As we will see when we consider Hooker's sacramentology, the

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<sup>4</sup> Dupré 39–40.

framework of the ontotheological synthesis is inseparable from the scene of communal flourishing—the *polis* and *ecclesia*—in which it is enacted and embodied.

Hooker signals his ties with Thomistic anti-voluntarism by developing at the outset of his *Lawes* a teleological conception of action. As Hooker argues, all things, in order to act (Hooker uses “operate” and “worke” interchangeably), must have some “foreconceaved ende.” Only certain action is fit for achieving that end. Hooker defines “Lawe” as “that which doth assigne unto each thing the kinde, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the forme and measure of working” (I.2.1).<sup>5</sup> Lawes assign each entity a certain kind and designate an end according to that kind. An entity’s manner of operating will follow from its kind and end. Applying this definition to an explicit rejection of voluntarism, Hooker writes that this effect of lawe “doth first take place in the workes even of God himselfe” (I.2.4). God is not without his own lawes and therefore cannot exercise his will in the same unbounded sense as Ockham’s definition of divine will. God is not, however, bound in the same manner as his creatures. Unlike them, he is the author of the law governing his actions. This law is the “first eternall law,” according to which the second order of laws, “the second law eternall,” is set down (I.3.1). The law of which he is author is his very being: “the being of God is a kind of lawe to his working.” God’s perfect being is the law governing his will. This law is the cause, reason, or counsel of God’s will. His will, therefore, is subordinate to his reason, his being, and his law. Limited by these, God’s will works not “infinitely” but “correspondingly” to its end, which is the showing of “glorious and abundant vertue.” He thus concludes with an explicit rejection of the voluntarist-Ockhamist picture of divine agency: “They erre therefore who thinke that of the will of God to do this or that, there is no reason besides his will” (I.2.5).

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<sup>5</sup> Hooker writes “law” and “lawe” interchangeably, the latter being more common. Because he uses such a specialized sense of the word, I will continue to use the spelling “lawe” out of quotation.

Lawe is the primordial concept in Hooker's philosophy. Given how closely Hooker's general picture follows Aquinas, the novelty of this formulation is noteworthy. Aquinas's own definition of law ("*quaedam regula est et mensura actuum, secundum quam inducitur aliquis ad agendum vel ab agendo retrahitur*") has a much narrower range of applicability. In condensing a teleological account of essence into his definition of law, Hooker elevates the underlying association with law (as in common law and ecclesiastical law) to an ontological significance that sets up his metaphysical-ecclesiastical-national synthesis (e.g., VIII.1.2) at the heart of the project. Behind Hooker's conception of "lawe," his basic metaphysical principle, is a cosmology reliant on substantial forms formulated as an explicit response to the voluntarism his Calvinist opponents inherited from the Ockhamist tradition. The obvious consequence of nominalism's disjunction of knowing and being is the kind of radical uncertainty so often associated with the literature and philosophy of the early modern period. Hooker directs his treatment of lawes and the rational cosmos to this modern anxiety of uncertainty in one of his most famous passages:

Now if nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were but for a while, the observation of her own lawes: if those principall and mother elements of world, wherof all things in this lower world are made, should loose the qualities which now they have, if the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads should loosen and dissolve it selfe: if celestiall spheres should forget their wonted motions and by irregular volubilitie, turne themselves any way as it might happen: if the prince of the lightes of heaven which now as a Giant doth runne his unwearied course, should as it were through a languishing faintnes begin to stand and to rest himselfe: if the moone should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the yeare blend themselves by disordered and confused mixture, the winds breath out their last gaspe, the cloudes

yeeld no rayne, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence, the fruites of the earth pine away as children at the withered breasts of their mother no longer able to yeeld them reliefe, what should become of man himselfe, whom these things now do all serve? See we not plainly that obedience of creatures unto the lawe of nature is the stay of the whole world? (I.3.2)

Hooker's project quickly takes its reader beyond the disciplinary concerns of the conformist-presbyterian conflict to the anxieties and tensions that we now see as definitively modern. Yet, far from an assertion of a rational-intelligible cosmos on which his entire system will depend, this most famous quotation from *Laws*, by hanging on the interrogative, resolves on a chord of doubt, as though Hooker recognizes that his project is doomed from the start, that knowing has already departed from being in the latter's historical unfolding, that everything hereafter can only be a fragmentary reconstruction of the already scattered body of the logos. Like with the openings sentence, then, there is a sense here that Hooker knows his cause is lost. In this ultimate limitation to Hooker's project we can see where the task for the 21st century intellectual-literary historian can move beyond mere antiquarianism. If the project of modernity, whose seed Hooker here opposes, has failed—at least insofar as it has brought humanity to the brink of self-annihilation—then the answer cannot lie in nostalgia for a pre-existing synthesis. The atom bomb and the telescope cannot be uninvented, just as the messages they deliver us cannot be ignored. We cannot return to the lost city but must see in its ruins the resources for our future.<sup>6</sup>

My suggested approach—to see Hooker in light of a longer struggle between the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna* that was accelerated by but does not neatly coincide with the

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<sup>6</sup> See Dupré's brilliant discussion of this problem in *Passage to Modernity* 6–7.

Reformation—is not entirely new. Several mid-twentieth-century critics approached Hooker with such a picture of modernity in mind. Notably, both Alexander Passerin D’Entrèves and Eric Voegelin turned to Hooker in search of answers to the moral and political failure that witnessed the rise of fascism in Western Europe. Voegelin made Hooker’s anti-puritanism central in his series of accounts of resistance to a transhistorical gnosticism he associated both with English puritanism and the intellectual forces that gave way to 20th-century totalitarianism. Similarly, in a lecture given at Oxford in the summer of 1938, D’Entrèves outlined the Thomistic roots of Hooker’s thought that celebrated Hooker’s social-cosmic vision wherein “state-power and state-action” depend “on higher and indeed eternal values.” To renounce such vision, he concluded, is to “raise the state or the tribe to the place which the Christian reserves to God alone”<sup>7</sup> (142). Whatever the shortcomings in their readings of Hooker, especially in terms of the historical context now made more readily clear thanks to recent scholarship,<sup>8</sup> both Voegelin and D’Entrèves grasped the moral and political stakes of Hooker’s project to a degree that has been lost in more recent, even if more historically nuanced, work on the subject. This more recent work on Hooker, along with revisionist historical scholarship offering a more nuanced picture of Elizabethan puritanism, has given us a richer picture of Hooker’s contemporary intellectual climate than the one assumed by Voegelin and D’Entrèves. Given these developments and that a transcendent principle (*archē*) for our own day seems as dire yet as difficult to identify as ever, I think it is right to once again consider Hooker in light of a modernity built on the ruins of an ontotheological synthesis.

With the exception of Voegelin, most intellectual histories concerned with the big-picture history of modernity and the legacy of the Reformation pay little, if any, attention to Hooker.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Medieval Contribution to Political Thought* 142.

<sup>8</sup> See especially Collinson’s seminal *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*.

This is surprising because none of the focal points of these narratives—the ascent of nominalism, the Erasmus–Luther debate—so thoroughly consolidates both the philosophical and the practical-political concerns as Hooker’s project does. Hooker’s exclusion from these broader (i.e., not exclusively post-Reformation English) intellectual histories is even more surprising given his (at least ostensible) central authority in Locke’s *The Second Treatise of Government*. No work is cited more frequently in this seminal text of modern political thought than Hooker’s *Lawes*. Yet, as any reader of Hooker will quickly recognize, the ideas Locke appropriates from his “judicious Hooker” bear only faint, or perhaps inverted, resemblance to those of Richard Hooker himself. The study remains to be written that charts the seismic intellectual, cultural, and political shifts that make possible the transmutation of the Elizabethan Hooker into the Lockean Hooker. This thesis may be considered as preliminary to such a project.

As already noted, because my aim is to shift the framework for understanding Hooker’s thought, I cannot give an exhaustive reading of the *Lawes* within the framework I attempt to outline. Two of the biggest questions—his doctrine of salvation and his formulation of Royal Supremacy—will stand out as needing to be addressed in a further project. Hooker’s method and his eucharistic theology will exemplify what I mean when I say that Hooker intends to retrieve or preserve an ontotheological synthesis. Taken together, these end up accounting for much of the heart of the matter, even if they leave much to be developed.

The question I ultimately want to pose, a question that the occasion of Hooker’s project invites us to consider even if he himself did not address it in these terms, is this: what is the relationship between logic and existence, or, better yet, logic and flesh? How does the idea, or the word, in its unity, come to be embodied in the multiplicity of historical political communities? Although the picture of Hooker offered here will ultimately be partial, I have

selected logic and liturgy as my case-study topics with the intention of streamlining the study directly to this axis of inquiry. Hooker's logic, the focus of the first case study, is enfolded in the sacrament of the second.

### Hooker's Occasion

Whereas Christianity had been a source for relative stability in late-medieval Europe, it had, by Hooker's day, become a force capable of motivating violence on an increasingly widening scale. By the second half of the sixteenth century, with the Council of Trent's ideological solidification of the Counter-Reformation and the spread of Calvinism, European powers were entrenched in an irreconcilable opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism. Diplomacy across this confessional division broke down, and the tensions that would eventually explode in the religious wars of the 17th century began to mount, with little hope for a non-violent solution. The otherwise advantageous relations between England and Spain disintegrated on the basis of this division into the violent rivalry that culminated in the crisis of the Armada. Tension between French Catholics and Protestants came to a head in the killing of thousands of Protestants in the 1572 St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and religious wars continued in France through the time of the publication of the first volume of Hooker's *Laws*. Upwards of three hundred people were burned in England during the reign of Mary, while Elizabeth oversaw hundreds of religiously motivated executions (though Catholics were technically executed for treason rather than heresy). This scale of violence is unprecedented in Europe, and it foreshadows the overwhelming scale of violence that would be unleashed in the first half of the 17th century.

This must be borne in mind when considering Hooker's premonitory opening. Behind all of Hooker's work, behind every carefully crafted sentence, is an effort to find in the intellectual

and institutional resources of Christianity the means to resolve the polarization that would give way to this violence. In the sermons he delivered at the height of English–Spanish tensions, for example, Hooker sought to rein in tensions by developing and defending the scandalous notion that “God I doubt not was mercifull to save thowsandes of our fathers lyvinge in popishe supersticions.”<sup>9</sup> Failing to meet the opposing sides on a common ground in this manner and continuing, as both conformists and presbyterians continued to do of Catholics, to regard the opponent as the true Antichrist could only bring about unthinkable suffering. “As in other most ample and heretofore most flourishing dominions it hath since fallen out,” he writes, alluding to the violence already going on in France, the Netherlands, Westphalia, and elsewhere, so it may come to pass in England “that the adverse part being enraged, and betaking it selfe to such practises as men are commonly woont to embrace, when they behold things brought to desperate extremities, and no hope left to see any other end, then only the utter oppression and cleane extinguishment of one side.” Failure to hold back this outbreak would result in his nightmare vision of “Christendome flaming in all partes of greatest importance at once,” of “mutual combustions bloudsheads and wastes,” and of “endlesse miseris” (14.6). This potential outcome guides the stakes of Hooker’s argument. For while English Calvinist geopolitics operated on the basis of an immanent exclusionary principle,<sup>10</sup> the separation of the elect from the damned and the struggle between the True Church and the Papal Antichrist, Hooker envisioned a geopolitical order that rests on the transcendent exclusionary (that is, sacralized) principle of the crucified and resurrected body of Christ. If such a political vision for Europe had at all been feasible in his day, its impossibility had been sealed by 1648.

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<sup>9</sup> *A Learned Discourse of Justification*, FLE 118.9–10.

<sup>10</sup> As Hooker writes, the doctrine of election “hath bred high tearmes of separation betweene such and the rest of the world, whereby the one sort are named The brethren, The godlie, and so forth, the other worldlings, timeservers, pleasers of men not of God, with such like” (preface.3.11).

On the international stage, the Protestant habit, orthodox in the Elizabethan church, of identifying the pope with Antichrist made any peaceful negotiation with the Catholic faction outright impossible. Archbishop Whitgift—the benchmark figure of mainstream conformism—wrote his doctorate thesis in defence of the doctrine that the pope is Antichrist,<sup>11</sup> and this remained a common point of agreement between Whitgift and Cartwright in the Admonition Controversy (to which I return shortly). In light of this consensus, Hooker’s plea for inter-church councils is noteworthy for its unorthodoxy: “So the urgent necessitie of mutuall communion for preservation of our unitie in these thinges, as also for order in some other things convenient to be every where uniformlie kept, maketh it requisit that the Church of God here on earth have her lawes of spiritual commerce betweene Christian nations, lawes by vertue whereof all Churches may enjoy freelie the use of those reverend religious and sacred consultations which are termed counsels generall.” Instead of achieving this unity of all churches, “pride[,] ambition and tyrannie began by factious and vile endevors to abuse that divine invention unto the furtherance of wicked purposes” (I.10.14). Although the *FLE* editors detect a reference exclusively to the Council of Trent, Hooker nowhere makes this connection explicit but seems to have in mind equally the proceedings involving Protestants, such as the Diet of Augsburg or the meetings that produced the Helvetic Confessions.

I nothing doubt but that Christian men should much better frame them selves to those heavenly preceptes, which our Lorde and Saviour with so great instancie gave us concerning peace and unitie, if we did all concurre in desire to have the use of auncient counsels againe renewed, rather than these proceedings continued which either make all

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<sup>11</sup> Collinson *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* 123.

contentions endlesse, or bring them to one onely determination and that of all other the worst, which is by sword (1.10.14–15).

Salvation for Catholics and a plea to open negotiations with Rome—these are significant departures from mainstream conformism, especially from someone claiming to author a *summa* of the conformist cause.

The ostensible context of Hooker's *Lawes* is the Admonition Controversy and the responses from Thomas Cartwright against Whitgift's defence of the church of England. The titular catalyst of the Admonition Controversy was the publication of *Admonition to the Parliament* in 1572. Whereas previous puritan critiques of the church of England had focused on its liturgical practices, the *Admonition* broadened that criticism by denouncing also its structure of church governance and demanding it conform to the presbyterian model. Presbyterianism, the authors claimed, is the only true model of church government in accordance with scripture. John Whitgift, then master of Trinity College Cambridge, was called upon by Archbishop Parker to respond. Before he could do so, however, *A Second Admonition*, this time penned by Thomas Cartwright, the established leader of the English presbyterians, was published and further advanced the case for presbyterian reform. What followed over the next five years was a pamphlet duel between Whitgift and Cartwright concerning the proper governance of the church of England and the role of scripture in determining its forms of worship.<sup>12</sup> This exchange ceased in 1577, but the controversy over the issues set out between the two authors continued through

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<sup>12</sup> This summary follows Lake *Anglicans and Puritans?* ch. 1. The complete exchange is available in *The Works of John Whitgift*, cited as Parker Society according to the volume number of the works of Whitgift (i.e., 1, 2, or 3).

the 1580s. One prominent continuation is the aforementioned pulpit dispute between Hooker and the presbyterian Walter Travers.

Cartwright's central claim regarding church governance was that an elected ministry, as opposed to an episcopate, was in accordance with the details for the organizational practices of the apostles given in the Bible and therefore the only true form of church polity acceptable to God. The Reformation of the church of England that had begun by bringing church doctrine in line with scripture must be completed by likewise bringing its external forms into accordance with scripture. Cartwright endows the completion of this two-part reformation with an eschatological force, as the manifestation of God's institutional plan on earth: "then should not our words and works be divorced, but Christ should be suffered to reign, a true ministry according to the word instituted, discipline exercised, sacraments purely and sincerely ministered."<sup>13</sup> The coming of God's Kingdom on earth is no longer to be deferred to the end of time but to be sought by the implementation of a properly scriptural church discipline. The result of this final stage of reform would be a time "when our Saviour Christ sitteth wholly and fully, not only in his chair to teach, but also in his throne to rule, not alone in the hearts of every one by his Spirit, but also generally and in the visible government of his church, by those laws of discipline which he hath prescribed."<sup>14</sup> What was true in theory, in doctrine, was to be made real in practice, in discipline, and therefore no appeals to practical concerns could stand in the way of making this idea a reality. The vision of spiritual unity and equality among all true believers gathered in the body of Christ is to be realized in the institutional structure and practices of the church. Episcopacy was wholly antithetical to this end because it replicates the hierarchy of

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<sup>13</sup> Parker Society 3:461.

<sup>14</sup> Parker Society 3:315 quoted in Lake *Anglicans and Puritans* 31.

worldly, monarchical institutions. Instead of Christ as its head, it places the human authorities of archbishop and monarch.<sup>15</sup>

Whitgift's defence against the claim for further reform rests on the distinction between those matters that are necessary for salvation and those that are indifferent to salvation. Under the former category are Baptism, Communion, and the hearing of right doctrine in sermons or the standardized homilies. But the form of church government, external ceremonies, and any other matter not positively instituted by God's word—these are all indifferent to salvation. These, rather, “may be done or undone as order requireth, and altered according to time, place, person, and other circumstances, without any opinion of justification, necessity, or worship in the same, pertaining only to external comeliness, order, decency, &c.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, whereas Cartwright insists that no practical considerations could stand in the way of further reform, such appeals to praxis were the bedrock of Whitgift's defence. Cartwright did not deny the existence of things indifferent, but his category of things necessary was cast much wider than for Whitgift, with the result that the distinction plays a much more prominent role in the latter's approach. Whitgift's emphasis on the things indifferent is inseparable from his strict separation of the invisible from the visible church. “Visible church” refers to the church as a physical and administrative body along with its diverse congregants, while “invisible church” refers solely to the company of the elect. Because the status of one's soul is unavailable to human perception, membership in the visible church could not be determined on the grounds of election. The visible and invisible churches, therefore, could not coincide. Aside from all other non-essential concerns (order, decency, comeliness, etc.), the only role of the offices of the visible church is to ensure access to the processes whereby the elect may be united with God. This was simply done by holding and

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<sup>15</sup> *Lake Anglicans and Puritans* 29.

<sup>16</sup> Parker Society 1:183.

teaching the right doctrine and by administering the sacraments. All other matters are indifferent to salvation, and therefore not binding necessities for the visible church. These matters included such crucial topics for the puritans as church governance, the use of original sermons over homilies, and such external orders as crossing during baptism, kneeling during communion, using rings in marriage, and observance of festival days. According to Whitgift, Cartwright commits a category error that blurs the visible–invisible distinction when he considers the spiritual growth of the ecclesiastical community to be dependent on such worldly matters. Matters indifferent to salvation should be determined by considerations of custom, tradition, and order. His defence of episcopacy, the crux of the whole controversy, rested on the last of these. Rather than conforming to a universal image of church governance given in the Bible, the government of the visible church, as a temporal institution, should fit the exigencies of temporal circumstances. In times of persecution of the godly, as was the case in days of the early church and in the reign of Mary, the existing system of temporal government was independent of the organization and government of the church. Under a godly magistrate, however, the visible church functions best when “governed according to the kind and form of government used in the commonwealth.”<sup>17</sup>

Whitgift’s argument would appear to reduce the question of salvation—the beating heart of post-Reformation religious life—to only a small part of parishioners’ church experience. By defending so many disciplines on political rather than soteriological grounds, Whitgift’s defence of the church presents the entire edifice of the Elizabethan church discipline as being determined by considerations only accidental to religious life. Although this explanation has some truth to it given the political significance of Elizabethan church service, it is unsatisfactory to any form of

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<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Lake *Anglicans and Puritans* 50.

piety sensitive to the genuinely religious dimension of parish life. That this answer was unsatisfactory not only to presbyterians but also to conformists is evident from the flurry of alternative conformist defences of episcopacy, including Hooker's, that emerge in the 1590s.<sup>18</sup> Any effort by conformists to construct a scriptural justification of episcopacy only raised other problems and inconsistencies for the conformist cause. For if episcopacy is not one of those indifferent matters pertaining only to the visible church but is the form of ecclesiastical government in accordance with the Bible, then why should the external forms of worship be any different? If the church of England should follow episcopacy because it is the evident form of the church in the New Testament, then why not also tie forms of worship to the New Testament? Any movement away from Whitgift's indifference-based approach towards a greater reliance on scriptural justifications of discipline would open the door to a host of reforms incompatible with the conformists' project of defending the status quo and the close tie between church and Crown.<sup>19</sup>

The problem for conformists of the 1580s lay in the framework of Reformed orthodoxy within Whitgift's church. Hooker's solution would depart from this orthodoxy in several key ways. In practice, the Reformed orthodoxy of the Elizabethan church was defined by a strong commitment to double predestination, an identification of the church of England with a broader continental Reformation in opposition to Rome, and a general consensus around the authority of Calvin.<sup>20</sup> Within the framework of Elizabethan Calvinism, any strong defence of the religious value of public worship was virtually off limits for its dangerous proximity both to popery and its seeming overestimation of the efficacy of works. This limitation and Rome's close association

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<sup>18</sup> See *Anglicans and Puritans* ch. 3 and "The 'Anglican Moment?'"

<sup>19</sup> *Lake Anglicans and Puritans* 128–9.

<sup>20</sup> See Tyack *Anti-Calvinists* 3–8, and MacCullough *The Later Reformation*.

with divine-sanctioned hierarchy also further explain Whitgift's inability to put forth a *divino iure* case for episcopacy. By the 1590s, however, this orthodox consensus began to loosen. The passing on of the previous generation of Elizabethan divines and the removal of the Catholic threat of Mary Stuart along with the declining threat of Spanish invasion after the Armada meant that the church of England was less bound to defining itself solely in opposition to Rome. When presbyterianism and separatist movements began to appear a greater threat than Catholicism to the established church, the anti-presbyterianism of the Admonition Controversy could expand into a broader critique of what were before central features of Reformed orthodoxy. Among the newly available approaches would be the sacrament-centred piety witnessed in Hooker that would characterize the rise of Arminianism between then and the Laudian church.<sup>21</sup> It is amid this ideological transformation of the 1590s, the loosening of the English Calvinist consensus, that Hooker writes and publishes his *Lawes*.<sup>22</sup> Hooker composes his *Lawes* amid this changing tide that characterized the religious-political culture in the last decade of Elizabeth's reign. Much of what makes Hooker unique vis-a-vis his conformist predecessors can be explained in light of these changes, as Peter Lake has so incisively demonstrated.

This tide change and the Admonition Controversy that precedes it, however, is only the ostensible occasion of Hooker's work and its broader consideration of intellectual, religious, and political life in the wake of the Reformation. Although many critics read Hooker as a conformist propagandist masking his polemic in a philosophical edifice and "window-dressing the command

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<sup>21</sup> For Hooker's role in the development of English Arminianism, see Lake "Lancelot Andrewes, John Buckeridge, and Avant-Garde Conformity at the Court of James I" and McCullough "Avant-Garde Conformity in the 1590s."

<sup>22</sup> Lake "The 'Anglican Moment'" especially 105–113.

structure of English society,”<sup>23</sup> the observations I wish to develop in this thesis add to the body of evidence that suggests this is not at all the case. Despite styling himself as an upholder of the status quo, Hooker challenges the prevailing orthodoxy of the Elizabethan establishment with his anti-Calvinist conceptions of reason, will, scriptural authority, and sacraments. His criticism of presbyterianism is a pretext for a more trenchant reconsideration of the English church's prevailing sense of self-understanding, including those shared between presbyterians and conformists. C.S. Lewis, a writer often very near in spirit to Hooker, grasped this now controversial point beautifully: in Hooker's writing, “truths unfold themselves, quietly and in due order, as if Hooker were developing—nay, we are sure that he is developing—his own philosophy for its own sake [...] thus his refutation of the enemy comes in the end to seem a very small thing, a by-product.”<sup>24</sup> To read Hooker as such a thinker is not a “hagiographical approach,” as Eccleshall derisively puts it, but an approach that respects Hooker as a thinker attuned to how ideas unfold in the course of history and who believed that serious thought, not mere polemic, has something indispensable to offer in addressing history's occasional crises.

### Critical Background

A longstanding interpretive tradition has read Hooker as the defender of an existing “Anglican” order that struck a middle way between Catholicism and Reformation. This reading of Hooker

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<sup>23</sup> Eccleshall 63. See also Helgerson 269–83, who despite conceding that “Hooker's argument may be logically consistent with itself,” maintains that Hooker's “conclusion is in fact decided before he ever begins.” This premise along with the concession of philosophic coherence forces the unsatisfactory point that these two just happen to line up, as though incidentally: “if [Hooker] preferred the general to the particular, there can nevertheless be little doubt that the generalities he marshalled with such skill arose from a situation in which rational argument made common cause with coercive state power” (272). The classic statement of the primacy of polemic, indeed “propaganda,” in Hooker's thought is Cargill Thompson “The Philosopher of the ‘Politic Society.’”

<sup>24</sup> Lewis 459. See also fn 87 below.

was solidified during the Oxford movement of the 19th century and the publication of John Keble's edition of the complete works whose introduction eloquently enshrined such a reading. The revision of the "via media" characterization of the Elizabethan Settlement as anachronistic, however, has shaken up the historical footing on which this interpretation rested. Two dominant alternative readings have emerged.<sup>25</sup> The first, which begins with Peter Lake's 1989 *Anglicans and Puritans?* and continues most prominently in the work of Nigel Voak, preserves much of the theological edifice of the *via media* reading but accommodates and nuances the historical context, mostly by stressing how the conformist-presbyterian controversy was one that took place within a strictly Calvinist framework from which Hooker, crucially, departed.<sup>26</sup> The revised historical context thus offers a significantly different Hooker, one who was no conservative defender of the status quo but an innovator who departed from the Reformed orthodoxy of the English church, at times even in "genuinely radical" ways.<sup>27</sup> Underscoring Hooker's sacrament-centred piety and the role of reason in authorizing scripture, and interpreting Hooker's much-debated doctrine of predestination as anti-Calvinist, Lake and his adherents see Hooker as a prominent figure in the anti-Calvinist trend that begins to emerge in the 1590s and takes full force in the Arminianism of the Laudian church, to which Hooker, according to this

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<sup>25</sup> The previous generation of Hooker scholars, many of whom worked on the *Folger Library Edition* (in whose introduction such a reading of Hooker is enshrined), persist in their adherence to the *via media* interpretation only by rejecting the historical revision of the *via media* interpretation of Elizabethan "Anglicanism," despite the fact that the former interpretation has little serious validity among contemporary historians. The following quote from Gibbs's rejection of Kirby and Atkinson is particularly telling: "I still find most satisfying and persuasive those historians of the English Reformation who find the origin of the *via media* way of doing theology that would in later centuries become known as 'Anglicanism,' not in the nineteenth century with the High Churchmen of the Oxford Movement, but rather in the three major parties which emerged in England during the reign of Henry VIII and continued to vie for power throughout the reign of Elizabeth I and beyond" ("Richard Hooker: Prophet of Anglicanism or English Magisterial Reformer?" 952). The source he cites in support of this claim is none other than the introduction to the *Folger Library Edition*.

<sup>26</sup> In addition to *Anglicans and Puritans*, see Lake's "Business as Usual," and "The 'Anglican Moment,'" Voak *Richard Hooker and Reformed Theology*.

<sup>27</sup> Voak "Richard Hooker and the Principle of *Sola Scriptura*" 138.

interpretation, is seen as a precursor.<sup>28</sup> Alternatively, interpreters working in a tradition that starts with Nigel Atkinson and then Torrance Kirby read Hooker as an orthodox Reformed theologian, consistent in all important respects with the magisterial reformers. In seeking to show that the tenor of Hooker's theology is consistent with both Calvinism and the character of his conformist predecessors, they preserve Hooker's place as a defender of an established English church tradition that has its roots in the Lutheran-Calvinist tradition against their more radical inheritors.<sup>29</sup>

This fault line in the scholarship between those subscribing to Lake's reading and those following Kirby and others has crystallized to the point that Nigel Voak can write of the "Kirby school" in contradistinction to those interpreters, including Voak himself, who follow Lake in seeing Hooker as intervening in the Reformed orthodoxy of the Elizabethan church.<sup>30</sup> The Kirby school's thesis would appear to hold when it comes to Hooker's ecclesiology. For, as Hooker himself explicitly notes, the *iure divino* case for presbyterianism was never put forth by Calvin himself but arose out of the misleading interpretations of his inheritors.<sup>31</sup> Hooker devotes a good

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<sup>28</sup> See Lake "Lancelot Andrewes, John Buckeridge, and Avant-Garde Conformity at the Court of James I."

<sup>29</sup> See Atkinson *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason*, Kirby *Richard Hooker, Reformer and Platonist*, ch. 2 and ch. 6. Other adherents to this reading include Ingalls, Simut, Dominak, and Littlejohn.

<sup>30</sup> Voak "The Peril and Promise" 464.

<sup>31</sup> "And all which the wit even of Calvin was able from [scripture] to drawe, by sifting the very utmost sentence and syllable, is no more then that certaine speeches there are which to him did seeme to intimate that all Christian Churches ought to have their Elderships indued with the power of excommunication, and that a part of those Elderships every where should be chosen out from amongst the laitie after that forme which himselfe had framed Geneva unto. But what argument are yee able to shewe, whereby it was ever proved by Calvin, that any one sentence of Scripture doeth necessarily enforce these things, or the rest wherein your opinion concurrerth with his against the orders of your owne Church? We should be injurious unto vertue it selfe, if wee did derogate from them whome their industrie hath made great" (Preface 2.7–8). This is one of the crucial passages that Cargill Thompson overlooks in his misleading summary of Hooker's preface as "a calculated piece of misrepresentation, a deliberate attempt to undermine Calvin's reputation among his readers [...] Hooker, in effect, accuses him of perpetrating a

part of his preface to demonstrating that the Genevan system arose out of accidental and circumstantial factors rather than Calvin's imposition of a divinely sanctioned form of church government. It would take Calvin's disciples to draw out the more prescriptive conclusions from these writings.<sup>32</sup> We thus see Hooker maintaining his commitments to the Magisterial Reformers by strictly separating them from the later Reformers whose influence translated into the English presbyterianism of Cartwright, Travers, and others.<sup>33</sup>

However, on other central questions concerning reason, sacraments, scriptural authority, and (above all) soteriology, Hooker's consistency with Calvinism becomes tangled for several reasons. Chief among these is the fact that the theology underlying Whitgift's conformism is not as easily reduced to Calvinism as Kirby and others would like to suppose, if, that is, "Calvinism" is taken to mean the theology espoused in the writings of Calvin the Magisterial Reformer himself. Indeed, a good degree of critical debate could be settled by distinguishing more rigorously between the Calvinism of the Elizabethans and that of Calvin.<sup>34</sup> While there may have been a consensus on double predestination in the loosest sense, for example, this consensus cannot simply be reduced to Calvin's own varied treatments of predestination.<sup>35</sup> Another source

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pious fraud, for he implies that Calvin's original reasons for instituting his system of discipline were pragmatic and that he only put forward the claim that it was of divine origin in order to induce the inhabitants of Geneva to accept it more readily" (15). What Hooker is really doing is separating Calvin himself from the deified authority he would gather among later "Calvinists." Cargill Thompson's error on this point is a clear illustration of the difficulties introduced by drawing a too-hasty equivalence between these two.

<sup>32</sup> And thus the real source of the *divino iure* presbyterianism was Calvin's disciple and successor Theodore Beza. For this and the place of Calvinism in the emergence of English presbyterianism, see Collinson *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* 109–121. For presbyterians' explicit rejection of dogmatic adherence to Calvin, see Collinson 104. For the relationship between Calvin's formulation of predestination and later reformers, including in Beza and English Calvinism, see Kendall. For the distortion of Calvin's thought more broadly in his reception through Beza, see Hall.

<sup>33</sup> On this transformation, see Kendall *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*.

<sup>34</sup> For difficulty of squaring Calvin with English "Calvinism" see Cummings 283 and citations.

<sup>35</sup> See Porter 364–72 and Lake *Moderate Puritans* 218–226. The latter argues for a stronger consensus between the heads at Whitaker's Cambridge and Whitgift.

of confusion stems from the changes that Hooker's thought and its presentation undergo from his early sermons to the published books of the *Lawes*, to the later unpublished books, and to the fragmentary material prepared in response to the attacks on the first five books. Some critics will treat this collection of writings as a whole consistent with itself, despite the wide range of situational and biographical circumstances determining these different works, while others are careful to distinguish between an "early," "middle," and "late" Hooker. Those who want to affirm that Hooker's soteriology conforms to a Reformed-orthodox doctrine of justification may turn to his early sermons from his days as Master of the Temple, but they have little textual evidence to cite from Hooker's *Lawes* or his unpublished defence against early critics.<sup>36</sup>

Much of this debate centres around competing attempts to slot Hooker into a set of doctrinal positions—"Calvinism," "reformed orthodoxy," "supralapsarian," etc.— whose senses might be too narrowly defined to meet the scope of Hooker's approach. Hooker may be, on the one hand, departing from the Elizabethan conformists' understanding of Calvinism and leaning into the English church's pre-Reformed, sacrament-centred inheritances while, on the other hand, informing this approach by turning to the authoritative roots of Magisterial Reform. Hooker is a synthetic thinker not easily reduced to any of the sources from which he draws his ideas. The wide range of interpretive latitude reflected in the scholarship owes to the richness of his anthropology and methodology, both areas in his work that would appear to depart from Whitgiftian conformism. It is on this broader vision of Hooker's work that I wish to focus. For if Lake is right that Hooker's project is novel with respect to Whitgiftian conformism and the broader Calvinist consensus of the Elizabethan church, then it remains to identify the full scope of that novelty, which is not always best considered in terms of doctrinal consistency. My

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<sup>36</sup> For a characteristic example, see Kirby 87.

approach is largely sympathetic to Kirby's emphasis both on Hooker's wide range of pre-modern sources and his synthesis of what are often seen as competing traditions (e.g., Dionysian and Augustinian forms of Christian Platonism).<sup>37</sup> Following and developing the contribution of Lake, however, I differ from Kirby in terms of how I see this synthetic approach as fitting with Hooker's polemical context. Hooker's incorporation and synthesis of Platonist, Aristotelean, Neoplatonist, Augustinian, Dionysian, and Thomistic traditions cannot, as Kirby concludes, coincide with his consistency with the magisterial reformers. To see such a wide-ranging synthesis as consistent with Calvin demands a rather peculiar reading of the latter. Instead, I suggest that Hooker draws from these disparate and often competing traditions because he sees in them a common denominator, a fundamental approach towards soul's and society's relation to the cosmos, that is passing away with the progress of the Reformation and modernity. This thesis accounts both for Hooker's polemical motivation (after all, Whitgift had already written an official defence of the church against the Admonitioners) and for the manner of the initial responses his work would provoke.

The emphasis on doctrinal adherence that gives rise to some of the scholarly impasses described above can obscure the fact that doctrine always finds expression in particular discursive settings, in methodological and stylistic media that are never separable from the "doctrinal content" found in any given theological writing. Hooker's attempt to recuperate a framework of classical and Christian metaphysics entails, or is made possible by, a departure from the presbyterianist, systematizing methods of Calvinist English protestantism that are themselves bound up with the methodological practices of the Elizabethan intellectual milieu.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See especially Kirby 36.

<sup>38</sup> For a model of this approach sensitive to the intricate relationship between doctrine and its means of expression, see Cummings, especially ch. 7. See also Lake *Anglicans and Puritans?* and Kuchar.

To assess the “consensus” within the Elizabethan church and whether or not Hooker conformed to it, we have to broaden this assessment beyond questions of doctrine.

## 1. Hooker's Dialectic

This section underscores the contribution of humanistic logic to both conformist and anti-conformist Elizabethan protestantism and argues that understanding Hooker's departure from this logical consensus is crucial for understanding the stakes of his project overall. What we have already seen as a broadly Calvinist consensus within the Elizabethan church and academy was also guided by a common intellectual framework informed by humanistic logic, a framework that Hooker both implicitly and explicitly rejects.<sup>39</sup>

The more systematized though otherwise not spectacularly novel logic of Ramus would come to be associated with anti-conformist puritanism, an association aided in part by Ramus's status as a protestant martyr after his death in the St. Bartholomew Day Massacre. Ramus's name had come to be associated with the tradition of topics logic stemming primarily from Agricola. In England, Ramism's most vocal proponents tend to be associated with presbyterianism, most notably the circle around Chaderton at Emanuel College Cambridge.<sup>40</sup> Despite this association between reformed logic and nonconformism, however, the reformed logic itself had a broader appeal that continued to inform the methodology of conformists and non-conformists alike. In light of this general logical consensus, I argue that Hooker's explicit rejection of Ramism in favour of Aristotelean demonstration (I.6) is not just a criticism of the methods popular among presbyterians but a departure from the general methodological assumptions of the Elizabethan intellectual milieu. While commentators have seen Hooker's rejection of Ramism as aimed at his presbyterian opponents,<sup>41</sup> it is better understood as guarding against intellectual trends associated

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<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of methodological consensus in the Admonition Controversy, see Lake *Anglicans and Puritans?* 14–15.

<sup>40</sup> Cummings 254–55.

<sup>41</sup> Gibbs "Theology, Logic, and Rhetoric" and *FLE* 6:493–4.

with the Elizabethan Calvinist consensus that Hooker saw as corrosive to the synthetic style of Christianity that he sought to preserve.

Before proceeding to these specifics, I want to review the backdrop of Hooker's project in light of what I see as his more general aim to guard against the corrosion of the ontotheological synthesis. I began by discussing Hooker's rejection of the notion that God's will is unbounded. Although I noted that this rejection challenges Calvinist formulations of the will, I also stressed that it should be seen in the bigger picture of intellectual currents surrounding Hooker, currents that would come to define the shape of modern frames of self-understanding.

As we saw, the nominalist emphasis on the unbounded will of God posed serious challenges to the intelligibility of the natural order. For, according to the nominalists, this order is not given by the creator but subject to an unpredictable, unknowable will. This is the sense of divine will that Calvin would inherit. Unbounded in his will, Calvin's God may separate the elect from the reprobate only on the basis of God's "mere good pleasure."<sup>42</sup> To include any notion that God's gifts can flow from the activity of a communal and sacramental life in the church is to detract from the unboundedness of this divine will. In response to objections to the apparent injustice of this power of "decision," Calvin nearly echoes Ockham's elevation of God's will quoted above: "For God's will is so much the highest rule of righteousness that whatever he wills, by the very fact that he wills it, must be considered righteous."<sup>43</sup> Although Aquinas does state, in an apparently similar vein, that God's election "has no reason except God's will [*non habet rationem nisi divinam voluntatem*],"<sup>44</sup> this supremacy of the will is only made in relation to the divine *ratio*, by which all things are ordered at their creation. We do not find in Aquinas's

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<sup>42</sup> *Institutes* 3.21.1

<sup>43</sup> *Institutes* 3.23.2. Compare Ockham's "*quod deus vult, hoc est justum fieri.*"

<sup>44</sup> *Summa Theologiae* I.23.5, ad 3, translation modified.

discussion of predestination the anxiety about a God whose will is *eo ipso* righteous. For Aquinas, God's providential decree technically predestines salvation only to some, but this poses little problem because that salvation is realized in a process of active growth and participation in the rationally ordered cosmos.<sup>45</sup> With the rejection of the Aristotelian-Thomistic natural order proceeding from God as the first cause, theological knowledge's availability is increasingly dependent on what God has revealed directly in scripture.<sup>46</sup>

The scripturalism that this rejection entailed would take on a much stronger form among Calvin's Elizabethan inheritors, but the philosophical-theological problem behind it flows from the very source of the Reformation—Martin Luther, himself committed to the Ockhamist vision of the divine will both before and after his breakthrough conception of justification.<sup>47</sup> The ground of theology is not, as in Aquinas, a philosophy that is to be “perfected” by grace in its relation to revealed truths<sup>48</sup> but scripture in itself, which is to be understood as an account of the otherwise unknowable deeds of the unknowable divine will. The promise of salvation is no longer experienced within an order that integrates nature and grace. Instead, it is radically distant and assured on the basis of faith alone. Knowledge is not available from the order in which the believer is situated but is instead confined to the page, which is experienced only through the individual, inward light of faith. To suppose otherwise, as proponents of natural theology do, is to vainly deny the power of this will. Luther aimed to redefine the relationship between philosophy and theology “by divesting the deductive method of its metaphysical foundations.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> See the comparison of Calvin with medieval understandings of predestination in Aers *Versions of Election*, chs. 2 and 3.

<sup>46</sup> For the Occamist beginnings of this limitation of theological knowledge to scripture, see Schreiner 19–23.

<sup>47</sup> Oberman 24.

<sup>48</sup> “*gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*” (1.1.8, ad 2)

<sup>49</sup> Oberman 22.

This entailed an outright rejection of Aristotle's place in theology. "Aristotle," he wrote, "is to theology as darkness is to light."<sup>50</sup> The legacy of this scripturalist, anti-metaphysical project, seeking, in the very least, to severely curtail the role of philosophy in religious matters, persisted through Calvin and the Calvinist tradition Hooker's contemporaries inherited.

By Hooker's day, Elizabethan Calvinists had elevated this scripturalist emphasis to the point that the Bible was to serve as a blueprint for the ordering of church and society. This overinflation of scripture at the expense of reason and history is the primary object of Hooker's criticism. Behind this debate about scripturalism and the limit of natural theology, however, is a profound difference over how thought and experience intersect one another. Alongside religious and political reform, this difference also plays out in the reform of logic witnessed in this period. In the logical reforms that coincided with the Reformation, we see a fissure between the order of thought and the order of the world. An Aristotelean logic centred on predication, the point at which knowing meets being, is replaced by a wholly formalist logic that is bound, like the type pieces fixed by the compositor, to the formal, otherworldly order of the page.

This transformation results from a battle waged over first principles. In Aristotle, the principles of epideictic deduction, and thus the grounds of certain knowledge, are themselves not immediately available but have to be approached through the opacity of what is made known and available through experience. The first philosophy of *Metaphysics* employs dialectical arguments to proceed towards these first principles from what is given, which presents itself in the absence of these principles. Dialectic, in this Aristotelian sense whose legacy survives in the *disputatio* assumed by Aquinas in the *Summa*, thus offers a "road towards first principles."<sup>51</sup> Theorizing towards these principles demands an openness to the enigma and contradictions of appearances.

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<sup>50</sup> From *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam* (1517) Qtd. in Oberman 30.

<sup>51</sup> Irwin 37.

The logical reforms that provide the background of late-Elizabethan intellectual culture, however, sought to collapse this distinction between the dialectical deduction that proceeds from the uncertainty of appearances and the epideictic deduction that works from certain first principles. Like the divestment of metaphysics from theology at the heart of the Reformation's legacy, these logical reforms divested logic of metaphysics by investing more exclusive authority to the principles given in the printed text (here the table of topics rather than scripture). The tendency of these two reforms run in tandem, insofar as their anti-metaphysical tendencies coincide. As we shall see, it may be that in the Elizabethan context, the connection between theological and logical reform is not accidental.

The question of first principles was at the forefront of Hooker's intervention in the Admonition Controversy. He attempted to resolve the controversy's impasses not by confining himself to its narrowly polemical concerns but by couching a defence of the church of England within an expansive work of systematic philosophical theology. This scope went against the wishes of his supporters and sponsors within the church, who would have preferred that Hooker apply his talents to the millstone of practical church politics. In his notes on an early draft of the *Laws*, Edwin Sandys encouraged Hooker to veer away from the philosophical breadth of the *Laws* and instead proceed, in the manner of Whitgift's pamphlets, with a point-by-point refutation of his opponents' case.<sup>52</sup> Although the *Laws* is surely not untouched by short-term polemical interest, Hooker saw the problem as too deeply rooted to be resolved by a point-by-point approach or even within the predominant framework of the Whitgift–Cartwright debate. His project has to begin from “the very foundation and root, the highest welspring and fountaine”

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<sup>52</sup> Gibbs “Life of Hooker” 14–15. Sandys hoped to enlist Hooker's work for his effort to expand the recusancy laws that applied to Catholics so as to include Puritan nonconformists.

of the true laws governing creation, humanity, and society (I.1.2). Any possible resolution on the particular points concerning the conformist-presbyterian debate has to begin with first principles, even if it will not score him points in the debate or garner him book sales.<sup>53</sup> As Hooker writes in the opening of book 1, “much of that we are to speake in this present cause, may seeme to a number perhaps tedious, perhaps obscure, darke, and intricate, (for many talke of the truth, which never sounded the depth from whence it springeth, and therefore when they are led therunto they are soone wearie, as men drawne from those beaten pathes wherewith they have been inured) yet this may not so farre prevaile as to cut off that which the matter it selfe requireth, howsoever the nice humour of some be therewith pleased or no” (I.1.2). The aim of his project is to recover these first principles, the laws themselves.

Not only is Hooker unique in approaching the polemical issue of his day at a philosophical level, but this approach itself also introduces an important departure from the unstated philosophical and intellectual methods undergirding the conformist-presbyterian debate. For while his principles look forward to their consequences, their full justification can only be realized from the backward-looking perspective of their results. “I have endeavoured throughout the bodie of this whole discourse, that every former part might give strength unto all that followe, and every later bring some light unto all before. So that if the judgements of men doe but holde themselves in suspence as touching these first more generall meditations, till in order they have perused the rest that ensue: what may seeme darke at the first will afterwarde be founde more plaine, even as the later particular decisions will appeare, I doubt not more strong, when the other have been read before.” (I.1.2). Like the uncertain starting points of Aristotelean

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<sup>53</sup> Explaining Hooker’s difficulties in raising the funds to print his philosophical tome, Sandys’s brother in law reports that “the printers at that time were fearful to adventure upon printing books in that kind, for that the books of a reverend man being then newly printed were badly sold” (quoted in *FLE* xiv).

dialectic, the principles themselves cannot be taken as authoritative. Instead, Hooker proceeds through the enigma clouding the principles' initial appearance towards the perspective from which they may be grasped in the full certainty worthy of their designation as first principles. As Hooker makes explicit later in book 1, his method marks a return to a tradition of dialectic that differs significantly from the methods informed by humanistic logic ascendant in the Elizabethan intellectual culture.

### The Methodological Consensus: Logical and Religious Reform

In the same 1536 injunction ordering all members of Cambridge to sign their support for the new Royal Supremacy, Henry VIII also mandated that the textbooks of the humanistic logicians Rudolph Agricola and Philipp Melanchthon replace those of the Scholastic logicians as the foundation of the arts curriculum.<sup>54</sup> This shift James B. Mullinger describes as “the line that in university history divides the mediaeval from the modern age.”<sup>55</sup> Logic was at the foundation of the university education. A Cambridge statute from 1570–71 writes that “no one shall [...] be accepted into any college unless he has been instructed and prepared for the learning of dialectic [i.e., logic].”<sup>56</sup> Regardless of their direction after the B.A., students were to study logic in their second and third years of the degree at Cambridge.<sup>57</sup> Although it is tempting to refer to all reformed logic in the 16th century as “Ramist,” the spread of Ramism that began especially at Cambridge in the 1570s fits neatly within the broader tradition of logical reform in the English

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<sup>54</sup> Cooper 1:374.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted by Sgarbi 20.

<sup>56</sup> Jardine “Place of Dialectic” 44. For logic or dialectic in Elizabethan Cambridge and Oxford, see Jardine “Place of Dialectic,” *Discovery and the Art of Discourse* chs. 1–2, “Humanism and the Sixteenth-Century Cambridge Arts Course”; Ashworth; Schmitt 38–46, Sgarbi 17–27,

<sup>57</sup> Sgarbi 36.

universities that began thirty years earlier. As early as 1540, Agricola's *De inventione dialectica* was a core text at Cambridge and a central guide to students' understanding of Aristotle's *Organon*. The Agricolan-influenced *Dialectica* by John Seton was first published in 1545 and spread widely through Cambridge, with a second edition appearing in 1570.<sup>58</sup> In his previous role as Master of Trinity College (1567–1577), Whitgift would assign both of these authors to his students.<sup>59</sup> In addition to these texts, Melanchthon's *Dialectices* (1527) or *Erotemata dialectices* (1547), Caesarius's *Dialectica* (1532), and Ramus's *Dialectica institutiones* were among the standard texts on logic at Cambridge in the second half of the 16th century.<sup>60</sup>

Although Ramus's martyr status would grant his name a special prominence within the English protestant academy, he appears within the context of this profusion of humanistic logic already well established at the universities by 1570. While Ramism never gained the popularity in Oxford that it held at Cambridge,<sup>61</sup> Agricola and the tradition of humanistic logic still held a central place in Oxford's intellectual culture. In fact, for the purposes of this discussion, the features that distinguished Ramus from his reformed-logical predecessors, especially Agricola, are not of central importance. As Lisa Jardine writes, "Ramus took the original and conceptually somewhat obscure developments of Agricola, made their consequences for the teaching of dialectic explicit and packaged them for mass consumption."<sup>62</sup> The commitment to Ramism of presbyterians like Chaderton should not, therefore, be taken as an antagonism to the established tradition of humanist, Agricolan logic.

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<sup>58</sup> Sgarbi 21.

<sup>59</sup> Jardine "The Place of Dialectic" 45n34.

<sup>60</sup> Jardine "The Place of Dialectic" 50.

<sup>61</sup> See Howell 189–93, who makes a case for the prominence of Ramus in Oxford between 1574 and 1618. The account is sufficiently qualified and, I think, plausible, but it is rejected by Sgarbi (40).

<sup>62</sup> "Humanistic Logic" 185.

Likewise, Hooker's criticism of what he labels "Ramistry" is in fact a broader criticism of the Agricolan logical tradition already so firmly established in the Elizabethan university curricula. In discussing the soul's ascent in learning, Hooker writes that after attaining natural reason,

there might be added the right helps of true art and learning (which helps I must plainly confesse this age of the world, carrying the name of a learned age, doth neyther much know nor greatly regard) there would undoubtedly be almost as great difference in maturitie of judgement betweene men therewith inured, and that which now men are, as betweene men that are now and innocents. (I.6.3)

The dearth of "true art and learning"—labelled "Aristotelicall demonstration" in the margin—is not simply a symptom of the threat of presbyterianism but a more general dearth of his age. Even if Hooker will later name his opponent as "that other new devised ayde" of "Ramistry," his target is clearly the more general eclipse of Aristotelean demonstration stretching back primarily to Agricola and the Agricolan reform of logic in the English academy. In signalling this rejection of Ramism, then, Hooker appears to have in mind not only presbyterian-affiliated exponents of Ramism but also the logical curriculum of Whitgift's Cambridge and the logic he would have encountered at Corpus Christi Oxford, where he likely would have attended John Rainolds's Ramist-sympathizing lectures on Aristotelean rhetoric.<sup>63</sup> Hooker singles out Ramus only because

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<sup>63</sup> On Rainolds's use of Ramus, see Ashworth 232. Daniel Featley's biography of Rainolds (published in Thomas Fuller's 1651 *Abel redevivus*) makes passing mention of Hooker's lectures on logic at Oxford: "and as *Jewels* fame first grew from the rhetoricke Lecture, which he read with singular applause: and *Hookers* from the Logicke, so *Reynolds* from the Greeke in the same house" (*Abel redevivus* 478, Wing F2401). The substance of these lectures, however, remains a mystery.

he is, by 1590, the most prominent figurehead of this longer tradition and more closely associated with the immediate threat of presbyterianism. Hooker's singling out Ramism, along with a commonplace overestimation of Ramus's novelty vis-a-vis Agricola and humanistic logical reform, has led interpreters to overlook this wider target.<sup>64</sup> One result of this obscuration is that Hooker's comments on method have been seen as attacks on only the Puritan-Ramist tradition of Chaderton and others, rather than on the broader methodological consensus of the Elizabethan intellectual milieu. To understand this methodological consensus, we have to understand first its emergence in the Agricolan reform of Aristotelian logic and then its amenability to Reformed theological writing.

Before proceeding, I must add a note on terminology. By Hooker's day, "dialectic" and "logic" are used synonymously. This was not always the case and is not the case in contemporary scholarly parlance, which tends to reserve "dialectic" for the process vaguely associated with the Hegelian sense of the term. Unsurprisingly, there is an important connection between the classical and medieval usage of "dialectic" and the contemporary theoretical one—a connection that is lost in the tradition that collapses "dialectic" and "logic." Clarification on this point, therefore, will also advance this introduction to humanistic logic in England and develop the sense of the tradition Hooker (and Hegel after him) sought to recover. In their classical usage, dialectic is closely associated with dialogue (*dialegesthai*), from which it is derived. For Plato a dialectical method, that of the dialogue form itself, is the supreme mode of inquiry. In *Republic*, Socrates offers this picture of dialectic as the highest of inquiries. Whereas other inquiries can never go beyond the uncertain truth of its hypotheses, dialectic can move beyond opinion (*doxa*)

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<sup>64</sup> Gibbs "Theology, Logic, and Rhetoric" and also the *FLE* note on the relevant passage, 6.1:493–94, which attributes the Agricolan reforms of Aristotelian demonstration to Ramus.

to behold being or reality (*ousia*) itself.<sup>65</sup> Dialectic's path to the secure foundation of understanding involves a double movement, first from hypotheses to principles and then from these principles to conclusions founded on the first principles of being: "[dialectic] does not consider these hypotheses as first principles but truly as hypotheses—but as stepping stones to take off from, enabling it to reach the unhypothetical first principle of everything. Having grasped this principle, it reverses itself and, keeping hold of what follows from it, comes down to a conclusion without making use of anything visible at all, but only of forms themselves, moving on from forms to forms, and ending in forms."<sup>66</sup>

The most extensive treatment of dialectic in the Aristotelian corpus, *Topics*, retains this close interdependence of dialectic and dialogue. *Topics* appears to be intended as a handbook for the kind of question–answer activities practised in Plato's Academy.<sup>67</sup> Aristotle opposes the "demonstration" described in the *Analytics* to the "dialectical deduction" treated in *Topics*.<sup>68</sup> The former proceeds from "true and primary premises," the latter from common beliefs (*endoxa*, cognate with *doxa* in the passage from Plato cited above). These *endoxa* from which dialectic proceeds are premises that "produce conviction (*pistis*)."<sup>69</sup> Demonstration, by contrast, proceeds from "true and primary premises," but how these premises are found in the first place is never clearly stated. The question of principles is a matter of debate that I have no intention of settling. For our purposes, two possible interpretations of Aristotelean dialectic are important. The first views dialectic simply as a limited form of inquiry, suitable for oratory and exposing faulty arguments but with no relevant place in the kind of knowing sought out in *Physics* or

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<sup>65</sup> 532a–534e, translation from *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, Hackett, 1997.

<sup>66</sup> 511b–c

<sup>67</sup> Smith *Aristotle Topics*, Oxford UP, 1997, introduction xii–xiv.

<sup>68</sup> 100a, 24b230

<sup>69</sup> 100a–b.

*Metaphysics*. A second possibility, however, grants dialectic some role in determining the premises of demonstration. As the final item of his list of the uses of dialectic in *Topics*, Aristotle writes,

Moreover [dialectic] is useful for finding the primary things in each science. For from the principles proper to the science proposed for discussion nothing can be derived about the principles themselves, since the principles are primary among all the truths contained in the science; instead they must be discussed through the common beliefs in a given area. This is distinctive of dialectic, or more proper to it than to anything else; for since it cross-examines it provides a way toward the principles of all lines of inquiry.<sup>70</sup>

Even if dialectic starts from *endoxa*, it can examine its way towards principles that are true not by some human authority or opinion, but true in themselves or to nature. Aristotle seems to suggest something similar in the discussion of method in *Physics*, where the inquirer is to begin from “what is better known and more perspicuous to us” and from there advance to “what is more perspicuous and better known by nature.”<sup>71</sup> The task of *Metaphysics*, then, might appear to be to apply the dialectic expounded in *Topics* in order to work towards these otherwise unknowable principles of first philosophy.<sup>72</sup>

Even if this latter interpretation lends dialectic a central role in Aristotle’s corpus in a way reminiscent of its role in the passage cited from *Republic*, neither Plato’s nor Aristotle’s formulation of dialectic approaches the sense of “dialectical” as a synthesis of contraries, the

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<sup>70</sup> 101a36–101b4

<sup>71</sup> 71b27–72a6

<sup>72</sup> Irwin *Aristotle’s First Principles* 19 and passim. See also C.D.C. Reeve’s introduction to *Metaphysics* (Hackett, 2016) xxxix–l.

beholding of unity in opposition, or the openness to paradox that we associate with Hegel. Rather, as I will return to in the second division, it would take Plotinus's translation of dialectic from method to ontology, and this translation's synthesis with Christian theology through Pseudo-Dionysius, Boethius, Aquinas, and others, to bring about that latter dialectical character in medieval Christian metaphysics.

For now, what is important is the distinction in Aristotle between demonstration and dialectic. This distinction between demonstration and dialectic is preserved, albeit in a slightly confused way,<sup>73</sup> in Peter of Spain's 1277 *Summulae Logicales*, the most widely used textbook of logic in the Middle Ages. The distinction is translated into a comparable distinction between judgement (*dispositio*) and invention (*inventio*).<sup>74</sup> These two parts of dialectic, whose terms derive from Cicero's dialectic, correspond roughly to Aristotelian demonstration and dialectic, respectively. In Peter of Spain and the related tradition of medieval logic curricula that prevailed in England until 1535, invention, or the topics logic of Aristotelian dialectic, was seen as subordinate to the universal truth of judgement or demonstration.<sup>75</sup> This terminological shift from the distinction between demonstration and dialectic to that between judgement and invention appears to be how "dialectic" comes to take on the more general sense of "logic." Thus, when Peter of Spain calls dialectic the "art of arts and science of sciences," he is thinking of something closer to demonstration, or simply logic in a sense that includes both judgement and invention, as in the title of the work, *Summulae Logicales*.

As his major contribution to the tradition of humanistic logic under consideration, Agricola blurs this distinction between judgement and invention and accordingly privileges

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<sup>73</sup> See Ong 59–63.

<sup>74</sup> For a summary of this distinction, see Knafla 27–29.

<sup>75</sup> Jardine "Humanistic Logic" 182.

*Topics* for its practical applicability.<sup>76</sup> This shift is provocatively indicated in the title of his work—*De inventione dialectica*.<sup>77</sup> Dialectic, here synonymous with logic, is reduced to invention. Without the distinction between truths founded on incontrovertible premises and those founded on commonplaces, topics logic can be deployed and redeployed to suit all manners of discourse by simply adjusting the tabularized commonplace premises accordingly. Thus, inverting Peter of Spain’s definition of “dialectic” given above, Agricola writes that it is “the art of discoursing with probability on any subject, insofar as the nature of the subject is capable of creating conviction”—a formulation also favoured by Ramus.<sup>78</sup> With the elevation of invention at the expense of judgement, the universal certainty of demonstration becomes irrelevant. Even though the principles of the dialectic deduction are limited to a given discourse, the truth value of the results of the deduction are sufficient insofar as they apply to a given discipline.

More importantly, Agricola’s privileging of topics logic over demonstration entails the complete formalization of logic. Unlike demonstration, which deals with what is true to nature, true beyond the experience of the arguer or the plain of the argument itself, topics logic is entirely textual. It begins with discourse-specific premises that are given in the tables, and it ends with discourse-specific conclusions. Aristotelian demonstration maintains within its horizon the exchange between knowing and being, an exchange grounded in predication. These truths predicate something of some subject, which at bottom is substance or being (*ousia*). As with Plato, then, Aristotelian logic, which continues beyond the *Organon* to *Metaphysics*, maintains as its horizon an encounter with being, which is to say an encounter with the world beyond the formalized sphere staked out by its hypotheses, beyond the flattened “places” of the textual

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<sup>76</sup> For an overview of this tradition and the revived centrality of Aristotle’s *Topics*, see Spranzi chs. 3–4.

<sup>77</sup> Jardine “Humanistic Logic” 182.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in Ong *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* 101.

*topoi*. Thought encounters being in predication. In privileging topics logic, Agricola's stated aim is to "to free his dialectic from the concern with predication which forms a principal axis of Aristotle's own thought." But it is by predication that the order of words, the discursive plane of the argument, meets the order of things. The elimination of predication thus forecloses the meeting of these two orders. Agricola "does not care [...] *how* one thing applies to another, provided only that it apply and that the application be teachable. He wants a dialectic purged of psychological and epistemological implications, built not out of an account of the nature of human knowledge, but out of a list of the topics as objects of common knowledge on which discourse turns."<sup>79</sup> Agricola, followed by Ramus, reduces predication to what is given under the topics and thus removes entirely the metaphysical and epistemological problems surrounding predication that would carry over from the *Organon* to the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. Insofar as the predicates (categories) bridge discourse and world, the order of words and the order of things, Agricola's stated aim to free logic from the epistemological and ontological tangles of predication eliminates this exchange and locks thought in its unworldly isolation.<sup>80</sup>

The harmony of the Agricolan vein of humanistic logic with Calvinism stems from this flattening or textualizing of logic. It is in this sense that humanistic logic could come to be what Brian Cummings describes as "the handmaiden of protestant theology,"<sup>81</sup> as it could also be for law, oratory, or literary criticism.<sup>82</sup> Calvin himself organized scripture in his *Institutio* according to the Agricolan-inspired *loci communes* of Melanchthon.<sup>83</sup> There is a somewhat contradictory effect of humanistic logic on the Calvinist tradition. For as I just suggested, humanistic logic

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<sup>79</sup> Ong 106.

<sup>80</sup> Ong 106–11.

<sup>81</sup> Cummings 245.

<sup>82</sup> See, for example, Abraham Fraunce's 1588 *The Lawiers Logike* (STC 11344) and William Temple's 1605 *A Logically Analysis of Twentie Select Psalmes* (STC 23870).

<sup>83</sup> Cummings 248

does away with the form of deduction that deals with universal, apodeictic truths. The effect of this, at least in the contexts under consideration here, is the elimination of uncertainties and mysteries. Humanistic logic elevates the truths of topic logic to the status of demonstration, while simultaneously eliminating the problem of the certainty of its principles. The dialectical principles are granted the authority of demonstrative principles. The problem of proceeding from what is readily known by us to what is true to nature is eliminated. In collapsing Aristotelian demonstration and dialectic, Agricolan dialectic takes the best (i.e., most certain) of both: the limited truth value of dialectic's *endoxa* is deemed unproblematic, and the problem of determining the principles of demonstrative deduction is eliminated. The principles and conclusions are as true and as certain as they need to be for the given discourse. When applied to theology, where those truths are derived from scripture, the problem of the truth value of the premises of a dialectical deduction disappears entirely.

We may see this effect briefly in comparing the doctrines of justification of Luther and Calvin respectively. The paradox of Luther's famous formula *simul iustus et peccator* derives ultimately from the mysterious and unknowable character of God. Luther carries this connection between God's mysteriousness and justification to its paradoxical limit:

faith is, in things not seen. Therefore, that there might be room for faith, it is necessary that all those things which are believed should be hidden. But they are not hidden more deeply, than under the contrary of sight, sense, and experience. Thus, when God makes alive, He does it by killing; when He justifies, He does it by bringing in guilty: when He exalts to Heaven, He does it by bringing down to hell: as the Scripture saith, 'The Lord killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to the grave and raiseth up, (I Sam. ii. 6.);

concerning which, there is no need that I should here speak more at large, for those who read my writings, are well acquainted with these things. Thus He conceals His eternal mercy and loving-kindness behind His eternal wrath: His righteousness, behind apparent iniquity.<sup>84</sup>

The being of God is concealed behind its appearance, and thus the appearance of wrath “conceals His eternal mercy and loving-kindness.” The two contraries coexist on opposite sides of this veil. Man, therefore, is both sinner and saved. The paradoxical coincidence of *simul iustus et peccator* is a consequence of the mystery in which God’s appearance is shrouded.

Calvin, by contrast, flattens this ambiguity with the binary division so central to his formulation of predestination. The both-and soteriological doctrine of Luther is exchanged for the either–or logic of Calvin.<sup>85</sup> Rather than seeing God’s almighty power expressed in paradox, Calvin sees it as expressed in the absolute distinction between the reprobate and the elect. Calvin’s insistence on the expression of God’s will in impermeability of boundaries, on dichotomizing, and on separation determines his doctrine of double predestination: “the boundaries dividing the reprobate from the elect,” he writes in his commentary on Luke 16:36, “can never be crossed.”<sup>86</sup> Humanistic logic, applied to rearranging the *loci* of scripture, lent itself to such lapidarian pronouncements.<sup>87</sup> The appeal of humanistic logic to the Calvinist, scripturalist reform project was that it “could therefore authorize the single *sensus Scripturae* and place it within a comprehensive order of discourse.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Luther *The Bondage of the Will* section 24

<sup>85</sup> Cummings 257

<sup>86</sup> Bouwsma, *Calvin* 35–36.

<sup>87</sup> For this distinction between modern and pre-modern in terms of the characteristically modern “obsessive desire for systematic order” by means of sharp boundaries and Hooker’s resistance to this historical trend, see Shuger *Habits of Thought* 17–44.

<sup>88</sup> Cummings 252.

The synthesis of *sola scriptura* and reformed logic thus furnished a discursive framework that could claim complete certainty. In light of this, it is notable that Hooker insists, in fact devoting an entire book to the claim, that scripture derives its authority from outside itself. The claim that scripture is self-authorizing creates the same problem of groundless regression that we find with discovering deductive principles: “But it is not the worde of God which doth or possiblie can assure us, that wee doe well to thinke it his worde. For if any one booke of Scripture did give testimonie to all; yet still that Scripture which giveth credite to the rest, would require another Scripture to give credite unto it: neither could we ever come unto any pause whereon to rest our assurance this way” (I.4.2).

Although there is a discernible influence of humanistic logic on the thought of Calvin himself, humanistic logic’s amenability to Calvinism becomes much starker in his disciple Theodore Beza, in many ways the true source of “Calvinism” as it came to be understood in Elizabethan England. Beza’s reformulation of predestination by means of the practical syllogism would further extend the affinity between Calvinism and humanistic logic.<sup>89</sup> Beza’s association with presbyterianism and the names of the most vocal proponents of developments in humanistic logic (Chaderton, Perkins) might suggest that it was the exclusive territory of non-conformist puritans, but humanistic logic underpinned the intellectual milieu of Whitgift’s church more broadly. This methodological consensus is what permits the kind of exactitude we find in the Lambeth article’s claim that “there is a determined and certain number of predestined,”<sup>90</sup> a

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<sup>89</sup> See Kendall chs. 2 and 3.

<sup>90</sup> Porter 371.

formulation whose exactitude Hooker would artfully sidestep.<sup>91</sup> Humanistic topics logic provides a framework for formulating scripturally derived doctrines in such precise terms.<sup>92</sup>

One crucial example from Hooker's ecclesiology will serve to introduce the significance of Hooker's departure from Whitgift's Calvinist precision on this front. We have seen the importance of the strict separation between the visible and invisible churches for Whitgiftian conformism. "There are," Whitgift writes,

two kinds of government in the church, the one invisible, the other visible; the one spiritual the other external. The invisible and spiritual government of the church is, when God by his spirit, gifts, and ministry of his word, doth govern it, by ruling in the hearts and consciences of men, and directing them in all things necessary to everlasting life. The visible church and external government is that which is executed by man, and consisteth of external discipline, and visible ceremonies practised in that church and over that church, that containeth in it both good and evil, which is usually called the visible church of Christ, and compared by Christ to 'a field' wherein both 'good seeds' and 'tares were sown,' and to 'a net that gathered of all kind of fishes.'<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> See Lake 187–194 and Cummings 317–319. The closest Hooker will get to the exactitude of that Lambeth article will be his parallel article, appearing at the conclusion of his tortured, unfinished meditation on predestination, known as the *Dublin Fragments*: "1. that God hath predestinated certain men, not all men. [...] 3. that to [God] the number of his elect is definitely knowne" (*FLE* 4:167). Even here, however, the verbal echo of "certain number" in "certain men" undergoes a key semantic shift, with "certain" in the latter sentence meaning "some number or other." Likewise, the echo of "definite" places further emphasis on definiteness only *to God*.

<sup>92</sup> Cummings 245–257.

<sup>93</sup> Parker 1:183–4. Cf. Calvin *Institutio* IV.1.7.

At first glance, Hooker would appear to follow Whitgift's distinction, simply substituting "mysticall" for "invisible":

That Church of Christ which we properly terme his body mysticall, can be but one, neither can that one bee sensiblie discerned by any man, in as much as the partes thereof are some in heaven alreadie with Christ and the rest that are on earth (albeit their naturall persons bee visible) we doe not discern under this propertie, whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body.<sup>94</sup> (*Lawes* III.1.1–2).

Like the "invisible church" of Whitgift and Calvin, Hooker contrasts this "body mysticall" with the "visible Church" (introduced at III.1.3.26–27): "for lacke of diligent observing the difference first betweene the Church of God mysticall and visible, then betweene the visible sound and corrupted, sometimes more, sometimes lesse, the oversightes are neither fewe nor light that have been committed" (III.1.9). Thus, Hooker's "mysticall" appears to be synonymous with Whitgift's "invisible," and Hooker goes on to follow Whitgift in arguing against disciplinary reform on the basis of the necessary–indifferent distinction. Unlike Whitgift, however, Hooker does not wed this latter argument to the distinction between invisible and visible. The distinction between necessary and indifferent does not parallel that between the visible and invisible.

Rather than referring strictly to invisibility, "mysticall" and its related terms refer to the processes by which the multitude are united with and participate in the body of Christ. For mystery, although it has a sense of the invisible or hidden, is also closely associated, or in some cases interchangeable, with sacrament. It is only with this broader sense of "mystery" that we

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<sup>94</sup> *Lawes* III.1.9.

can make sense of the surprising terminological development Hooker makes by book five: in introducing his discussion of public prayer and sacraments, he labels the church a “visible mysticall body.” What Hooker first holds to be distinct, and even warns against getting confused, he now seems to elide or compound: “This holie and religious dutie of service towards God concerneth us one way in that we are men, and an other way in that we are joygned as partes to that visible mysticall bodie which is his Church” (V.24.1).<sup>95</sup> Hooker overcomes this static binary of visible and invisible by placing Christ’s body at the threshold between the invisible and the visible, the ideational and the incarnate, the transcendent and the immanent. For unlike the “invisible” status of the elect, the mystical body, like the body of Christ, is both immanent and transcendent. This is why Hooker uses “mysticall” instead of “invisible.” As we shall see in the second division’s consideration of Hooker’s sacramental theory of the constitution of social bodies, one consequence of this is a much more open account of church membership.

For now, I wish only to underscore how Hooker revises Whitgift’s visible–invisible distinction. Although Hooker would at first appear to follow Whitgift in keeping the static separation of the two churches, he ultimately unites—in a dialectical gesture that will prove crucial for the public theology it introduces—these two forms while maintaining their distinctness. The capaciousness of Hooker’s thought owes to such a tendency to maintain the distinction between the terms of these oppositions but then integrate them into a unity at a higher level of analysis. The result is a more dynamic ontology and methodology than those of either the conformists or the disciplinarians.

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<sup>95</sup> See also Debora Shuger, who writes of the phrase “visible mysticall body” that “book V can be viewed as an extended gloss on this unfamiliar entity” (“Society Supernatural’: The Imagined Community of Hooke’s Laws” 129).

“Copiousness”: Heterodox Style

It was the Calvinist orthodoxy’s precision of language and thought, shorn of mystery and uncertainty, that Hooker’s opponents are looking for when they criticize him of excessive obscurity. When the authors of *A Christian Letter* request of Hooker “intelligible and *logical* argumentes *onely as other writers and disputers doe*,” they are falling back not on doctrinal but methodological consensus (*FLE* 4:75, my emphasis).

The dictates of humanistic logic conferred the plain, straightforward style that presbyterians and mainstream conformists held in common. Hooker’s earliest critics, both presbyterian and ostensibly conformist, emphasized his blatant rejection of this style. In *A Christian Letter*, the 1599 response to the first five books of the *Lawes*, the authors charge Hooker for his unusual style “differing from the simplicitie of holie Scripture, and nothing after the frame of the writings of the Reverend and learned Fathers of our church, as of *Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Jewell, Whitgeeft, Fox, Fulke, etc.*” Rather than communicating a learned argument, Hooker’s style, they allege, aims to confuse, to intimidate, and to furnish him with the always-reliable counterargument that his critics simply did not read him carefully enough:

whether your meaning bee to shewe your selfe to bee some rare *Demosthenes*, or extraordinarie Rabbi, or some great *Pythagoras*, that enjoyne your schollars or your adversaries to five years silence, before they can be perfect in your meaning or able to replye; or that these men you write against, bee not sounde in matters of fayth, and therefore you handle all thinges, or else you had no better way to make doubtfull the chief groundes of our faith and religion, and that you would have men better seene in

Philosophie and schoolmens divinitie, and namelie in *Aristotle*; or that you were afearde, that if you had not handled it with so grave, heroicall and lofite a majestie, you should have been reputed like some other man, and so your fame should have bene but small; or that you would wearie your adversarie with such thicke and continuall fallinge strokes, that hee should not bee able to stande before you to strike one blow against you; or that you would beare down the cause with swelling wordes of vanitie, and cunningly framed sentences to blinde and intangle the simple; or that you would shew your selfe another *Aristotle* by a certaine metaphisicall and crupticall [sic] method to bring men into a maze, that they should rather wonder at your learning, then be able to understand what you teach in your writinge” (*FLE IV* 71–72 authors’ emphases).

What the authors suspect to be true (namely, that Hooker’s *Lawes* goes against the doctrine set forth in the 39 Articles) is, they admit, more likely a result of their own “meane capacitie” to follow Hooker’s “marvelous great” but difficult prose. In ironic humility, they beseech Hooker to state plainly his argument so “that poore playne men, which cannot skill of such hidden misteries, may perceave and learne something by your great travailes” and thus prove the authors’ worrisome suspicions untrue (76). However feigned their earnestness, the authors of *A Christian Letter* raise a respectable criticism, one within a genre of critique that bears perennial importance. For public debate depends on the assumption that authors are prepared to meet their opponents at eye level and partake in exchange within a common framework. Without this, intellectual exchange descends into personality worship, something by which both Hooker studies and most other humanistic disciplines are not untainted. What the authors demand is

simply an account of the substance of *Lawes* that can be plainly understood within the accepted conventions of Elizabethan ecclesiastical debate.

Their criticism focuses as much on style as on method: “howe great and large your five bookes would bee, if you had used reasonable, intelligible and logicall argumentes onely as other writers and disputers doe, and had left out all needlesse wittie gloses and Rhetoricall shadowes in preambles, discourses, digressions, amplifications, and had kept your selfe out of the common jayle of sophisticall elenches, and impertinent outleapes, and had followed S. Peters prescript, in a meeke, reverend and direct apolloge and defense proceeding from a good conscience” (75). The “sophisticall elenches” refers to the fallacious arguments refuted by Aristotle in the final book of *Topics*. Through this reference to Aristotle’s *Topics*, the authors cite the authority of humanistic logic and its plain style in opposition to other Aristotelian traditions (e.g., Scholasticism) and the mystical logic of “sophisticall elenches.” Furthermore, the authors ally the “method” of humanistic logic with the plain style of scripture—a comparison favoured by religious reformers, including Melanchthon and Calvin.

The authors of *A Christian Letter* thus accuse Hooker of violating the plain, methodical, scripturalist style associated with both mainstream Elizabethan protestantism and humanistic logic. Beneath this violation, they suggest, may lie an insidious, potentially Catholic-sympathizing, rejection of the 39 articles, despite Hooker’s ostensible claim to being a defender of the Elizabethan status quo. The authors thus raise the question of intellectual sincerity that is of longstanding significance in Hooker interpretation. Now, however, rather than accusing him of being a popish subversive, interpreters have plausibly read him as a polemicist pre-committed to the defence of the existing Elizabethan establishment at the expense of truth and coherence. Although this is in some ways the opposite of the reading suggested in *A Christian Letter*, it

stems from the same point about Hooker's method: that Hooker's prose is working towards some end ulterior to the articulation of an argument. However, if, as I have already suggested, Hooker is seeking a more general ground on which to settle dispute, then some venture beyond the established ground upon which the dispute arose in the first place should be expected, even necessary. Rather than smoke and mirrors, then, Hooker's style can be read as an attempt to return to a firmer methodology that avoids late-Elizabethan Protestantism's irresolvable impasses as evidenced by the Admonition Controversy. In an age of martyrdom, scrupulously formulated confessions of faith, and religious persecution, Hooker appears to adopt a style of thought sensitive to the complexities of being in a historically situated society. This style would thus refuse to be pinned down to one-sentence doctrines or articles for which others were prepared to burn.

It is therefore significant that Hooker's style was set apart from both presbyterians and conformists. For it suggests a directional shift that must be understood beyond these fault lines. Echoing the stylistic comments from *A Christian Letter*, though now positively, Thomas Fuller would later contrast Hooker's ornate and complicated sermon style with the "plain method" of his presbyterian opponent, Walter Travers: "[Hooker's] style was long and pithy, driving on a whole flock of several clauses before he came to the close of a sentence. So that when the copiousness of his style met not with proportionable capacity of his auditors, it was unjustly censured for perplexed, tedious, and obscure."<sup>96</sup> If we are skeptical of Fuller's 1655 reconstruction of this exchange, we may also compare Travers's own recollection of their contrast, in his supplication to the Privy Council. In recalling one of Hooker's sermons, Travers writes,

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<sup>96</sup> Fuller *Church-History*, 9.7.53, p. 216, quoted in *FLE* V 658.

In which discourses, and such like, he bestowed his whole time and more, which, if he had affected either the truth of God, or the peace of the church, he would surely not have don. Whose example could not drawe me to leave the scripture I tooke in hand, but, standing about an hower to delyver the doctrine of it, in th'ende, upon just occasion of the text, leaving sondrie other his unsound speeches, and keeping me still the principall: I confirmed, the beleeving of the doctrine of justification by Christ onely, to be necessary to the justification of all that should be saved, and that the Church of Rome directly denieth that a man is saved by Christ, or by faith, alone, without the works of the lawe. (*FLE V 204*).

Having already made previous reference to the excessive length of Hooker's sermons, Travers here elides his own punctual sermon with steadfast commitment to plain Calvinist doctrine. Plain speech is the mark of an upright adherent to plain doctrine. He contrasts this doctrinal plainness with Hooker's wandering, lengthy, and excessive preaching—a style that set him apart not only from presbyterians like Travers but also his fellow conformists.

### The Digby Affair

In 1587, William Whitaker, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge and newly appointed Master at its St. John's College, orchestrated the removal of senior fellow and prominent anti-Ramist Everard Digby. The official reason for the dismissal was Digby's failure to pay his commons, but additional charges against him include accusations of popery, anti-Calvinism, and general bad behaviour, including skipping out on communion to go fishing. Because Digby

himself expressed his full willingness to take the oath of supremacy and swear his subscription to the 39 articles, the doctrinal concerns hardly amount to a legitimate argument. Rather, Whitaker sought by this dismissal to eliminate a perceived opponent to the Elizabethan Calvinist consensus. Whitaker's long-time ally Archbishop Whitgift recognized this and, careful administrator that he was, deferred the dismissal. Digby was to be restored to his position while careful investigation was to proceed regarding the charges of popery. Whitaker, however, would ultimately have his way. Whitgift agreed to have Digby re-removed within three months of his reappointment.<sup>97</sup>

The Digby affair is relevant to my consideration of Hooker for two reasons. First, like Hooker, Digby was openly committed to the official doctrine of the church. Style and method are more evasive than plain-stated doctrine, so any “non-conformity” in these authors is harder to pin down than in the case of an avowed Catholic or presbyterian. Any challenges they may have presented to Elizabethan conformity were more subtle. Like Hooker in the context of the conformist–presbyterian debate, Digby employed a syncretic method that stood in direct opposition to the plain, methodical style of the reformed logic in vogue at Cambridge and that Digby would come to openly challenge. As for Hooker, this was a symptom of his turn to philosophy.<sup>98</sup> Digby's first published work, *Theoria Analytica* (1579), is a lengthy Latin treatise on “total philosophy” and its “arcane mysteries” that, with frequent reliance on Aristotle, Plotinus, Pseudo-Dionysius, Ficino, Kabbalah, and alchemy, describes the soul's contemplative

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<sup>97</sup> Much of this summary of the affair is drawn from Lake *Moderate Puritans* 171–180. See also Porter 183–6.

<sup>98</sup> Schmitt writes that “It does not seem to have before been noted that Digby's treatise has some claim to be considered the first British philosophical work since the Middle Ages to be addressed to a learned international audience” and that “Digby's work without doubt marked an upswing in philosophical aspiration in England” (47, 49).

ascent and return beyond the limits of intelligibility. One can understand why Whitgift requested more time to parse his work for doctrinal conformity. Second, the affair points to the Elizabethan establishment's hostility towards exponents of medieval metaphysics and silent preference for Ramism and the humanistic logic that it, by that time, had come to represent. The case exposes that humanistic logic was not only integral to the Calvinist concerns of the presbyterians but also of the conformists representing the church establishment. In the very least, the affair demonstrates a general association between medieval dialectic and the continuing threat of popery, and hence the Elizabethan church establishment's interest in staving off the former.

While *Theoria Analytica* maintains an implicit critique of Ramism, Digby would make his opposition to Ramism explicit in his second book, *De Duplici methodo libri duo unicum P. Rami methodum refutantes* (1580). Shortly thereafter, William Temple published an attack on Digby and defence of Ramus. An exchange of pamphlets then ensued between the two authors over unitary or bipartite methods.<sup>99</sup> Digby, as his title suggests, advocated the bipartite method, which preserves the distinction between invention and judgement, while Temple, following Ramus and Agricola, argued for the collapse of this distinction. Temple would go on to have a successful career as one of England's most outspoken propounders of Ramism. His later appointment as provost to the newly founded and strategically vital Trinity College Dublin further demonstrates the congeniality of Ramism to establishment Protestantism.

Although the connection between Digby's dispute with Temple over Ramism and his later dismissal from Cambridge is not to be overstated, it is, I suggest, certainly relevant.<sup>100</sup> This appears to be especially so in light of the foregoing discussion of the Elizabethan religious-

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<sup>99</sup> The best summaries of the debate are Jardine *Discovery and the Art of Discourse* ch. 2 and Sgarbi 80–91.

<sup>100</sup> Cummings hints at the connection p. 257, as does Munz p. 160.

methodological consensus. Nevertheless, it is a difficult case to make convincingly, for the same reason that gave Whitaker such a difficult time justifying his dismissal of Digby. Doctrine is only the most salient feature of a text, but language itself signifies and performs in ways that escape such conformity-enforcing modes of discourse as articles of religion. Style and method express habits of experiencing intellectual, political, and spiritual realities that are not reducible to doctrines, even as those habits affect the range of doctrines they could consistently pronounce. No doubt, matters beyond Digby's print publishing career were behind Whitaker's accusations of popery, and Digby's anti-Ramism receives no mention in Whitaker's appeal to Cecil and Whitgift,<sup>101</sup> but the official grounds for dismissal were quite clearly a convenient pretext for removing a perceived ideological threat. It is hard to imagine, then, that Digby's publishing record was unrelated to his dismissal. Outside of *Theoria Analytica* and the Temple debate, Digby's only other published work at the time of his dismissal was a manual on swimming. It is equally hard to imagine that Whitaker did not connect the dots between Digby's methodological eccentricity and his occasional popish-seeming pronouncements. As Whitgift seems to have recognized, the doctrinal and behavioural accusations were thin at best. Whitaker's hostility towards Digby and Whitgift's eventual acquiescence appears to be the result of intellectual temperament or, we might say, of method. The more easily defined charges against Digby may have been supported by an underlying sense that the method from which Digby dissented was integral to the Calvinist-Reformed order represented by Cambridge and Whitgift or, equivalently, that dissent from this methodological consensus was itself sufficient proof of popery.

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<sup>101</sup> This is made available in Heywood, James and Thomas Wright (eds.) *Cambridge University Transactions during the Puritan Controversies of the 16th and 17th Centuries* pp. 503–523.

The core of the controversy over Digby's work stems from the interpretation of Aristotelian logic offered in *Theoria Analytica*. What is at issue is the problem of first principles in Aristotelian demonstration discussed earlier. Whereas humanistic logic finds its way around this problem by elevating the principles of topics logic, Digby embraces the initial unknowability of demonstration's first principles. The method of discovering these principles is a journey to the mystical origins of knowledge (*mystica scientiae primorida*).<sup>102</sup> This journey is the first part of his double method, which proceeds from what is known to us, and therefore both familiar and at the same time clouded by the obscurations of our own limited sensation. The limitation of apprehension is depicted as the subject's entrapment within the confines of the earth (figure 1). The method of contemplation that Digby describes leads beyond this limitation towards a transcendence of the outer limit of apprehension, from which what is true to nature can be discerned (figure 2). From this outer perspective, analysis then proceeds towards genuine knowledge.

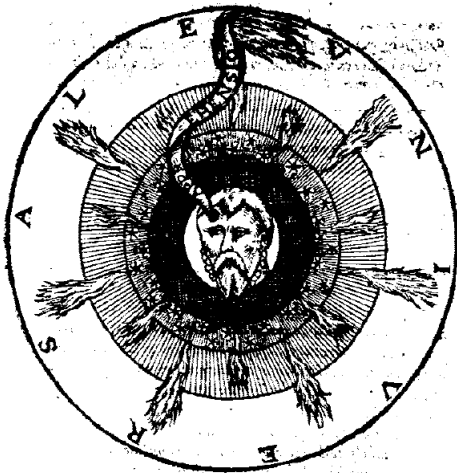


Figure 1: *Theoria Analytica* B2v

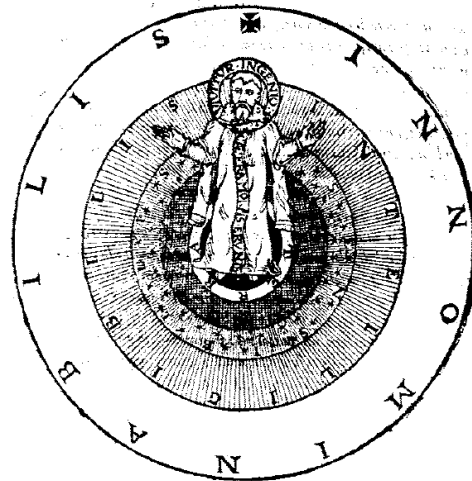


Figure 2: *Theoria Analytica* N2v

<sup>102</sup> "Saepe multum eximium opus Aristotelis de demonstratione perlegens, post diutinam contemplationem magna multaque eademque paene mystica (ut nostra fert aetas, methodusque hodie discendi docondique artes) scientiae primordia, animo satis auspicato, & reuelatione oportuna comprehendere videbar" (Ai).

Temple counters this double method by returning to the humanistic-logical maxim that collapses the Aristotelian distinction between what is known by us and what is known by nature.<sup>103</sup> This collapse thus eliminates the humble uncertainty from which Digby's method starts out. Just as the Calvinist eliminates the gap between the appearance and being of God's judgement that we find in Luther, the humanistic logician eliminates the uncertainty of subjective experience that lies at the heart of mystical-religious experience.

We may begin to see in the Digby–Temple controversy why humanistic logic was so amenable to the religious thinking of both mainstream Elizabethan Calvinism and presbyterianism, particularly in the tendency towards exactitude and certainty. Just as Temple sought to remove the stage of uncertainty in the double method and replace it with the formalist certainty of discourse, so the reception of Calvin in Elizabethan England tended towards the elimination of uncertainty, ambiguity, and mystery in place of a systematic and unified understanding of the instruction given by the Bible. As Cummings neatly puts it, “the difference between Calvinism and anti-Calvinism is not the difference between one doctrine and another but between assertiveness and uncertainty, articulation and inarticulateness.”<sup>104</sup> In this sense, Digby, not just in his anti-Ramism, should be seen as a precursor to Hooker's own project and its philosophical-theological scope. If, as Charles B. Schmitt writes, “by 1600 Aristotelian logic had a stronger foundation in England than it had had at any time since Henry's break with Rome,” then the foregoing would suggest that this upswing should be seen as causally intertwined with

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<sup>103</sup> “statuendum quae natura notiora sunt, eadem ipsa esse nobis notiora” (*admonitio de unica Rami methodo* 70, quoted by Sgarbi 85).

<sup>104</sup> Cummings 317.

the contemporaneous anti-Calvinist trend. In both Hooker and Digby, we see these two late-Elizabethan trends coincide.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Schmitt 37. Schmitt himself, though focusing strictly on logic and giving no attention to religious controversy, names three figures—Case (the focus of his study), Digby, and Hooker—as being at the start of an “Aristotelian revival” that he suggests culminates under Laud (8).

## 2. Sacraments: The Great Mystery

We have seen that Hooker is responding to a tendency among reformers to flatten knowledge, to reduce it to systematized procedures of the printed texts that offer the image of certainty without contact with the lived historical reality beyond that text. Ironically, in its striving for certitude, this tendency removes the possibility of genuine contact between knowing and its object. For Hooker, by contrast, certitude must be “held in suspense,” for “what may seeme darke at the first will afterwarde be founde more plaine” (I.1.2). This openness to persist through obscurity and mystery, to hold the unknown in suspense, differentiates Hooker from both reformed logic and its Elizabethan-Calvinist counterpart. It is also the common thread between his opposition to the two. The contemplative mysteries that are eliminated by topics logic have their social-political counterpart in the mystery of public liturgical performance.

This correspondence is neatly encapsulated in the word “mystery,” which oscillates between textual-contemplative mystery and public sacrament. As we saw, Whitgift’s ecclesiology hinges on the static opposition between the visible church and the invisible body of the elect. By contrast, Hooker defies this static binary by conceiving of the social unity of the church in terms of a polysemous understanding of “mystery.” A key text for post-Reformation discourse around this term “mystery” is Ephesians 5:32, which refers to “the great mystery [*to musterion*]” of matrimonial-sacramental union with Christ. As with other but not all occurrences of the Greek *musterion* in the Old and New Testaments, the Vulgate translates the term as *sacramentum*. When Erasmus translates this term as *musterion* in Ephesians 5:32 of his 1516 bilingual edition of the New Testament, he later notes in his commentary that he had done so in order to ensure that the text could not be used to count matrimony among the sacraments, despite

his own willingness to retain matrimony's sacramental status.<sup>106</sup> Nevertheless, his translation's accompanying philological insight laid a founding block in the Reformation's reconsideration of the sacraments, beginning with Luther's attack on the church's counting of sacraments in *The Babylonian Captivity*. Luther points to the Vulgate's mistranslation of *musterion* to explain the church's confusion about the number, meaning, and significance of the sacraments and argues instead for a textual rather than ecclesiological sense of mystery. The mystery through which God's presence is disclosed should not be restricted to sacramental performance. In other words, *musterion* should not be limited to *sacramentum*. Instead, the mystery of divine presence is to be encountered in the word as word.<sup>107</sup> The traditional double sense of the Greek *musterion* thus encapsulates the tension between textual-contemplative and ecclesiastical-sacramental encounters with God—with the word itself straddling these two forms of divine mystery.

Hooker holds these opposing senses conveniently together: the contemplative mystery of the coincidence of unity in multiplicity is inseparable from the public liturgical practice that performs this unity. My contention is that the key to the political interest of Hooker's thought is his insistence on both maintaining conceptual distinctions and simultaneously integrating these distinctions at a higher level of analysis. We have already seen Hooker's dynamic integration of contraries illustrated in his resistance to Whitgift's static visible–invisible binary in favour of an account of the “mysticall” as a higher-level synthesis of this distinction. This synthesis also further integrates the opposition between the ideational wholeness of political community and its visible, particular manifestations. For Hooker, sacraments play a central role in this synthetic,

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<sup>106</sup> Id nolui eos nescire, qui ex hoc loco faciunt matrimonium unum ex sacramentis septem, iuxta peculiarem & exactam huius vocis rationem, non quod de hoc sit dubitandum, cum probabile sit, hanc traditionem ab apostolis, aut certe sanctis patribus ad nos usque fuisse profectam (Erasmus 615).

<sup>107</sup> Kuchar 55–57.

dynamic movement. Hooker conceives of the sacramental-political community in terms of the mystery of sacrament, which relies on an understanding of the mystical as not strictly the invisible but as a negativity that is not reduced to a nothing.<sup>108</sup> Its presence is not exhausted by the visible or the apparent, just as the presence of Christ is felt in the performance of the sacrament even while the fullness of that presence is held in suspense. Sacraments are the locus of negativity or absence that is not reduced to a nothing but rather can sustain the coincidence of opposites—visible and invisible, many and one, finite and infinite, present and absent.<sup>109</sup> The Eucharist in particular, as the central “mystery” of the church, with its capacity for, in Catherine Pickstock’s phrase, the “outwitting of metaphysical dichotomies,” thus becomes a focal point for this more general tendency that I argue is so crucial to Hooker’s overall project.<sup>110</sup>

The social-political significance of this function of mystery is that sacraments are themselves constitutive of political community. The equivalence of sacrament and mystery means that this political constitution derives ultimately from a sacred rather than a worldly principle. This point radically differentiates Hooker’s conception of public religious practice from Whitgift’s. It is also why, contrary to one mainstream interpretation, Hooker must be thought of as a genuinely philosophical thinker rather than a polemicist seeking to mystify and

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<sup>108</sup> “As oft as wee mention a sacrament properlie understood [...] our restraint of the word to some fewe principall divine ceremonies importeth in everie such ceremonie two thinges, the substance of the ceremonie it selfe which is visible, and besides that somewhat els more secret in reference whereunto wee conceive that ceremonie to be a sacrament.” (V.50.2). It is in part, then, the mystery of the presence as an absence that defines the sacrament. For a related discussion of the Eucharist that stresses this quality against the Zwinglian memorialist view (Hooker’s primary imagined opponent, even if such a view was not explicitly adopted by Cartwright et al.), see Turner.

<sup>109</sup> This is a property of the divine presence: “seinge therefore that presence everie where is the sequelle of an infinite and incomprehensible substance (for what can be everie where but that which can no where be comprehended?) to inquire whether Christ be everie where is to inquire of a naturall propertie, a propertie that cleaveth to the deitie of Christ” (V.55.4).

<sup>110</sup> Pickstock 253.

uphold the worldly power structures of the status quo. Hooker is indeed defending hierarchy, but his concept of hierarchy is not at all reducible to the worldly hierarchy of the Elizabethan state.

### Hierarchy, Coincidence, Desire

The dynamic movement from difference to integrated unity so central to Hooker's dialectical sense of mystery is the theme that defines Hooker's conceptualization of hierarchy. The impetus of Hooker's project, let us recall, is episcopacy, the sacred hierarchy of the church. By "hierarchy," I mean in part the cosmic order of creation ascending from the material and vegetal to the animal and human to the celestial. But hierarchy goes beyond that familiar sense to a more fundamental one, best captured in the etymological sense of the word coined by Pseudo-Dionysius, as *hiera archē*—the principle of the sacred or sacred rule. In this broader sense of hierarchy, we have the convergence of the political and the metaphysical instantiations of Hooker's basic problem: that of accounting for how religious ceremonies and institutions realize this coincidence of the invisible within the visible, the infinite within the finite, the many within the one.<sup>111</sup> This is what his exhaustive study of sacraments in book 5 (longer than the first four books combined) seeks to address. The metaphysical register of this coincidence is dealt with famously in Plato's *Parmenides* and its Neoplatonic interpreters through Plotinus and Proclus to Pseudo-Dionysius.<sup>112</sup> Its scriptural counterpart is Paul's baptismal formula, "For just as the body

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<sup>111</sup> The centrality of this problem for Hooker is marked by Hooker's distinction between the first and second eternal laws—the first being the "verie *Oneness*" of God and his divine law, the second the law governing the multiplicity that emanates from and returns to the one (I.2.2). I agree with Kirby in seeing this and its Neoplatonic inheritance as pervading Hooker's entire system: "this apparent ambiguity of the simultaneous unity and multiplicity of law lies at the very heart of Hooker's Neoplatonic vision of the *procession* of the dialectical division of the manifold forms of law out of the one eternal law" (46 Kirby's emphasis).

<sup>112</sup> Klitenic and Dillon, especially ch. 2. I am aware that the concept of *coincidentia oppositorum* inherited through this tradition is by Hooker's day most strongly associated with Nicholas of Cusa, whom Hooker

is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” (1 Cor 12:12 NRSV). These political, social, liturgical, and metaphysical registers of this problem converge in the question of representation—as both *Darstellung* and *Vertretung*. Just as the sign gathers together the multiplicity of sensory experience into the unified, shared representation of the signified, so the social-political body gathers its many members into the one conceptual unity—the body of Christ, the Hobbesian sovereign, the nation. The ecclesiastical-political register of this problem concerns the movement from the visible to the invisible church. Hooker reserves the epithet “mysticall” for the liminal space within which this movement takes place. The double sense of “mysticall,” then, is perfectly apt because it designates both the liturgical and metaphysical registers of hierarchy.<sup>113</sup> As we shall see, desire, both in the human person and in the cosmos, plays an integral role in the dynamic movement definitive of hierarchy.

Hooker outlines this foundational concept of the mysticall in the chapter of his *Lawes* that marks the turn from general lawes (book 1) and the authority of scripture in ecclesiastical polity (books 2 and 3) to ecclesiology and sacraments (books 4 and 5). He begins by lamenting the loss of an “ancient simplicite and softnes of spirit” that held itself open to receive the practices of a living tradition of what is “publicly received in the Church of God.” This loss represents a decline of both charity and wonder: “the state of this present age wherein zeale hath drowned charitie, and skill meknes, wil not suffer any man to marvel whatsoever he shal heare reprov

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cites on only one occasion (I.8.3*m*). Hooker's relation to this Renaissance Neoplatonist tradition remains a matter for further investigation.

<sup>113</sup> By contrast, Feisal G. Mohamed argues that Hooker places hierarchy purely in the supernatural in a polemical effort to make structures of authority beyond reasonable argument (44–45). This reading, however, mistakenly identifies the mystical with the supernatural and invisible, when, according to my interpretation, it is constituted by a dialectic of visibility and invisibility, reason and revelation, natural and supernatural. In my reading, then, hierarchy is not simply reducible to worldly structures of dominance and submission.

by whomsoever” (IV.1.1). Citing the authority of Augustine, Hooker acknowledges that the “essence” of sacrament is simply combining the proper words of the minister and the elements of the sacrament but then adds that “the due and decent forme of administering those holy sacraments, doth require a great deale more” (IV.1.3). Religious experience affects the ascent towards the fulfillment of man’s and the church’s end. This ascent is not achieved by intelligibility alone but by the whole human person, mind and heart. Thus, “men are edified, when their understanding is taught somewhat whereof in such actions it behoveth all men to consider, or when their harts are moved with any affection suteable therunto, when their minds are in any sorte sitrred up unto that reverence, devotion, attention and due regard, which in those cases semeth requisite” (IV.1.3).

Underlying this dual emphasis on edification of the heart and mind is Hooker’s sensitivity to the fact that the liturgical sign is inherently sensory. Any attempt to deny that sensory quality, by stripping the altars or stressing a strictly verbal-textual understanding of *mysterion*, is to disregard the function of liturgy as such and reduce it to unfeeling contractual obedience to God’s command.

Because therefore unto this purpose not only speech but sundry sensible meanes besides have alwaies bene thought necessary, and especially those meanes which being object to the eye, the liveliest and the most apprehensive sense of all other, have in that respect seemed the fittest to make a deepe and a strong impression; from hence have risen not onely a number of prayers, readinges, questionninges, exhortings, but even of visible signes also, which being used in performance of holy actions, are undoubtedly most

effectual to open such a matter, as men when they know and remember carefully, must needs be a great deal the better informed to what effect such duties serve. (IV.1.3)

As a mystery that occupies the liminal space between different orders, the liturgical sign must sustain the coincidence of opposites: the simultaneous absence and presence of the thing signified. In illustrating this point, Hooker quotes pseudo-Dionysius, a loose translation from his *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, as follows: “The sensible things which Religion hath hallowed are resemblances framed according to things spiritually understood [*ta men aisthētōs hiera tōn noētōn apeikonismata*], whereunto they serve as a hand to lead and a way to direct” (IV.1.3, Greek from Hooker’s note *e*). Whereas the disciplinarians saw the surplices, crosses, images, and altars as Catholic remnants of Mary’s reign that should be removed from churches because of their false localizing of the divine in the mundane, Hooker understands these mundane though elevated objects of the senses to be involved in a dynamic hierarchical movement that approaches the divine. For this reason, the difference between sacraments and other ceremonies is a difference only of degree rather than kind (IV.1.4). This is a far cry from Whitgift’s insistence on the “indifference” of these symbols.

To understand the framework of the liturgical sign within which Hooker situates his sacramentology and ecclesiology, we have to turn to the Christian Neoplatonist sign he invokes in explicating it. As I indicated, hierarchy here is to be understood not as a rigid structure of superiority and inferiority that we now associate with the secularized sense of the term but as a participatory structure, one that integrates its constituents through overlapping orders—the sensory and the intelligible, the natural and the supernatural, the finite and the infinite—that permit the coincidence of opposites, the positive term’s containment of its negation. This

hierarchy occurs at the highest level—for example, in the problem of evil, how the God who is goodness can also contain within him that goodness’s negation (cf. I.3.1.26–3)—but it begins most fundamentally at the level of the sign. The Dionysian sense of hierarchy Hooker evokes is ordered according to a series of “dissimilar similarities”—a phrase that encapsulates the basic nature of the sign as a resemblance of its intelligible signified that is also utterly unlike it.<sup>114</sup> The movement between these orders, the mysticall uplifting from one to another, from sign to signified, from finite to infinite, Dionysius calls *anagogy*. The gap between these, which is bridged in mystery-liturgy, is “the great divide between the intelligible and the perceptible.” (144C).<sup>115</sup>

Like hierarchy, the crossing of this great divide, when it is not simply bracketed as in topics logic, involves something of a paradox. If a sign leads me to some referent, then the sign as it is held in my perception acts as an intermediary between the sign and its referent. But this would simply be another sign with an unknown referent, leading me to an endless regression. On the level of its immediate appearance, the sign is explicitly not its referent, while on another level, that of intelligibility, the two are united. The sign, then, both is and is not its referent. Of course, if we demarcate the distinction between, say, the material sign-referent pair and the intelligible signified-concept pair, then the paradox is resolved. But this distinction between the

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<sup>114</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius *Celestial Hierarchy* 141C.

<sup>115</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius *Celestial Hierarchy* 144C. Although the task of fully integrating his project with Hooker’s lies beyond me, Hans-Georg Gadamer’s account of crossing this divide between the sensory and the intelligible—with its common ground in the Dionysian *symbolon* as the “coincidence of the sensible and the non-sensible”—comes remarkably close to Hooker’s sense of mystery, including in its inextricable liturgical component: “the symbol is not an arbitrarily chosen or created sign, but presupposes a metaphysical connection between visible and invisible. The inseparability of visible appearance and invisible significance, this ‘coincidence’ of two spheres, underlies all forms of religious worship [...] The possibility of the instantaneous and total coincidence of the apparent with the finite in a religious ceremony assumes that what fills the symbol with meaning is that the finite and infinite genuinely belong together. Thus the religious form of the symbol corresponds exactly to the original nature of ‘symbolon,’ the dividing of what is one and reuniting it again” (67–71)

perceptible and the intelligible is the fault line that divides these competing modern and ancient frameworks. Consider, for example, the critique Ockham would adopt of Aquinas's understanding of *species*, a concept so central to his Eucharistic theology. This critique hinges on this same problem of the infinite regress of the sign. "How could the *species* mediate," Dupré summarizes, "when it remains itself unknown? It would require a second *species* to know the first one, and so on in an infinite process."<sup>116</sup> This, however, assumes that the appearance (*phantasm*) is strictly material and does not offer up the intelligible form of the object to the intellect. It stems from a more basic rejection of substantial forms and the framework of substance, soul, and cosmos that goes with it. Similarly, the English Calvinist liturgical-ecclesiological project, like its logical counterpart, seeks to bypass the appearance of the sign for its mental significance. This project seeks to bypass uncertainty by beginning from the textual givens of the topics, just as the obscurity of holy symbols can be removed in exchange for their worldly absence and the merely textual-spiritual fulfillment of the faithful. The key difference from Hooker here is the assumption that the sensory and the intelligible are fundamentally at odds, or that the intelligible cannot be made accessible through its sensory appearance. For Hooker, by contrast, it is not only that the sensory can lead to the intelligible but, as the potential for this movement, the sensory is already saturated with the *ratio* of cosmos.<sup>117</sup>

Such a framework does not remove the paradox inherent in the divide between the intelligible and the perceptible. Rather, it integrates it into hierarchy, which as we saw is

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<sup>116</sup> Dupré 40.

<sup>117</sup> Recall the passage quoted above regarding the body mysticall: "That Church of Christ which we properly terme his body mysticall, can be but one, neither can that one bee sensible discerned by any man, in as much as the partes thereof are some in heaven alreadie with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their naturall persons bee visible) we doe not discern under this property, whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. Onely our mindes by intellectual concept are able to apprehend, that such a reall body there is, a body collective, because it containeth an huge multitude; a body mysticall, because the mysterie of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense" (III.1.2).

structured according to the coincidence of opposites. Following a tradition that goes back to Platonic *erōs* and its Aristotelean and Christian-metaphysical reformulations, Hooker conceives of this paradoxical movement within hierarchy in terms of desire. To see this, we have to revisit the outline of the law-based cosmos that Hooker provides in book 1 and the relation therein between the natural and supernatural. Hooker's argument for the saving power of the sacraments seeks to bridge the space between these.

The label "natural law," characteristically associated with Hooker, is only illuminating insofar as it accounts for the given theorist's specific sense not only of "law" but of this most protean term "nature"—what Raymond Williams has described as "perhaps the most complex word in the language."<sup>118</sup> The word is perhaps polymorphous enough that an examination of its particular uses in a given text may lay bare its most fundamental assumptions—a fact that becomes particularly apparent when we consider Hobbes's "state of nature." Hooker uses the term in two senses. The first refers to nature as "creation," and thus "law of nature" refers to one of the two primal divisions of law, the other being the law governing God himself. These "laws of nature" apply to all created beings. It is by these secondary laws that, as we saw, God assigns "the kinde, that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the forme and measure of working" to each of his creations. This first sense of nature refers to what an entity has inherited from the family of objects to which it belongs. These properties are *innate*. God's secondary law assigns to each particular type an end or perfection that is unique to it. Both this end and the way to achieve it define the entity's "nature." The second sense of nature refers to those things that operate involuntarily. Those things that make up this "nature" are "natural agents," a category that includes non-angelic celestial bodies, animals, plants, etc.

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<sup>118</sup> *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* 219.

Whereas natural elements follow their given law unknowingly, both humans and angels follow their law voluntarily and therefore can transgress their law (I.4.2–3). In this way, they lie above “nature” in this second sense. The difference between humans and angels is that the latter have complete knowledge of their law. Humans, by contrast, are born with incomplete knowledge that must be acquired over time (I.6.1). Only reason, not full knowing, is innate. Given at birth are self-evident principles of reason, without which thinking itself would be impossible and from which the “measure of working” is discerned (I.8.4). The laws discernible by reason are among the “natural laws”: “Law rationally therefore, which men commonly use to call the law of nature, meaning thereby the law which humane nature knoweth it selfe in reason universally bound unto, which also for that cause may be termed more fitly the lawe of reason: this law, I say, comprehendeth all those things which men by the light of their naturall understanding evidently know, or at leastwise may know, to be befitting or unfitting, vertuous or vitious, good or evill for them to doe” (I.8.9–10). By means of this innate reason, the rest of the human natural law can be discerned. Hooker cites the classical philosophers in his sketch of the laws of reason in order to reaffirm their discernibility even to those who have received neither the Bible nor divine revelation. These laws include, among others, the existence of God, the principle commandment to love him, and the golden rule, which is “the root out of which all lawes of dutie to men-warde have growne” (I.8.7). Reason, and not revelation or scripture, is sufficient for receiving the knowledge whereby right ethical conduct can always be determined. Moreover, as Hooker labours to show at length in chapter 10, the necessity of commonwealths and their constitutions follow from these natural laws.

Because reason is human nature, reasoning is the means by which humans strive towards their highest perfection, which is “the participation of God himself” (I.5.2). But if reason can

guide individual, interpersonal, legal, and geopolitical action according to nature, what then is the role of faith, scripture, and revelation? Hooker seeks to answer this in chapter 11, where he articulates the threshold between the natural and the supernatural.<sup>119</sup> This is where desire and its determining relation to human nature enter the order of Hooker's analysis. "Appetite or desire," he writes, is the force that propels the working of all things towards their perfection given according to their nature (I.5.1). Desire proceeds sequentially, "linked and as it were chained one to another" such that one object, once attained, becomes the means to some subsequent object. If no object is desired itself, then this chain would extend out indefinitely from the agent and leave the action at hand with no overall purpose. In this case, action itself becomes impossible. Each individual moment becomes either a part in a bare and mechanistic routine or a step in a never-ending frenzy of untamed obsessions. Echoing Aristotle, he writes that "if everything were to be desired for some other without any stint, there could be no certaine end proposed unto our actions, we should go on we know not whether, yeh, whatsoever we do were in vaine, or rather nothing at all were possible to be done" (I.11.1).<sup>120</sup> To close the chain of unbounded desire, there must be a form of desire that seeks its object as an end in itself.

For this special form of desire, Hooker reserves the verb "to covet." As the preferred word for English translations of the form of desire interdicted in the ultimate commandment (Exodus 20:17) and its more absolute, objectless reformulation in Romans (8:7, 13:9), this term has a weighty though nebulous sense in any early modern English Christian discourses. Hooker reserves the verb "to covet" for the special case of desire that seeks its object as an end in itself,

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<sup>119</sup> It is worth noting that "supernaturals" was in use in Hooker's day as the title of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (*OED*, s.v., "supernatural," n., sense 1).

<sup>120</sup> Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1177b. Later in the same paragraph, Hooker's marginal note cites book, chapter, and section numbers corresponding to the related Aristotelean passages of *Nicomachean Ethics* 1177b and *Metaphysics* 1072a, 1075b (*FLE* 512–513).

as in the following: “all things in the worlde are saide in some sort to seeke the highest, and to covet more or lesse the participation of God himselfe” (I.5.2). Although Hooker will sometimes qualify the verb (redundantly, according to my interpretation) with an adverbial phrase such as “for themselves,” it still holds that he reserves “covet” for his special case. He makes this semantic distinction almost explicit when, after using “desire” throughout the start of chapter 11, he then switches to “covet”: “Now that which man doth desire with reference to a further end, the same he desireth in such measure as is unto that end convenient: but what he coveteth as good in it selfe, towardes that his desire is ever infinite” (I.11.2). For Hooker, “to covet” appears to bear its negative, interdicted sense as a perversion of desire only when the coveted object is any other but God. Another word for this is idolatry. To desire any other object the way one should desire God is “repugnant” and “evil” (I.11.1, 2). This is because coveting destroys the finite object without referring it onto something greater in the process. To covet is to remove oneself from the hierarchical cosmic chain of desire in a destroying and self-destroying loop. This form of desire is never satisfied or referred onto some subsequent object but fixates on its object inexhaustibly. The coveting subject will enjoy or consume the desired object so long as it persists. The only object that could persist as the object of such a ravenous desire must itself be infinite, which is why it could only properly be God:

Now that which man doth desire with reference to a further end, the same he desireth in such measure as is unto that end convenient: but what he coveteth as good in it selfe, towardes that his desire is ever infinite. So that unlesse the last good of all, which is desired altogether for it selfe, be also infinite: we doe evill in making it our ende even as they who placed their felicitie in wealth or honour or pleasure or any thinge here attained,

because in desiring any thing as our finall perfection which is not so, we do amisse  
(I.11.2).

When referred towards the proper object—that is, not a finite end but the infinite end—coveting holds the whole chain of individual desires in order and directs it along the path to bliss. This path, however, is only revealed supernaturally, because desire itself extends beyond man’s nature.

For man doth not seeme to rest satisfied either with fruition of that where with his life is preserved, or with performance of such actions as advance him most deservedly in estimation; but doth further covet, yea often times manifestly pursue with great sedulitie and earnestnes that which cannot stand him in any stead for vitall use; that which exceedeth the reach of sense; yea, somewhat above capacity of reason, somewhat divine and heavenly, which with hidden exultation it rather surmiseth then conceyveth; somewhat it seeketh and what that is directly it knoweth not, yet very intentive desire thereof doth so incite it, that all other knowne delightes and pleasures are layde aside, they geve place to the search of this but onelye suspected desire (11.4).

Unavailable to reason, the path to this “complete union” with God, “the mystery or secret way of salvation,” is made available only through divine revelation.

Upon its true and rightful realization, coveting is not an active relation of the subject onto God as the receiving object. Rather, the subject is transformed upon attainment into both the subject and object of possession. This follows from the property of desire that “tendeth unto

union with that it desireth” (I.11.2). The realization of desire, in Hooker’s terminology the “possession” of the object, is a symmetrical relation. The desiring subject is possessed by the object desired. Hence, “it is not the possession of any good thing can make them happie which have it, unlesse they injoye the thing wherewith they are possessed” (I.11.2). This double possession of divine love, the subjective and objective genitive of *amor dei*, is the relation of participatory union. The union achieved with the object of desire entails that the subject, as a part of the whole with which it is now united, is possessed by the same object that the subject of desire comes to possess upon the realization of its desire. The subject thus becomes the passive recipient of God’s perfecting and replenishing agency. This final stage of perfection is not natural because it no longer follows from humans’ working in accordance with the law determined by their nature (i.e., reason). It is, rather, a passive receiving of the supernatural reward: “the soule being in this sorte as it is active, perfected by love of that infinite good, shall, as it is receptive, be also perfected with those supernaturall passions of joye peace and delight” (I.11.3.20–3). This active-passive reciprocity echoes the Prayer Book Communion service’s figure of mutual participation: “that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.”<sup>121</sup>

I have now moved through the coincidence of contraries as a paradigm of the sign, the role of desire in the movement within hierarchical signifying structure, and the passive-active distinction’s dissolution in the fulfilment of this process. These three and their intersecting significances offer basic touchstones for understanding how Hooker’s synthetic world picture differs from that of his Calvinist opponents. Calvin himself, for example, nearly equates desire with covetousness as he ascetically rejects both: “our covetousness is an insatiable abyss unless it

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<sup>121</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer*, ed. Brian Cummings 136.

is restrained and the best way to hold it in check is for us to desire nothing more than the needs of the life demand. But we transgress this limit because our anxiety exceeds the needs of a thousand lives.”<sup>122</sup> By contrast, in a famous passage approvingly cited by Hooker (1.4.1), Aristotle places desire (*orexis*) behind the first movement of the primary heaven.<sup>123</sup> In articulating the relation between the natural and the supernatural, Hooker invokes a cosmic vision that takes desire as one of its organizing principles, to which one might compare the role of Platonic *erōs* in the apprehension of the forms<sup>124</sup> or Aquinas’s recasting of Aristotle’s first mover.<sup>125</sup> Whatever these accounts’ differences, the important point is that Hooker is in line with a tendency in Classical and Christian metaphysics to assign a positive role for desire at the centre of a cosmos and the soul’s relation to it—a tendency that is eclipsed both in the Calvinist negative assessment of the human will and modern scientific rationalism’s condemnation of desire as the negative counterpart of reason. A cosmos organized according to intelligible movement through desire offers little potential for the neutral perception of the mind-independent world sought after in modern epistemologies. As Thomas Pfau writes of this division, “any philosophical school of antiquity would have been rather mystified by the post-Cartesian conception of the world as a neutral inventory of medium-sized dry goods awaiting impersonal perception, analysis, and use. On the contrary, the world has to be understood as a dynamic and profoundly interconnected grid of phenomena towards which we relate in *prima facie* evaluative form, viz., as focal points of interpretive curiosity and, potentially, as sources or

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<sup>122</sup> Calvin Comm I Tim 6:7, quoted in Bouwsma Calvin 38.

<sup>123</sup> *Metaphysics* 1072a23–26.

<sup>124</sup> E.g., *Phaedrus* 248a–50c, *Symposium* 210d–212a

<sup>125</sup> E.g., *Summa Theologiae* II-I.1.6

means for our continued flourishing.”<sup>126</sup> For Hooker, this flourishing is the realization, impelled by desire, of the end given to nature through lawes.

The movement of desire and its realization, as a dynamic that collapses the distinction between the active subject and passive object, is the basic dynamic that defines hierarchy. It is at this point that we may see how these three threads of desire, hierarchy, and the sacramental sign come together. The fulfillment of desire as coveting manifests the reciprocal dynamic or contrary containment definitive of hierarchy. Although complete fulfillment is deferred to the world to come, it is realized at a lower level of the hierarchy in the performance of the sacraments, which, along with scripture, offers the supernatural intervention in nature to manifest the virtues necessary for this salvific union. The mystery of this sacramental union stems from the paradox inherent in the sign, whose analogue is the subject-object dissolution of hierarchical union. It is in this sense that the values of revelation are beyond reason and approach the ineffable but lie on “a way mysticall and supernaturall” (I.11.6).

We saw above how, regarding the visible–invisible distinction, Hooker avoids both Whitgift’s static binary and Cartwright’s disregard for the distinction that separates visible, divine, and ideational from visible, incarnate, and worldly. We can see the significance of this in light of Hooker’s conception of desire, hierarchy, and the sacramental sign. Again, the “conjunction” of the “multitude” into the unified “body mysticall” is “removed altogether from sense” (III.1.2). It is not that the body is strictly invisible. Rather, it is the conjunction itself that is invisible (“their conjunction is removed altogether from sense”). The mystery is the process of conjunction, which is sacramental action operating according to the dialectical fulfillment of desire. Continuing with this terminological distinction between invisible and mystical, Hooker

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<sup>126</sup> Pfau 85.

describes the church as an “invisible spouse,” that is, invisible in its conjunction with Christ, while as body it is not invisible but “mysticall”: “the church is the mysticall body of Christ and his invisible spouse” (III.11.14). The mystical body is not invisible in itself but only in its unity (in its role as bride), which is its conjunction, elsewhere termed “mysticall copulation,” with Christ (V.56.10)—the manifestation via desire of the whole as a coincidence of its parts. Of course, the archetypal case of this coincidence is the incarnation, which for Hooker is also the condition for its conceivability.

### Incarnation and Communion

The sacramental sign encapsulates the coincidence of the infinite within the finite, which, as we have seen, Hooker holds to be necessary for humans to rightly order their lives and political institutions. This coincidence is only possible in the body of Christ and because of his incarnation. Given this, Hooker sandwiches a lengthy discussion of the paradoxical double nature of Christ (V.51–56) between the introduction to the sacraments (V.50) and their particular treatment (V.57–68).

These six chapters on Christology defend the doctrines of the Nicene Creed and the anti-heretical arguments of the first four ecumenical councils, which culminate in Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Like Calvin, Hooker adheres to Chalcedonian orthodoxy,<sup>127</sup> but he does so by situating it within the framework of law, nature, and the supernatural that he outlines in the first book. The consequent emphases thus differ significantly from Calvin’s. There is one God of one

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<sup>127</sup> *Institutes* 2.15.

nature with three persons: the Father, his only begotten Son, and the holy Ghost.<sup>128</sup> Each of these three persons is differentiated from the other and has its own subsistence, but all are of one nature, which, as we saw, is infinite (I.11.2). When Christ is incarnated, the nature of all three takes flesh, but only in the person of the Son. In taking flesh, Christ takes on two natures, human and divine, united in the one person and one body. This union of two natures in one person was never separated after the incarnation. During Christ's death, his soul separated from his body, but the person with both natures remained a part of soul and body until they were reunited in the resurrection and stayed so with his ascension to heaven. In the hypostatic union, then, we see that Christ is the locus of mystery as the coincidence of opposites with which we have been wrestling throughout: in Christ, "a visible and an invisible, a mortall and an immortall substance may united make *one person*." (V.52.4, Hooker's emphasis). As I have stressed earlier, doctrine will only get us so far. Equally important are style, emphases, overarching framework. In formulating this doctrine, which is orthodox and which none of Hooker's polemical opponents would reject, Hooker stresses not just the double nature but specifically this double nature as an expression of the coincidence of unity and difference: "there are but fower thinges which concurre to make compleate the whole state of our Lord Jesus Christ, his deitie, his manhood, the conjunction of both, and the distinction of the one from the other beinge joyned in one" (V.54.10). This

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<sup>128</sup> According to my interpretation and comparison of Hooker's translation with his quoted sources, "substance," "nature," "essence," "kinde," and "beinge" are used interchangeably, with subtle variation in emphasis. These correspond to the interrelated senses of *ousia* and *phusis* in the writings of the Greek Fathers but are also intended to be consistent with his earlier definitions of these terms. Hence, the theology of the first ecumenical councils is defended within and synthesized with the framework Hooker develops in book 1. In these chapters, he prefers "substance" but makes its equivalence with "nature" more or less explicit (V.51.25–1).

insistence on the unity within the double nature of Christ was unique among English Protestants.<sup>129</sup>

Hooker stresses this particular aspect of the doctrine because the hypostatic union offers a locus of the coincidence of unity and difference that, as I have argued, is the basis for his dynamic conception of hierarchy. “The union therefore of the flesh with deitie is to *that flesh* a guift of principall grace and favor. For by vertue of this grace man is reallie made God, a creature is exalted above the dignitie of all creatures and hath all creatures els under it” (V.54.3–4 Hooker’s emphasis). As we have seen before, this is an image of hierarchy that maintains both identity and difference: Christ has human nature and exists alongside his fellow humans as one of them, while at the same time he is above them as God. A related hierarchy is already at work before creation in the trinity, where the Son, coming from the Father (difference), receives his divinity as a gift by which he shares in the Father’s nature (identity, unity). Again turning to Pseudo-Dionysius, Hooker frames this dynamic of hierarchy in terms of the signs of revelation, which descend from the unity of their source into the realm of difference that thereby ascend to God’s unity: “Seing therefore the father alone is originallie that deitie which Christ originallie is not (for Christ is God by being of God, light by issuing out of light) it followeth hereupon that whatsoever Christ hath common unto him with his heavenly father the same of necessitie must be *given him*” (V.54.2 Hooker’s emphasis).<sup>130</sup> The light that issues out of the sun is not the sun. At the same time, however, the sun is pure light, and thus the sun that one sees—though it is concealed by light that is *of* the sun and therefore *not* the sun—is the very sun. The appearance

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<sup>129</sup> Neelands 371–72.

<sup>130</sup> “Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights’ [James 1:17]. But there is something more. Inspired by the Father, each procession of the Light spreads itself generously toward us, and, in its power to unify, it stirs us by lifting us up. It returns us back to the oneness and deifying simplicity of the Father who gathers us in” (*Celestial Hierarchy* 120B). Hooker cites this chapter and its cited verse at V.54.2q.

of the sun in the form of light is the sign of the sun's presence, and this sign both is and is not its source.<sup>131</sup> Likewise, the Son, as the person who is "of the father," is not the deity from which he comes, but he inherits divinity as a gift from the father, and they are thereby both God. Insofar as he receives the gift from his paternal superior, the familial hierarchy collapses and they become one as God. This dynamic familial hierarchy is analogous to Christ's relationship to humanity, for humanity participates in Christ's nature by virtue of receiving from him the gift of grace.

The hierarchy of God and creation thus operates according to the figure of the gift, which collapses the relation of difference that precedes the act of giving. Just as the Father has given these gifts to the Son, so he gives the coincidence of the hypostatic union to humanity: "The gift whereby God hath made Christ a fountaine of life is that conjunction of the nature of God with the nature of man in the person of Christ." The gift of the hypostatic union is the same as the gift of grace (V.54.3). The giving of the gift presupposes the active-passive, inferior-superior distinctions of the giver and the gifted, but the completion of the giving reorients this hierarchy in terms of union and identity: "For by vertue of this grace man is reallie made God, a creature is exalted above the dignitie of all creatures and hath all creatures els under it" (V.54.3.20–23). It is a gift in part because the hypostatic union makes possible this coincidence that in nature is impossible: "all thinges are in such sorte devided into finite and infinite, that no one substance nature or qualitie can be possiblie capable of both" (V.55.2). As we saw, however, the union of the finite human with the infinite object of desire is necessary both for the self to find its place within the cosmological hierarchy and for the functioning of that hierarchy itself. The possibility of this union must come from without nature, from the supernatural gift of the incarnation, which

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<sup>131</sup> For a reading of Hooker's *Lawes* that strongly emphasizes this Neoplatonic theme of *exitus et reditus*, see Kirby ch.3.

makes possible the presence of the conjunction of man and deity that is reducible to neither (V.55.9).<sup>132</sup> This is the manner of sacramental presence that humans can access through participation, a term that for Hooker describes the reciprocal union as the realization of desire or the collapsed hierarchy of having received the gift: “participation is that mutuall inward hold which Christ hath of us and wee of him, in such sort that ech possesseth other by waie of speciall interest propertie and inherent copulation” (V.56.1, cf. John 14:20, 15:4, cited at V.56.7).

Sacramental action, as the mystery of coincidence of the many in the one, performs the receiving of the gift and thus works to realize this “mysticall conjunction” (V.56.6.3) or “mysticall copulation” (V.56.10.30)—“the mysticall association wrought through the guift of the holie Ghost.” They are not “bare *resemblances* or memorialls of thinges absent” but the performance of gift reception that assembles the many members of the church into the one mystical body (V.56.13, Hooker’s emphasis). Here, at last, we see the social-political import of his theological-metaphysical foundation:

For in him wee actuallie are by our actuall incorporation [note the almost redundant emphasis on sacrament as *action*] into that societie which hath him for their head and doth make together with him one bodie (he and they in that respect havinge one name [note cites 1 Cor 12:12]) for which cause by vertue of this mysticall conjunction wee are of him and in him even as though our verie flesh and bones should be made continue with his. (V.56.7)

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<sup>132</sup> “Albeit therefore nothinge be *actuallie* infinite *in substance* but God onlie in that he is God, nevertheles as everie number is infinite by possibilitie of addition, and everie line by possibilitie of extension infinite, so there is no stint which can be sett to the value or merite of the sacrificed bodie of Christ, it hath no measured certaintie of limites, boundes of efficacie unto life it knoweth none, but it is also it selfe infinite in *possibilitie of application*.” (V.55.9, Hooker’s emphasis).

Sacraments are constitutive of the political community, and this constitutive power derives not from any worldly authority but from the sacred principle of hierarchy or mystery. When, in book 8, Hooker extends this community to the English state, which he sees as coinciding with the church, the dynamic, mystical sense of hierarchy he develops here is what holds the power of the worldly sovereign in check. Hooker's "supernaturall societie" constituted sacramentally is reducible to neither its bodily members nor the highest seat in the worldly hierarchy.

The participatory experience of communion gets to the fundamental level of human social experience, that of language and communication, and resolves the problem of language and representation which, as we saw, are bound up in mystery and hierarchy. The *OED* lists an instance from Walter Raleigh's *The History of the World* (1614) as the first recorded use of "communion" as plain "communication" or "conversation," as opposed to either Eucharistic Communion or the general act of mutual participation.<sup>133</sup> Yet already in Hooker's *Lawes*, published two decades earlier, we can see a fundamental conceptual correspondence between the liturgical and linguistic senses of communion. Both senses refer to the reciprocal exchange of mutual participation. Following Aristotle, Hooker grounds his political anthropology in man's capacity for language as a means of communication unique to humans, "Betweene men and beastes," he writes,

there is no possibilitie of sociable communion, because the welspring of that communion is a naturall delight which man hath to transfuse from him selfe into others, and to receyve from others into himselfe especially those thinges wherein the excellencie of his

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<sup>133</sup> *OED*, s.v. "communion" sense 5, accessed May 2022.

kind doth most consist. The chiefest instrument of humane communion therefore is speech, because thereby we impart mutuallie one to another the conceiptes of our reasonable understanding.” (I.10.6–9)<sup>134</sup>

The Eucharist consummates and elevates the social communion that is already implicit in all verbal communication. For Hooker, this “delight” in “transfusing” the self with others will always be incomplete without its elevation to communion with God. In making this connection, Hooker grasps how, as Catherine Pickstock describes it, “the Eucharist underlies all language, since in carrying the secrecy, uncertainty, and discontinuity which characterize every sign to an extreme (no body appears in the bread), it also delivers a final disclosure, certainty, and continuity (the bread is the Body) which alone makes it possible now to trust every sign.”<sup>135</sup> The word by which the self is shared will always obscure that self it seeks to impart. In performing the problem of the obscurity of the sign while simultaneously affirming their belief in the miraculous incarnation that resolves this problem, communicants experience the radical fulfillment of the desire that always lies behind speech.

Hooker stresses the communal, communicative, and participatory function of the Eucharist over and against its relevance vis-a-vis individual salvation. Reformation’s eucharistic controversies, he argues, have been bogged down in “unnecessarie” questions about the symbolic significance of the elements and should instead return to what he sees as the true, substantial, and

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<sup>134</sup> *Politics* 1253a.

<sup>135</sup> *After Writing* 262.

original significance of the Eucharist—not as a symbol but as an *action* constituting divine participation (V.67.2 ,V.67.11).<sup>136</sup>

The gathering of the public for Communion is, ideally, itself an index of the union it celebrates. Bitterly divided societies cannot gather together under the banner of charity, and the *Book of Common Prayer* demands that participating communicants be in a state of reciprocity with their neighbours.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, the Communion celebrates a public unity as an otherworldly gift, not one that is reducible to a worldly magistrate. In missing these two fundamental points, interpreters who seek to reduce Hooker to an Elizabethan polemicist are mistaken. The arcane language behind his social theory may lead to the suspicion that Hooker is simply trying to mystify and legitimize the worldly hierarchies of the Elizabethan church and Crown, but here we must distinguish between theory and practice. In dissuading his readers against the intricacies that the eucharistic controversy of the early Reformation had provoked, he writes, “curious and intricate speculations doe hinder, they abate, they quench such inflamed motions of delight and joy as divine graces use to raise when extraordinarily they are present” (V.67.3). Whatever the difficulties and obscurities that arise in trying to theorize the complexities of the human sacramental social body, sacraments ultimately depend on the engaged participation of a broadly conceived public. They are, for Hooker, public performance of the sacred principle. This

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<sup>136</sup> “In a worde it appeareth not that of all the ancient fathers of the Church anie one did ever conceive or imagin other than onlie a mysticall participation of Christes both bodie and blood in the sacrament, neither are there speeches concerninge the change of the elements them selves into the bodie and blood of Christ such, that a man can thereby in conscience assure him selfe it was there meaninge to perswade the world either of a corporall consubstantiation of Christ with those sanctified and blessed elements before wee receive them, or of the like transubstantiation of them into the bodie and blood of Christ. Which both to our mysticall communion with Christ are so unnecessarie that the fathers who plainelie hold but this mysticall communion cannot easilie be thought to have meant anie other change of sacramentall elements then that which the same spirituall communion did require them to hold” (V.67.11).

<sup>137</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer* 124.

performance maintains the social cohesion it performs. Its effect authorizes the community and extends beyond the church to the heart of its social-political life. His social theory is thus rightly described as a kind of “liturgical and political populism” even as it combines this with a great deal of respect for worldly hierarchy, elite authority, and coercive power.<sup>138</sup> I have tried to outline several starting points for understanding Hooker’s attempt to develop a framework in which these two aspects of his social thought can meaningfully coexist.

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<sup>138</sup> Shuger “‘Society Supernatural’: The Imagined Community of Hooker’s Laws.” 124–128.

## Errata: End

The errata page appended to the first edition of volume V of Hooker's *Lawes* begins with a heading addressed "To the Reader": "*Have patience with me for a small time, and by the helpe of Almighty God I will pay the whole.*" Despite being a conventional heading for an Errata page, this *hors-texte* captures the ethos of Hooker's overall project. It is the last sentence of the last work Hooker published in his lifetime. The remaining three volumes of his massive project were only published after his death, and they are a shadow of the first five's radiance. But this incompleteness is in a sense to the point: incompleteness and error, qualities of mystery, are integral to Hooker's effort to theorize the human from a perspective that acknowledges the limitations of such a self-reflexive endeavor.

My project has come to its own inevitably untimely end. In both sections of this thesis, I have tried to articulate how Hooker's emphasis on mystery, negativity, and the unknown or unknowable sets him apart from both his presbyterian opponents and his conformist peers. If one pole of the Reformation is defined by an emphasis on the private, inward experience of the self and its relation to God, the other pole is the humble recognition of one's limitation before God. This is the humility behind Luther's *sola gratia* germ of the Reformation. If Hooker rejects the former pole in the name of a social, communitarian conception of selfhood, he also fully inhabits this latter pole of the Reformation, perhaps even taking it to its limit. The theoretical principle of negativity I have been exploring is embodied practically as humility. Hooker sees in his intellectual culture a problem of self-righteous certitude—both in the Papal claim to divine authority and the presbyterian claim to the key to the Bible's blueprint of a godly society. "Two

things there are which trouble greatly these later times,” he writes in the margin of *A Christian Letter*, “one that the Church of Rome cannot, another that Geneva will not erre.”<sup>139</sup>

Like Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, a project like Hooker’s must reckon with error rather than conquer it. In this sense, both works thematize their incompleteness. Long after the Redcrosse knight’s initial defeat of the monster Errour, the knights of Spenser’s unfinished poem continue to wander within the horizon of the infinitely deferred vision of blissful consummation. Hooker’s unfinished project, as I have argued, takes the darkness of wandering error as its starting point, which is only to be illuminated gradually by the unbounded unfolding of his book and of history. To return to Hooker’s comment on first principles that has served as a guiding thread in my interpretation, the completeness of this vision must be held “in suspence,” for “what may seeme darke at the first will afterwarde be founde more plaine, even as the later particular decisions will appeare, I doubt not more strong, when the other have been read before.” (I.1.2). This wandering is itself an expression of love. As he reportedly says in his highly controversial defence of the openness of salvation to Catholics, “if this be an error, I would it willingly, for it is the greatest comfort I have in this world, without which I would not wishe either to speake or to lyve.”<sup>140</sup>

It takes both patience and charity to read a project that thematizes error. This great demand of charity, however, leaves Hooker especially vulnerable to uncharitable criticism that his thematization of negativity is not a gesture of humility but of mystification. Hooker, as the various interpretations go, seeks to mystify and confuse his readers in order to mask his secret Catholic sympathies or to mystically authorize coercive structures of power. My own attempt to articulate Hooker’s account of hierarchy may be accused of trying to find an untouchable,

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<sup>139</sup> *FLE* 4:55.4–6.

<sup>140</sup> *FLE* 5:208.

otherworldly foundation for worldly hierarchy and the apparent injustices within it. Fear of such an error is certainly behind the new historicist interpretations of Hooker as a propagandist-polemicist. The coincidence of opposites so central to Hooker's project was after all a convenient theme for both Stalin's and Mao's efforts to deflect any reasoned questioning of their authority. As I have already noted, however, Hooker's conception of hierarchy, unlike that of the Laudian tradition that would come after him, does not grant the monarch an irrefutable seat of worldly authority. It is, rather, the kind of absolutizing tendency found in both presbyterianism and Laudianism that Hooker's principle of err seeks to resist.

Hooker resisted what he saw as a tendency in presbyterianism to see past intellectual traditions as a line of conquered enemies over which to triumphantly wave the flag of the one revealed Truth. Instead, he saw past writers as a genuine source of knowledge to guide him and his society through the crises of his own day. It is above all his posture of humility and its theoretical foundation that I suggest we take away for our own crisis over dogmatic claims to certitude.

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