

The Meeking of the Shrew: Converging Perversions and Conversions in Katherine and Petruchio

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At the end of Act 4, Scene 1, Petruchio describes his method of training Kate, his kite, and asks us: "He that knows better how to tame a shrew, / Now let him speak (4.1.197-98).¹ Petruchio is unlikely to be challenged because the precepts by which Katherine the curst (1.2.127) is beatified are similar to the guidance given for the creation of a new self by the Master in the Sermon on the Mount.

Katherine is indeed in a perverse state when we first see her entering with Baptista, Bianca, and Bianca's two suitors, Gremio and Hortensio. She demands of her father: "I pray you, sir, is it your will / To make a stale [i.e., prostitute] of me amongst these mates?" (1.2.57-58).² Gremio declares she is more fit for carting than courting, i.e., for "[a] whipping at the cart's tail [which] was a punishment for bawds and whores."³ Shakespeare provides three additional images of Katherine's corrupt self.

First, there is the drunk and disorderly Christopher Sly who roars onstage with "I'll feeze you, in faith" to his hostess, i.e., he'll "beat" or "flog" her because she requests payment for glasses he broke (Ind. 1.1).⁴

Second, there is the mad elder sister dragging the younger whom she has bound and who pleads, "Good sister, wrong me not, nor wrong yourself, / To make a bondmaid and a slave of me" (2.1.1-2). Coming to rescue his obvious favorite, the father rails at Katherine: "For shame, thou hilding of a devilish spirit, / Why dost thou wrong her that did ne'er wrong thee?" (2.1.26-27). Brian Morris, the Arden editor, explains that a hilding is a horse but that Shakespeare also uses it for "a contemptible or worthless person of either sex [. . .] specially applied to a woman here."⁵ Baptista mourns: "Was ever gentleman thus griev'd as I?" (2.1.37).

In a heartbeat, he is answered. Petruchio enters with the suitors and servants in various disguises and immediately agrees with him

on Katherine's dowry. And Petruchio is also the answer to Katherine's predicament as they immediately disagree. How different their banter is from Bianca's silence which provoked Katherine's tying and dragging her (2.1.29) and from Baptista's disparagement! Petruchio lavishes words—both sweet and salty—on her. He listens to what she says and bandies a suitable comeback. Previously, Katherine told Hortensio she'd "comb [a husband's] noddle with a three-legg'd stool" (1.1.64); his reply dismissed her: "From all such devils, good Lord deliver us!" (1.1.66) Gremio echoed him: "And me too, good Lord!" (1.1.67). Petruchio, though, plays her game. When he says he's "mov'd" to woo her, she puns on his being a "movable" such as "a joint-stool." Then he joins in (punning is contagious) with "Thou hast hit it. Come, sit on me" (2.1.198). (This is the second consecutive line they share.) All the while, the banter is teamed with, well, horseplay, that repeatedly brings them into eye contact and eventually mutual estimation. Isn't this better than the paternal physical affection Baptista bestows on Bianca? "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."⁶

Not only are Baptista and Katherine gaining relief from the new arrival in town, but so is Petruchio who came to "wive it wealthily" (1.2.74) and found the "Kate of [his] consolation" (2.1.190).

The third image of Katherine the curst, which continues the whores and horses pun and metaphor, is like Dorian Gray and his portrait. We see Katherine finely tricked out in her wedding costume. Inside, though, she is the equivalent of the grave-worthy jade that Petruchio rides in his motley garb to the ceremony. The horse is swaybacked and knock-kneed with a dislocated hipbone, tumors in her legs and under her ears, and swellings in her joints, jaw, and mouth. Mucous and blood discharge from her nostrils. Also, she suffers from jaundice, sweating and a dizzy madness, perhaps caused by a surfeit of meat (but aren't equine beings vegetarians?), so that she beats her head against the walls.⁷ The horse's bit, bridle, girth, and crupper are in woeful condition (3.2.54-61): Baptista has not governed his daughter well.

Katherine is the analogous walking-talking wounded because she fears she's been stood up and, yet again, held up to public ridicule—though marriage to "a mad-brain rudesby, full of spleen" (3.2.10) may be a fate worse than death or "[dancing] barefoot on [Bianca's] wedding-day" (2.1.33). Petruchio recognizes the mote in his own eye; his deranged exterior matches both their choleric interiors. When Baptista objects to the groom's attire, Petruchio

defends his choice: "To me she's married, not unto my clothes. / Could I repair what she will wear in me / As I can change these poor accoutrements, / 'Twere well for Kate and better for myself" (3.2.115-18).

Again, the beatitude "Blessed are they that mourn" applies to Katherine and Petruchio, but "comfort" now means being strengthened or heartened—and well they will need it. After the vows are exchanged, Katherine must be dizzy with conflicting emotions: piqued by Petruchio's attraction to her, dazzled by his verbal pyrotechnics ("Where did you study all this goodly speech?" [2.1.256]), terrified by his outshrewing of her during the ceremony (Gremio, who had called her a devil now applies the epithet to Petruchio and declares: "She is a lamb, a dove, a fool to him" [3.2.155]), dismayed by his rejection of her public plea to dine at their feast ("[I]f you love me, stay" [3.2.202]), self-assertive ("I see a woman may be made a fool / If she had not a spirit to resist" [3.2.218-19]), and humiliated when Petruchio addresses her (while seeming to address the guests) as a horse ("Nay, look not big nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret" [3.2.226]). How she responds during his long "chattels" or "10th Commandment" speech ("She is my goods [. . .] my horse [. . .] my anything [. . .] Touch her whoever dare! [. . .] Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch thee, Kate. / I'll buckler thee against a million" [3.2.228-37]) must depend on the production. Is he reducing her to thinghood? Or elevating her to the sum of his treasure that he will defend against anyone and everyone as Baptista rushed to rescue his "treasure," Bianca, from her (2.1.32). In the 2004 Utah Shakespearean Festival production, Petruchio began the speech roaring and wildly gesticulating, quite alarming Katherine and all in attendance. Then slowly, in a decrescendo, he approaches her on his knees, speaks in a melting voice, and extends his hand to her—which she accepts.⁸ He is Moses leading her out of Egypt, but the journey to the Promised Land is as troubled as that of the Israelites.

As they begin their life together, we can take comfort in Petruchio's vision of her during their wild wooing:

Why does the world report that Kate doth limp?
 O slanderous world! [. . .]
 O, let me see thee walk. Thou dost not halt. [. . .]
 Did ever Dian so become a grove
 As Kate this chamber with her princely gait? (2.1.246-53)

Still a mare but at least not a jade. And we can comprehend why Petruchio declines her plea to stay. When he calls for his horse,

Grumio's assurance—"Ay, sir, they be ready; the oats have eaten the horses" (3.2.203)—is noted as a "comic reversal."⁹ It would be an unfortunate reversal, though, if Petruchio allowed Katherine and himself to indulge in the physical feast of marriage before they prepared themselves spiritually. The horse-whisperer will succeed: Kate's inner self will come to match her fair appearance.

Another analogy applies to this wilderness experience on which the couple embark: the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. On the road to arrest Christians, Saul is thrown from his horse and blinded by light when he hears Jesus ask why he persecutes him. After he has fasted in a Damascus house for three days, Ananias comes to tutor him and restore his sight. Katherine's horse stumbles and she lands under her. Rather than cursing her "bemoiled" state, Grumio reports to Curtis that "she prayed that never prayed before" (4.1.70-1). Petruchio acts as an Ananias figure by teaching her mercy and justice. His method, the servants report is to "[kill] her [i.e., suppress her fire or cholera]¹⁰ in her own humour" (4.1.167)—as he predicted to Baptista he'd do (2.1.130-37).

And it works. When Petruchio beats Grumio for supposedly causing the fall, Katherine "wade[s] through the dirt" to pluck her husband off the groom (4.1.69-70). Later, she attempts to allay Petruchio's anger—again, not cursing or criticizing him—when he strikes a servant who is removing his boots (4.1.134-36). "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy": freeing others from condemnation also frees oneself from self-condemnation and prepares one to receive merciful help in one's own time of need.

But where is the help for her in what may be her "dark night of the soul"? The suffering Katherine yearns ever more deeply for just treatment. To Grumio, she complains: "The more my wrong, the more his spite appears / What, did he marry me to famish me?" (4.3.2-3). Longing for the old life under Pharoah, she continues: "I, who never knew how to entreat, / Am starv'd for meat, giddy for lack of sleep, / With oaths kept waking, and with brawling fed" (4.3.7-10). In at least one instance, Petruchio accompanies her in this discipline: "[B]etter 'twere that both of us did fast, / Since, of ourselves, ourselves are choleric / Than feed it with such over-roasted flesh" (4.1.160-62). Earlier, when Grumio describes to Curtis the eventful ride home, there is a jest about whether the wedded couple is riding one horse or two; could this relate to their suffering from the same flaw? (4.1.59-63). "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." The couple's triumphant fulfillment will be sweet as they preside at Bianca and Lucentio's wedding feast.

Katherine's sanctification and Petruchio's transmogrification (in the eyes of his servants) continue as she is forced to rise to the precept: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." But it's hard to empty oneself of the desire to exert one's personal will and to break long-held habits. When Grumio taunts Katherine with offers of mustard and meat, she beats him. Her spirits lift when Petruchio offers her a meal—for which she thanks him as he commands (4.3.45-47)—and fall when Hortensio, at Petruchio's request, devours it. They soar when a milliner and a tailor show her a cap and a gown—her graduation costume, as it were, from Petruchio's school for wives. And plunge when he elaborately rejects them. The "moveable" is unmoved even by her moving protest:

My tongue will tell the anger of my heart,
Or else my heart concealing it will break,

And rather than it shall, I will be free
Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words. (4.3.77-80)

Anticipating her resistance to his disciplines, he has ordered her a "loose-bodied gown" (4.3.132). She is delighted with it: "I never saw a better-fashion'd gown, / More quaint, more pleasing, nor more commendable" (4.3.101-02). Petruchio, however, knows that this is the costume of "loose women."¹¹—as does Grumio with his ribald jest (4.3.155-60). Katherine is still a harlot in the sense of not capitulating to Petruchio as "[her] lord, [her] king, [her] governor" (5.2.139). He advises her to disregard their mean garments because "'tis the mind that makes the body rich" (4.3.169). What a contrast to the scene just before this one where Tranio enlists the pedant in his scheme: "Go with me to clothe you as becomes you" (4.2.121)! As the Christopher Sly deception prefigures Katherine's transformation, the true/false Vincentio parallels it.

Nevertheless, Katherine does appear onstage in a new costume for the visit back to Baptista's. Their starting is delayed, though, because Petruchio disorients her with his maniacal insistence on its being 7 o'clock when it's almost 2 o'clock (am or pm?). Exasperated, he exclaims: "Look what I speak, or do, or think to do, / You are still crossing it" (4.3.189-90). Finally, Katherine has a man who gives her the time of day—but it's the wrong time. A sense of absolute futility that her preferences and efforts can make a difference must be enveloping her. That's as it should be: she must cease "kicking against the pricks"¹² if she's to become poor enough in spirit to enter the kingdom of heaven, i.e., loving union with her mate.

Katherine the Curst's Last Stand occurs when she "crosses" her husband over the brightness of the sun vs. that of the moon (4.5.2-23). (Is Petruchio cueing her that Brother Sun and Sister Moon have equal importance?) Then her eyes open to a new vision. On the one hand, she chimes in with him: "What you will have it nam'd, even that it is, / And so it shall be for Katherine" (4.5.21-22)—except possibly for her name: she doesn't call herself Kate. And, on the other hand, she is free to invent too, as she did in the wooing scene: even if he "please[s] to call it a rush-candle," (4.5.14), she'll agree.

Hortensio observes that "the field is won" (4.5.23). Is the indefatigable Petruchio raising the bar or celebrating his regard for his Kate's beauty when he describes the aged Vincentio whom they encounter on the road? There's not a whit of the "stale" here:

Tell me, sweet Kate, and tell me truly too,
Hast thou beheld a fresher gentlewoman?
Such a war of white and red within her cheeks!
What stars do spangle heaven with such beauty
As those two eyes become that heavenly face? (4.5.28-32)

Clear-sighted, liberated Kate takes this opportunity to get back at her father and flirt with her husband:

Young budding virgin, fair, and fresh, and sweet
.....
Happy the parents of so fair a child,
Happier the man whom favorable stars
Allots thee for his lovely bedfellow. (4.5.36-40)

When Petruchio abruptly reverses direction, pointing out that this is a "wither'd" man, Kate smoothly falls in about her "mistaking eyes, / That have been so bedazzled with the sun / That everything I look on seemeth green" (4.5.44-46). The stay in Petruchio's house has been a retreat to the green world where her life was regenerated. Vincentio, who encounters her for the first time, calls her a "merry mistress" (4.5.52). Her ears must ring with this praise after the barbs from her family and anti-suitors. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"; Katherine now understands the sun of her domestic universe. "Katherine" and "Kate" (and all their variations) are associated "with the Greek *katharos*, meaning 'pure'." When Katherine addresses Petruchio as "husband" (5.1.130) and sails through her Public Display of Affection test, she is indeed "the prettiest Kate in Christendom" (2.1.187) that Petruchio foresaw in their wooing scene.

Lucentio's welcome speech at the wedding feast is unconsciously ironic. It accurately describes Katherine and Petruchio's marriage at this time but he and Bianca (as well as Hortensio and the widow) have a long way to go to match these words about himself and his bride:

At last, though long, our jarring notes agree,
And time it is, when raging war is done,
To smile at scapes and perils overblown. (5.2.1-3)

Petruchio's remark is consciously ironic. "Nothing but sit and sit, and eat and eat!" How boring after the life he's recently led! Is he lusting for a new contest? Kate senses he is and joins in by pressuring the Widow for clarity about her remark: "He that is giddy thinks the world turns round" (5.2.20). The Widow ignores her first question ("Mistress, how mean you that?" [5.2.22]) and responds to Petruchio instead. But on Kate's pursuant: "I pray you [how polite!] tell me what you meant by that" (5.2.27), the widow persecutes her about her past: "Your husband, being troubled with a shrew, / Measures my husband's sorrow by his woe. / And now you know my meaning" (5.2.28-30). Katherine puts her down verbally; Petruchio sees more of a victory to savor. He is sure enough of his wife to propose a wager and to raise it when it's too low—after all, she's not chattel (5.2.71-73):

Let's each one send unto his wife,
And he whose wife is most obedient,
To come at first when he doth send for her
Shall win the wager which we will propose. (5.2.66-69)

Hortensio smirks: "I am afraid, sir, / Do what you can, yours will not be entreated" (5.2.89-90).

After his widow/wife will not come and Petruchio commands that Kate come to him, he avers: "I know her answer . . . She will not" (5.2.98). How quickly he forgets! He witnessed the sun/moon and virgin/old man tests. He declared to the tamer: "Well, Petruchio, this has put me in heart. / Have to my widow! And if she be froward, / Then hast thou taught Hortensio to be untoward" (4.5.76-78). How like Jesus's untrusting disciples he is! They saw how the miracle of the loaves and the fishes fed five thousand.¹³ A little while later, when a crowd of four thousand pressed them, they despaired, not remembering the first such miracle or not believing there could be a second one.¹⁴

Kate, of course, wins the obedience test: "What is your will, sir, that you send for me?" (5.2.101). Petruchio explains the meaning of this "wonder" (as Lucentio and Hortensio call it):

“Marry, peace it bodes, and love, and quiet life, / An awful rule, and right supremacy, / And, to be short, what not that’s sweet and happy” (5.2.109-111.) He has accomplished the “meeking” of the shrew, a now-obsolete verb used in James 3:7 in the 1526 Tyndale Bible.¹⁵ The fortune of the meek is to “inherit the earth,” so how appropriate that Baptista rewards them extravagantly: “The wager thou has won, and I will add / Unto their losses twenty thousand crowns, Another dowry to another daughter, / For she is chang’d, as she had never been” (5.2.113-16). Petruchio has indeed been “Kated” (3.2.243) in all the best ways.

He pushes his advantage using her preferred name: “Katherine, I charge thee, tell these headstrong women / What duty they do owe their lords and husbands” (5.2.131-32). I’d like to call Katherine’s final speech the one where she demonstrates that she is a marital peacemaker—“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called children of God”—with her quote from the Book of Common Prayer:¹⁶

I am asham’d that women are so simple
To offer war where they should kneel for peace,
Or seek for rule, supremacy, and sway,
When they are bound to serve, love, and obey.

However, her words unleash domestic strife in the other marriages. It works, though, for Katherine and Petruchio as they leave to consummate their marriage (“Come, Kate, we’ll to bed” [5.2.185]) after inheriting both the earth and the kingdom of heaven.

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Dale G. Priest, in “Katherina’s Conversion in *The Taming of the Shrew*,”¹⁷ uses Biblical passages to support a parallel interpretation to the husband’s taming of his wife: it is the Lord’s conversion of a wayward soul. Priest acknowledges that “To argue for a thoroughgoing parallel between Petruchio and Christ would be a bit reckless” because of the former’s initial mercantile motive and general lack of humility.¹⁸ However, Priest points to parallels such as these: a theological analogy whereby a lord makes Sly a new creature in his own image, sophisticated verbal manipulation whereby Petruchio transforms Katherine’s “railing” to “sweet singing,” the transvaluation of a “last” figure into a “first” figure (Katherine in Baptista’s household, then in Petruchio’s) as Jesus did for the uncouth and despised who became his apostles, the metaphorical use of clothing as a teaching device about the exterior vs. interior person, echoing Matthew 6:25-27, and the example of trials that bless when they result in steadfastness and wisdom as described in James’ Epistle.¹⁹

I base my parallel reading on Augustine's concepts (primarily) in the *Confessions*. In the 11th book, he writes:

Our hope is that we may cease to be miserable in ourselves and may find our beatitude in you; for you have called us to be poor in spirit, to be meek, to mourn, to hunger and thirst for righteousness, to be merciful and pure-hearted, and to be peacemakers.²⁰

Elsewhere he discusses perversion vs. conversion, habit, will vs. grace, the love of beauty, the interior vs. the exterior person, and obedience and charity. Scholars who have noted Augustine's influence on Shakespeare include Ann Livermore and Roy Battenhouse. In "Shakespeare and St. Augustine," Livermore finds evidence of *The Confessions* and *The City of God* in many of the plays: the major tragedies, especially *Hamlet*; the Roman plays; *Measure for Measure*; and *The Comedy of Errors*. In *Shrew*, she notes the setting in Northern Italy where Augustine experienced his conversion and a parallel between Christopher Sly and the "jolly, drunken beggar" on a Milanese street who provokes Augustine to consider how cheaply and easily the drunkard attains a temporary state of joy that costs Augustine and his friends so much intellectual effort in Book 6. Like Petruchio, Augustine desires a well-dowered wife in a well-ordered marriage. Like Lucentio, Augustine and his friends intend to take courses. Like Katherine, he haltingly learns obedience. He repeatedly needs "[plucking] out of the mire" and painful reminders that all earthly goods are secondary to God.²¹

I don't claim that Shakespeare intended *Shrew* as anything but a money-making farce. Christianity, though, permeated his society. In a *Shakespearean Newsletter* interview, John Velz told Michael P. Jensen that Shakespeare had experience in three denominations: Catholic, Anglican, and Huguenot.²² David Danielle, in "Shakespeare and the Protestant Mind"²³ and "Reading the Bible,"²⁴ argues that England by the 1500s was a thoroughly Protestant, i.e., a Bible-reading culture. Shakespeare may have read or heard about Augustine's works or those of Luther, an Augustinian friar.

Instead, then, of Petruchio taming Kate, let's see how God uses the Holy Spirit to present Christ's beatitudes and infuse her soul with faith. The human soul must decide which to love and value most: its gaze is turned upward to God in conversion or downward towards earthy matters in perversion.²⁵ Alternatively, Augustine says, "my weight is my love, and wherever I am carried, it is this weight that carries me. Fire rises, stone falls."²⁶ For every occurrence of evil, the soul pays with "a wound in being, a lack or privation of some perfection that is expected to be present but is not."²⁷

On the day of the wedding, Katherine is in the “hilding” phase exemplified by the horribly diseased horse Petruchio rides. Augustine’s attachment was to lust, or as he admitted, he was “[i]n love with loving.”²⁸ “[His] soul’s health was consequently poor. It was covered in sores.”²⁹ Augustine’s description of the chain that binds him applies to Katherine who drags her sister onstage by a thick cord or chain to which she, too, holds fast:

[I]t was no iron chain imposed by anyone else that fettered me, but the iron of my own will. The enemy had my power of willing in his clutches, and from it had forged a chain to bind me. The truth is that disordered lust springs from a perverted will; when lust is pandered to, a habit is formed; when habit is not checked, it hardens into compulsion. These were like interlinking rings forming what I have described as a chain, and my harsh servitude used it to keep me under duress.³⁰

Bianca protests: “Good sister, wrong me not, nor wrong yourself, / To make a bondmaid and a slave of me. . . . Unbind my hands” (2.1.1-4). Katherine’s anger may come from her desire to be a wife: she asks her sister which suitor she prefers; savvy Bianca assures her: “If you affect [Hortensio], sister, here I swear / I’ll plead for you myself but you shall have him” (2.1.14-15). And then continues: “Is it for [Gremio] you do envy me so?” (2.1.18).

A wayward soul like Augustine, Katherine is helpless to free herself. She needs a deliverer who, in Augustinian terms, can give her justification or righteousness (synonyms for each other) and these can come only by grace or a gift of God—should God choose to give it. In the case of Paul, the Lord says: “[H]e is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”³¹

Like Augustine, Kate can only wait for light to dissipate her darkness. Augustine’s deliverance came in a garden in the prompting to “pick up and read” Paul’s letters. What he saw in Romans 13 applies to both Katherine and Petruchio: “Not in dissipation and drunkenness, nor in debauchery and lewdness, nor in arguing and jealousy; but put on the lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh or the gratification of your desires.”³²

As the Lord chose Paul and Augustine, he chooses (as Petruchio) Katherine: “Will you, nill you, I will marry you. Now Kate, I am a husband for your turn,” i.e., her conversion “from a wild Kate to a Kate / Conformable as other household Kates” (2.1.264-71). To Baptista and the suitors, he declares: “I choose her for myself. / If she and I be pleas’d, what’s that to you?” (2.1.295-96).

There's no falling in love without finding someone or something beautiful. Augustine writes of the "concupiscence of the eyes" which "pursues the beautiful, the melodious, the fragrant, the tasty, and the silky"³³ and then, after the garden experience, "Late have I loved you, Beauty so ancient and so new."³⁴ Of his Kate, Petruchio declares: "[B]y this light, whereby I see thy Beauty, / Thy beauty that doth make me like thee well" (2.1.266-67). The danger—the perversion—is falling in love with temporal things such as a hat and dress. Petruchio corrects Katherine with his deliberate misunderstanding: "I love thee well in that thou lik'st [the cap] not" (4.3.83). His instruction mirrors that in the Sermon on the Mount:

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . for your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.³⁵

Even if Kate desires to please her savior, the course of true obedience doesn't run smoothly because her will is divided against itself. Augustine marvels: "The mind commands the body and is instantly obeyed; the mind commands itself, and meets with resistance . . ."³⁶ The most important definition of the relation of grace to free will in the Middle Ages was Augustine's: "Will is to grace as the horse is to the rider."³⁷ Kate's will is eventually surmounted: "For it is you, Lord, who will light up our darkness. From you derives our garment of light, and in you our darkness will be bright as noon."³⁸

Katherine (in stage and film productions) does indeed wear a new dress for her homecoming. On their journey, the couple compliment each other: he praises the brightness of the moon, a feminine symbol: "I say it is the moon that shines so bright" (4.5.4) while she first declares of the masculine symbol: "I know it is the sun that shines so bright" (4.5.5). It doesn't matter which is illuminating the sky because the vaster difference is that "between Light as source and that which is lit up by another."³⁹ This Jack and Jill have fair interiors and exteriors—in contrast to the drinking vessels in Petruchio's home of which only one attribute could be expected when Grumio asks: "Be the Jacks fair within, the Jills fair without, the carpets laid, and everything in order?" (4.1.44-45).

At "our father's" house (as Priest highlights)⁴⁰, Katherine demonstrates in her paean to her lord's graciousness that hers is a

filial rather than a servile obedience (in the latter, one desires external rewards or fears punishments; in the former, one obeys from love because one delights in the loveliness of God). Obedience or charity is following Christ's twofold commandment of love: first, love God with one's whole heart, mind, and strength and, second, love one's neighbor as oneself in God (which consists of helping him or her to find the ultimate happiness that is loving God).⁴¹ Katherine acknowledges her dependence: "Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare, / That seeming to be most which we indeed least are" (5.2.175-6).

Roy Battenhouse, in "Augustinian Roots in Shakespeare's Sense of Tragedy," uses *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Macbeth*, and other plays to illustrate that "[o]ne of the significant features of Shakespearean tragedy is imagery that frequent echoes Bible language or paradigm, even when the play's setting is pagan."⁴² He suggests that the "double-level language" is reminiscent of Augustine's aphorism that "'souls in their very sins seek but a sort of likeness to God, in a proud and perverted, and, so to say, slavish freedom."⁴³ Shakespeare follows his medieval predecessors in using analogy as a principle of dramatic construction: horizontal or linear analogy (the porter scene in *Macbeth* is Macbeth's tragic situation in comic terms) and vertical analogy (Macbeth sees the handle of the dagger as an emblem of his mission, which is a perversion of devotion to the cross).⁴⁴ A comedy, too, can offer the "theological reflection"⁴⁵ encouraged by vertical analogy: Katherine as Petruchio's bride, their souls as brides of Christ.

Notes

1. All references are to the Arden edition. William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Brian Morris (Walton-on-Thames, Surrey: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1981).
2. Morris, 174-75.
3. Morris, 174.
4. Morris, 153.
5. Morris, 198.
6. *KJV* Matt. 5:4.
7. Morris, 226-28.
8. William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Utah Shakespearean Festival, Cedar City, Summer 2004.
9. William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1997), 131.
10. Morris, 249.
11. Morris, 266.
12. *KJV* Acts 9:5.
13. *KJV* Matt. 14:13-21 and Mark 6:35-44.

14. *KJV* Matt. 15:32-38, Mark 8:1-9.
15. *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 1761.
16. Morris, 296.
17. Kay K. Cook, "The Taming of the Shrew," *Midsummer Magazine: The Magazine of the Utah Shakespearean Festival*, Summer 2004, 10.
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19. Priest, 32-37.
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