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**The Poetry, Politics and Educational Reform
of John Hall (1627-1656)**

by

© Dorothy Fraser Turner, BA

**Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts**

**Department of English
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
14 August, 1988**

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THE POETRY, POLITICS AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM
OF JOHN HALL (1627-1656)

submitted by Dorothy Fraser Turner, B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor

Chairman, Department of English

Carleton University
August 14, 1988

ABSTRACT

The following is an examination of the works of John Hall of Durham (1627-1656), poet, translator, educational reformer and propagandist, and their reflection of seventeenth century notions of empiricism, utilitarianism, rational skepticism and individualism. The seventeenth century was a time of magnificent and widespread changes in almost all aspects of English intellectual life, and Hall's precocious mind reflected such diverse but compatible philosophies as those of Francis Bacon, Descartes and Thomas Hobbes. This study consists of an overview of his notions of the place of religion in civil politics, civil politics in religion, and of the place of both in educational and social reform. The first chapter builds a biography from the evidence left in various sources. The second chapter examines his early work and how his Parliamentary pamphlets fit into the current political framework of Commonwealth England. The third chapter considers how the style of his prose developed along with his philosophy. The final chapter is concerned with the state of education in England in the 1640s and Hall's proposals for reform of its government and curriculum.

I would like to dedicate this work in deep
appreciation to Professor Cameron and
Tug McGraw.

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BIOGRAPHY

John Hall's outstanding trait was his precocity. He published at a very early age. He produced (when he was actually producing) at an impressive rate, and he was at ease in a wide variety of genres. He was, by the testimony of Hobbes as well as the evidence of his own work, brilliant. Also strong-willed and arrogant, he enjoyed expounding on science and politics in the tavern as much as he did on paper and did not balk out of cowardice or morality at satirizing politics, religion, metaphysics, or any of the personalities involved in these pursuits. Above all, he was passionate. When he embraced the cause of the Army at the dissolution of the Barebones Parliament, he did it, at least on paper, with as much enthusiasm as he had allowed Parliament in his Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy Considered or the educational reformers in his Humble Motion to Parliament Concerning the Advancement of Learning: and Reformation of the Universities.

John Hall was born of good, but not too good family in 1626:

John Hall was one of six children born to Michael Hall and Elizabeth, daughter of John Gill. The family occupied the manor at Birtley, a moiety of the estate of Consett Park in the northern county of Durham.
(Hill 1)

Not surprisingly, then, he was expected to go up to Cambridge when he was thirteen, but in 1639 there was war with Scotland and in 1640 a Scots army was occupying Newcastle. London was in

turmoil. "The Nationall commotions increasing," his biographer writes, "and the universities transform'd into Garrisons, it was thought fit he should be stayed at home. . . ." Little is known about the six years he spent at Durham except that he owed something of his tutelage to Thomas Stanleyⁿ, a classical scholar and minor poet, to whom he would later, in appreciation, dedicate his volume of Poems. It is known that he made use of the library at Durham, and had taken a course in mathematics from "that since famous Professour of those sciences, Mr. Jonas Moore"^o (Davies). That he had an extraordinarily good academic background when he finally entered St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1647 is witnessed by the contents of his two pieces published the same year. His Essays show the influence of Bacon along with an admirable familiarity with classical texts. In his poems, he displays a comprehensive knowledge of the popular poetry of his time along with, again, an intimacy with their classical forms and models.

Hall published his Horae Vacivae or Essays. Some Occasionall Considerations (hereafter referred to as Essays) the year he entered the college. These short pieces, dedicated to Dr. John Arrowsmith, Hall's Master, "amazed not onely the University, but

ⁿ Thomas Stanley (1625-1678) "cultivated literary society, and his wealth enabled him to aid many less fortunate men of letters" (D.N.B.). Hall was among his closest friends.

^o Jonas Moore (1617-1679) was a mathematician whom Hall would have met while the former was working as a clerk to Dr. Burghill in Durham. He later gained his reputation "by his success in keeping the sea out of Norfolk," surveying the coasts and constructing a map of Cambridgeshire" (D.N.B.).

the most serious part of men in the three Nations, where they were spread, nay . . . they travelled over to France and were by no ordinary person clad in the language of that Countrey" (Davies).

While at Cambridge, Hall made the acquaintance of his later biographer, John Davies of Kidwelly (a fellow student under John Pawson), who would supply the only first-hand information extant on the life of Hall in his "An Account of the Author of this Translation, and his Works", prefixed to the posthumous publication of Hall's Hierocles upon the Golden Verses of Pythagoras.

Hall's Poems, dedicated to Thomas Stanley, appeared in January, 1647, while he was at Cambridge in the capacity of "Pensioner or Commoner", which, writes Davies, "obliging him to certain lownesses and collegial duties . . . sometimes to persons whose merit consisted chiefly in their time spent there . . . he soon grew weary of those Academicall grievances, and got himself translated into the members of the Fellow-Commoners." This bit of information from the Davies biography of Hall is the first glimpse we get of Hall as insurgent, and is worth taking a closer look at. Being a "Pensioner or Commoner" meant that he stayed at the university and earned his education by performing the "collegial duties" he found so repulsive. That he had little money for education is proven by the fact that while in Durham he had had to appeal to "some remote friends" (also, probably to Stanley) in order to pay the fees of his tutors. Despite the fact

that working would seem to be the only way Hall could afford to stay at Cambridge, his pride was such that he obviously devised some other means of supplying the necessary funds. He was also academically thwarted in his application to become a "fellow" of the college; a situation which, had he been successful in his application, would have solved both his career and pecuniary uncertainties. Becoming one, however, had its drawbacks:

The increas[ing] value of a fellowship . . . made the competition . . . severe. The society of St. John's, in the year 1630 . . . declar[ed] that there were thirty candidates on a single vacancy. Merit . . . in those days being less impartially estimated and independently established, there was often a sense of indebtedness on the part of those elected which contributed to render them . . . subservient to the wishes of their seniors. (Mullinger 386)

Hall must have found himself in a situation close to this one, and it became unbearable for him. He left the university in May, 1647, "not without some dis-satisfaction with the Governours there for denying those honourary advancements, which are as it were the indulgences of the University. . . ." This dissatisfaction later became one of the motivations behind his attack on university hierarchy and practices. In his Humble Motion he would denigrate the "many Idle Pedantic Brotherhoods" (17) from which he had been excluded. For him, a fellow is a "stripling youngster, who perhaps understands that which he professes as little as anything else, and mounts up to the chaire twice or thrice a yeare, to mutter over some few stolne impertinencies . . ." (27-28).

Hall entered Cambridge at a period of rapid and extensive transition, and he would leave to criticize fiercely the education that was available there. Nevertheless, it is obvious he derived many benefits from his stay at the university. Even if Cambridge did not give him his classical learning and his knowledge of Bacon and of Descartes and other continental philosophies, his Essays, which were written as academic exercises, show that the school did not discourage such things. His knowledge of languages--he was fluent in several languages other than his own: French, Italian, Spanish and Latin--seems to have been enhanced at Cambridge.⁶ And while studying he made the acquaintance of Samuel Hartlib and John Dury, two social reformers who were to have a profound effect on his later work, especially in their efforts for what they called "pansophia," or the formation of an international community of enlightened thinkers.⁸ Hartlib, Dury, and especially the Bohemian educator Comenius worked energetically to build their enlightened fraternity, and we know from Hall's correspondence with Hartlib that he had been recruited to spread the pansophic message within the confines of his college. He translated Johann Valentin

⁶ This too may be partially attributable to the influence of Stanley. He was "an excellent classical scholar . . . [and] an enthusiastic student of French, Spanish and Italian poetry" (D.N.B.).

⁸ John Edward Sadler has written a seminal work on the sources, development, different aspects and instruments of pansophia.

Andreae's⁵ A Modell of a Christian Society and The Right Hand of Christian Love Offered on Hartlib's advice and dedicated the work to Hartlib. From Davies we know that Hall was also "intimately acquainted with" Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist, who wrote commendatory verses to preface the 1646 edition of Hall's Poems. His friends and correspondents at this time included not only Stanley but the Reverend Ralph Cudworth,⁶ then Master of Clare Hall.

Hall came to London from Cambridge in 1647 and entered Gray's Inn, but according to Davies rather than seriously apply himself to that "Profession attended with honour and advantage," he wrote the larger part of a romance, Leucenia, which, "had it been finished, might have raised envie in the famous Romanticist Monsieur De Scudery." It was lost through the neglect of a reader, however, who never offered "either to return or acknowledge it" (Davies).

Between May and August of 1647, Hall married a gentlewoman of Hertfordshire, carrying her off against stiff competition. Not having consulted his family about the matter, however, "never came colder news to the North than that of this marriage; the

⁵ Johann Valentin Andreae (1586-1654) was a Lutheran pastor and mystic. "In spite of endless disasters . . . [he] was supported all his life by hopes of some far-reaching solution to . . . [religious division on the Continent]. All his activities, whether as devout Lutheran pastor with socialist interests, or the propagator of 'Rosicrucian' fantasies, were directed toward such a hope" (Yates 31).

⁶ Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688) was a Puritan preacher, divine, and leader of the Cambridge Platonists. He was appointed Master of Clare Hall in 1645 by Parliamentary authority (D.N.B.).

great hopes there, which were that he should have fastened on a Fortune heavier by many hundreds than he had met, were suddenly blasted." These northern expectations are especially interesting in the light of Hall's parents' inability to support him at Cambridge. Perhaps the family was decayed and the parents hoped that the son's brilliance would restore its fortunes. In any case, that marriage did not work, and Hall's bride "became in a manner a widow soon after the Nuptials." The circumstances both of the marriage and of its breakdown are still a mystery. All that Hall produced during this year was a small book of Emblems under the pseudonym "J. de la Salle." The volume is derivative, the plates copied from continental volumes, and the whole somewhat of a literary joke according to Rosemary Freeman (138), although some of the verses themselves, originally published in his Poems, have an interesting energy, as we shall see.

In 1648, Hall joined the journalist Marchamont Needham and began to write for the pro-Parliamentary Mercurius Britannicus, a journalistic periodical that was directed against the royalist "Mercuries, Satyres, and Pasquinado's" which had infiltrated London, and especially against the Cavalier Mercurius Melancholicus (1647-1649) (Bush 49). Many of the current periodicals were short-lived and furious missiles pointed at any and all political targets; between the years 1641 and 1655, there were over 300 published, and of them "a fourth appeared but once and only a tenth lasted more than a year" (Bush 49). Hall and Needham also wrote for Mercurius Politicus, which was under the

official direction of John Milton from March 1651 to January 1652 (Bush 261). The experience of writing for these periodicals was a very important one for Hall. During the years that he worked with Needham, he developed his awareness of audience and of the stylistic resources available to a popular writer at the time. His changing style reflected his growing knowledge of the potential power of the text, and as he developed he displayed an increasing control both over his medium and his audience.

Hall's parliamentary sympathies were well established by 1648, and he would soon have opportunity to meet the astrologer, William Lilly,^a and through him, Mr Frost, "late Secretary to the Committee at Derby-House, and afterwards the Councell of State." This political commitment is central to all of his later work. It is clear that by this time he thought of himself not as a poet, but as a political activist. Once he left Gray's Inn and started writing on behalf of the Parliamentary cause, there were no more poems, no more philosophical essays, no more emblems or other literary works, and this would remain the case until he stopped writing political pieces. It was in the political arena that his passion for writing was developed and maintained. It would seem that his determination to advance the cause to which he was attached (and which afforded him his livelihood) caused

^a William Lilly (1602-1681) a self-proclaimed apolitical figure, became a strong Parliamentary supporter because his professional rival, Captain George Wharton, was a devout Royalist.

all other efforts to be laid aside. He was Puritan, but more of a Parliamentary Puritan than a religious one.

All these facts are reflected in his tract, An Humble Motion to Parliament Concerning the Advancement of Learning: and Reformation of the Universities (hereafter referred to as Humble Motion), which was presented to Parliament in 1649, and secured Hall "a present sum of money, and a [very impressive] pension of 100 l. per ann. from the Councell." He was certainly still in touch with Hartlib and other reformers at this time, and if he had not been well known to Parliament when he submitted this piece he must have been shortly thereafter, because in 1650 he was commissioned to accompany Oliver Cromwell to Scotland, "to make such observations on affairs there, as might conduce to the settling of the Interests of the Common-wealth." The fruit of this voyage was The Grounds and Reasons of Monarchy Considered, a fifteen-page tract of propaganda, "proving" that the institution of the divine right of kings was actually not at all "divine", but a human construct aimed at maintaining the power of the status quo. To it was appended "An Epitome of Scottish History," another fifteen pages of anti-royalist propaganda, "exemplifying" the arguments of the first part by describing the bloody succession of Scottish kings, "two successively scarce dying naturally" (15). Both were dedicated to Cromwell.

Hall was now a confirmed and active political writer, had been called to the Bar in 1650, and was practising in 1651. He was supporting himself by writing pamphlets, the most noteworthy

one, states Davies, being "A Gagg to Love's Advocates," justifying Parliament's proceedings in the execution of Christopher Love.® At the request of some book sellers he had also revived and edited a nasty anti-Dutch tract, A Treatise discovering the horrid cruelties of the Dutch upon our People at Aboyna. Originally published in 1624, Hall edited it in 1651 on the occasion of state talks between the United Provinces and the Commonwealth, and dedicated it to Cromwell; the Dutch Ambassadors returned home, and Parliament considered it "a seasonable service done the Publike."

Upon the dissolution of the Barebones Parliament in 1653, Hall wrote the timely and bold A Letter Written to a Gentleman in the Country, touching the dissolution of the late Parliament, And the reasons thereof (hereafter referred to as the Letter), and this work is his last surviving political piece. It is a very powerful twelve-page monologue, addressed to Hall's "Gentleman" friend, written in response to possible objections to the forced dissolution of Parliament by Cromwell and his Army. It would seem that Hall stopped producing after this. His pension was removed and he fell ill. He finished one more work before he died, a translation of Hierocles upon the Golden Verses of Pythagoras but it is a rough piece and by his own admission he just barely managed to "put an end to that which I thought my own end would have prevented" (preface).

® Christopher Love (1618-1651) was a Puritan preacher who was convicted of high treason for corresponding with Charles Stuart in France. He was executed August 22, 1651.

In July 1655, having heard his father was seriously ill, Hall returned to Durham, only to die there himself the first of August the following year.

A surprisingly clear picture of Hall's character and reputation emerges from what little biographical material we have concerning him. The contemporary verdict varied, but there seem to be at least a few agreements. Davies, James Howell, and Samuel Hartlib all praise his quick wit, intelligence, precocity and learning. Howell wrote after reading the Essays that he felt Hall had an ability for the "severest sort of studies" and that this reputation would be further enhanced by their translation into French. Hartlib held him in great esteem, believing him to be particularly suited to spread the pansophic message within St. John's. Hall's letters to Hartlib still exist, and in them Hall expressed the difficulties he encountered, a young man in the first year of his bachelor's degree, attempting to teach masters and preachers the idea of pansophia:

I act upon disadvantage by reason of my youth, and men rather expect I should learn from them then teach them anything. But this shall (by the grace of God) [not] discourage me. (Turnbull 226)

Robert Boyle was also very impressed with the young Hall. Upon receipt of a copy of the translation of Andreae's work he thanked Hartlib for procuring him the acquaintance of "a person that, treading antipodies to the strain of his contemporaries, has September in his judgment, whilst we can scarce find April upon his chin" (Turnbull, "John Hall's Letters to Samuel Hartlib" 222).

All these praises point to a character whose work made a very good impression on almost everyone who came in contact with it. Unfortunately, opinions were finally tempered with disappointment when his tendency for self-abuse began to outweigh his talent. The short life of the writer was summed up by Thomas Hobbes, an acquaintance of Hall's, who wrote

Had not his debauches & intemperance diverted him from the more serious studies, he had made an extraordinary person; for no man had ever done so great things at his age. (Davies)

Davies wrote that Hall was accused of being somewhat irreligious:

there is one reproach lies heavier than all the rest viz. That he was guilty of a certain neglect and dis-care of things sacred, which some ignorantly, some enviously, stretch to a kinde of Atheisme. . . .

There is no direct biographical evidence to support this charge, nor does any exist in his writings. Accusations of atheism against Hall might well have arisen, however, from "that freedom in his discourse, at which some ordinary capacities were startled" (Davies). The few facts we have about Hall point to a character who enjoyed making an impact. Davies wrote

he . . . [erred,] either thinking that liberty was allowable in Taverns, as Conventicles and private conferences (where the very principles of Christian Doctrine were shaken, haply with somewhat more zeal, but certainly equall satisfaction) or not sufficiently reflecting on the dangers of too much familiarity with holy things, and forgetting that, De divinis etiam vera dicere periculosum est.

Hall did not hesitate to satirize the Church and established religion, and selective contempt like that contained in his

essay, "Of Preaching," would be bound to raise some self-righteous hackles. We must listen to the Gospel, he wrote,

although as to Balaam, he speake to us by the mouth of an Asse, and yet he must either boare our eares, or we cannot heare what the Spirit speaketh unto the Churches, for his messages are high and mysterious, such as can finde no entrance in at the eare of a man of flesh, who is too fast asleepe to take any Alarme at the Silver Trumpet of the Gospell. . . .

This is the work of someone disgusted with the tautologies of preachers, not of someone questioning the gospel itself. The relationship between preaching and the gospel is a central aspect of the Puritan movement, and Hall's interest reflects one consuming his society. Finally, his close friendship with Henry More and Ralph Cudworth, as well as his sustained association with the Hartlib group, argues in favour of sincere religious convictions on his part.

If Hall's reputation in his time was based on his political activities, his reputation since has been as a poet--admittedly a minor one--ironically, perhaps, because he seemed to have thrown over poetry while he was still at St. John's College. The seventeenth century was a time when poets abounded, and the writing of verse was considered one of the necessary talents of anyone with literary pretensions. Saintsbury, in his "Introduction to John Hall," states: "When poetry is 'in the air' a certain class of ingenuous minds 'take' it, like the measles or the chickenpox, and become thereby, unluckily or luckily, immune from it afterwards" (177). Hall himself admits, in "A Satire",

So learned an age we live in, all are now
Turn'd Poets, since their heads with fancies glow.

'Las! Poets? yes: O bear me witness all
 Short-winded ballads, or whate'er may fall
 Within the verge of three half-quarters, say,
 Produce we not more poems in a day
 (By this account) than waves on waves do break,
 Or country justices false English speak? (203-210)

That these two judgements are accurate is witnessed by the sheer volume of poetry produced during the early part of the seventeenth century (Witherspoon 715).

There is good reason why Hall's oeuvre will never transcend the category of 'minor' poetry of the earlier seventeenth century: his verse is uneven in quality and almost entirely derivative. Nevertheless, he has a good ear, at times his images are fascinating, and he demonstrates an ability to work ingeniously within the limits of most poetic forms. Saintsbury qualifies his earlier jibe out of fairness to Hall, and comes to, I think, an unexceptionable conclusion: "A minor poet? Undoubtedly: but a poet. Gold dust only, in small handfuls, or even pinches? Perhaps; but gold dust" (179). Since the poetry is the basis of what reputation Hall has today, there is good reason to review it before moving on to what are arguably his more important writings.

Hall, although his corpus is small, manages to include a wide variety of different poetic forms in his one published manuscript, Poems (1647), which was divided into two books of secular and divine works. The book was prefaced by commendatory verse reminiscent of those in his Horae Vacivae: laudatory, extravagant and enthusiastic. Henry More writes

Young monster! born with teeth,

that thus canst bite [t/o]
 So deep, canst wound all sorts at ten
 and eight: [t/o]
 Fierce Scythian brat! young Tamer-
 lane! the Gods' [t/o]
 Great scourge! that kicks't all men
 like skulls and clods; [t/o]
 ("To the young Author . . ." 1-5)

More's poem makes reference specifically to the opening work in the collection, "A Satire." It is a good piece, incisive and insightful, and in it Hall takes objection to a wide variety of current abuses in literary circles: the writing of pamphlets as a practice, the content of most of those published, the literary fashions at Court, the deficiencies in education, and the deficiencies in current poetry and prose. The opening couplet is abrupt in the manner of Joseph Hall's satires:

Pray let m'alone; what, do you think can I
 Be still , while pamphlets thus like hailstones fly
 About mine ears? (1-3)

The overall emphasis of the poem is very close to that of his Humble Motion of two years later, and the central argument of "A Satire" would have a very familiar ring to anyone who appreciated the work of current educational reformers:

Why do we live, why do our pulses beat,
 To spend our bravest flames, our noblest heat,
 On such poor trifles? to enlarge the day
 By gloomy lamps. . . .
 It will not quit the cost, that men should spend
 Themselves, time, money, to no other end;
 That people should with such a deal of pains
 Buy knowing nothing, and wise men's disdains. (117-126)

Too much time and effort were being wasted, Hall wrote, on the learning of trifles, on writing over that which had already been written, and on ignoring the obvious and uncontestable fact that

the human condition could be easily improved by the advancement of learning--advancement both in the sense of encouragement and exploration.

There are four epigrams included in his collection. The best of them, "Upon T.R., a very little man, but excellently learned," is built around a metaphysical conceit: Hall wonders how such a large part of nature (learning) can exist in so small a body:

Would she [Nature] the Golden Legend shut
Within the cloister of a nut;
Or else a musket bullet rear
Into a vast and mighty sphere?
Or pen an eagle in the caul
Of a slender nightingale;
Or show, she pigmies can create
Not too little but too great?
How comes it that she thus converts
So small a totem and great parts? (13-22)

The composition of the contraries in lines 13 through 20 is very effective and the rhythm of the segment is, for the most part, good. The images are Hall's own, and the resolution of the poem is supplied, fittingly, by paradox: "In th' selfsame action we may call/ Nature both thrift and prodigal." The poem is, overall, fast paced, intellectual, clever, and the diction is good.

We can see, too, in this quotation and elsewhere, the awkward syntax Hall sometimes fell prey to. It may not be fair to compare him to Thomas Carew, but if we place

Witches may cheat us of his light awhile
But this can him even of himself beguile:
(A Burning Glass 9-10)

next to

Have we no voice, no tune? Didst thou dispense
Through all our language both the words and sense?
(Carew 122)

we can see that Hall's contorted syntax, especially in the second line, distorts the sense of the period almost beyond comprehension, while Carew's natural syntax and diction, the punctuation placed naturally to break up the flow of the verse without losing it, makes the couplet sound almost conversational. Hall does not always fail, however, in the construction of his poetry. As we shall see soon, many clauses, and some whole poems, exhibit an admirable talent.

Of his few odes, "To his Tutor, Master Pawson. An Ode" is the best. Written in the Horatian style, it is a personal, tranquil, literary piece expressing Hall's deep-felt gratitude for the wisdom and sympathy of his teacher. Further, it is based on the sixteenth and seventeenth century notion of knowledge in nature's book:

I

Come, come away,
And snatch me from these shades to purer day.
Though nature lie
Reserv'd, she cannot 'scape thy piercing eye.
I'll in her bosom stand,
Led by thy cunning hand,
And plainly see
Her treasury;
Though all my light be but a glimpse of thine.
Yet with that light, I will o'erlook
Her hardly opened book,
Which to aread is easy, to understand divine.
(1-12)

The stanzaic form and rhyme scheme are relatively complex, and Hall effectively maintains this rhythm throughout the six stanza structure. The argument, too, is a thoughtful one. Hall and his tutor's objective in the quest is to "Take a full view of this

enamelled ball" (16). Based on an empirical ideal, this is a poem about learning, learning as a flight upward through material nature to "the haven where we may securely lie" (72). Hall's poetic style is at its height in this piece, not only in his successful execution of the Ode, but in the effectiveness of lines such as "Another slow as is a mounting stone," (33) Hall brings the movement of the line almost to a standstill, in admirable imitation of its subject.

The four epitaphs contained in Hall's Poems are by no means extraordinary, but again Hall shows himself a learned practitioner if not a particularly inspired one in this form. The pieces tend to lack the classical brevity and conciseness of truly fine examples, such as Milton's "On Shakespeare" or numerous of Jonson's works. Hall's best piece, "To my honoured Noble Friend, Thomas Stanley, Esq., on his Poems," is a forty-five line panegyric on Stanley's poetry and an exhortation for him to publish.

But, dearest friend, what law's power ever gave
To make one's own free first-born babe his slave?
Nay, manumise it; for what else wilt be
To strangle, but deny it liberty?
Once lend the world a day of thine, and fight
The trembling still-born children of the night.
(37-42)

The rhythm is unspectacular but even, and the metaphor of verse as the child of a poet is given refreshing and compelling expansion.

The largest group of poems in the collection are the love lyrics, and they range from the self-conscious neo-Platonism of

Come, dearest Julia! thou and I
 Will knit us in so strict a tie,
 As shall with greater pow'r engage
 Than feeble charms of marriage:
 ("Platonic Love" 1-4)

to the very light but effective "The Morning Star." In this short aubade, Hall asks the morning star to wake his lover before dawn. The theme is simple and in its tone it is reminiscent of other seventeenth century dawn poems:

Who [the star] wink'st while lovers plight
 their truth, [t/o]
 Then falls asleep, while they are loath
 To put without a more engaging oath:
 Steal in a message to the eyes
 Of Julia, tell her that she lies
 Too long, thy Lord the Sun will quickly rise.
 (7-12)

The last stanza, however, introduces an interesting metaphysical twist:

Yet is it midnight still with me,
 Nay worse, unless that kinder she
 Smile day, and in my zenith seated be.
 But if she will obliquely run,
 I needs a calenture^ù must shun,
 And like an Ethiopian hate my sun. (13-18)

Unless his sun/lover sits at his "zenith" he has no desire for light. If she "obliquely run"--away from him--he will have to avoid the potential melancholy and darkness of unrequited love (his "calenture") by avoiding both the light of the sun and the light (love) of his lover.

^ù "calenture"; "a disease incident to sailors in the tropics, characterized by a delirium . . ." (O.E.D.) The figurative meaning of the term is fever, burning passion, heat, etc.

Much of Hall's religious poetry is very conventional. There are twelve English and two Latin pieces: odes, epigraphs, a couple of hymns. Hall is, like many of his contemporaries, at his best in these poems when he is most personal. Whereas for the most part they are neutral, the pieces come alive occasionally with energy, sincerity and enthusiasm--three qualities, I might add, which would be notably absent from an atheist's religious verse. Although his secular poetry is also marked by an emphasis on his own experience, it seldom has the immediacy and the spontaneity of his religious verse:

I hear and tremble! Lord, what shall I do
 T'avoid thy anger? whither shall I go?
 What, shall I scale the mountains? 'las! they be
 Far less than atoms if compar'd with thee.
 What, shall I starve to get myself a tomb
 Within the greedy ocean's swelling womb?
 Shall I dive into rocks? Where shall I fly
 The sure discovery of the piercing eye?
 ("The Lord cometh. . . ." 1-4)

This poem, along with six others from his religious verse, was included in the 1648 edition of his emblems, Sparkles of Divine Love. These pieces are presented in the style of Francis Quarles; they are mostly "concerned with the individual experience of the human soul in its search for sanity" (Freeman 119). The poem itself is verbally very close to the twelfth emblem of Quarles' third book:

O Whither shall I fly? what path untrod
 Shall I seek out to 'scape the flaming rod
 Of my offended, of my angry God?

Where shall I sojourn? what kind of sea will hide
 My head from thunder? where shall I abide,
 Until his flames be quench'd or laid aside?
 (quoted in Hill 194)

It is noteworthy that at this stage in his development Hall, a strong Puritan, could produce work so close in style and content an Anglican Royalist.

"An Ode" is another poem reprinted in his book of emblems. The illustration represents a struggle between Divine Love and the devil for Anima; this conflict is reflected in the poem in terms of the anxiety of the poet's soul faced with the attraction of sinful pleasures, coupled with its innate knowledge of the need of divine assistance in resisting temptation:

II

What though I be
Nothing but high corruption?
Let me have thee,
And at thy presence 'twill be gone.
Darkness dare never stand
In completion, while the sun's at hand. (7-12)

Probably the best image produced by Hall is contained in "On an Hourglass":

My life is measur'd by this glass, this glass
By all those little sands that thorough pass.
See how they press, see how they strive, which shall
With greatest speed and greatest quickness fall.
See how they raise a little mount, and then
With their own weight do level it again.
But when th'have all got thorough, they give o'er
Their nimble sliding done, and move no more. (1-8)

This is very good, and very typically seventeenth century. Saintsbury writes that "the intensity which so often attends, and saves, the triviality of the metaphysicals, has seldom, outside their greatest, been better exemplified than here." With every line the image is expanded without strain, and successfully

encapsulates the whole life process with the very simple movement of an hourglass.

Hall's poetry, as we have seen from this brief overview, is very good academic verse that at times rises above itself in moments of real imaginative vision. His knowledge and understanding of poetic form were extensive, and he showed himself capable of working well within the limits of different genres. It will remain minor in status, however, because it is inconsistent, and only rarely achieves the rhythm and thought-density which make great and lasting work.

It is interesting, nevertheless, that there are thoughts and themes in the poetry which foreshadow his later and more mature work. Hall's preoccupation with the subjects of his later work was obvious even at this early stage. We noted in "A Satire" his concern with education, writing, and literary taste. I shall finish my examination of Hall's religious poetry with a glance at his position on the place of learning and knowledge in a world searching for understanding of teleological design. "Vain curiosity!" he wrote,

yee lead
The mind in images, make her tread
A-side, while that she toyles and is not fed.
(Emblem 8 Book 1 1-3)

Am I the better, though I could
All wisdom with a breath unfold,
And a heart boundless as the Ocean hold?

Not a whit unless that he
By whom these glorious wonders be
Lead me and teach mine eyes himself to see.
(15-20)

Here we have the reflection of an overwhelming seventeenth century concern, as we shall see in detail when we examine Hall's Humble Motion. The advancement of learning and science was one of humankind's most pressing necessities, but only insofar as it led to a greater understanding of Divine Providence and a greater will to be illuminated by that power. In sentiment Hall comes close to George Herbert, who wrote

The fleet astronomer can bore
And thread the spheres with his quick-piercing mind.
He views their stations, walks from door to door,
Surveys as if he had designed
To make a purchase there. He sees their dances,
And knoweth long before
Both their full-eyed aspects and secret glances.

What hath not man sought out and found,
But his dear God? who yet His glorious law
Embosoms in us, mellowing the ground
With showers and frosts, with love and awe,
So that we need not say, "Where's this command?"
Poor man, thou searchest round
To find out death, but missest life at hand.
(*"Vanity"* 1-7, 22-28)

For better or worse, Hall completely stopped publishing poetry after the release of this first volume. More pressing and engaging political and religious matters were at hand, and he would devote the rest of his active life to promulgating one or another aspect of them in prose. As we shall see in the following chapters, he was successful, if we measure success in terms of dedication and quality of thought.

POLITICS

The most interesting tracts written by Hall, with the qualified exception of his Humble Motion, were his pro-Parliamentary political pieces. His position was firm and unwavering, and what he wrote was daring, lucid, provocative and extremely articulate. The idea and ideals of politics, and to a lesser degree, religion, permeated all of Hall's work and made up the larger part of the core of assumptions that underlie his oeuvre. In order to form a balanced picture of Hall's place, character and achievement it is necessary to take a close look at his political and religious notions. It is most efficient to look at several pieces that span the length of his career and bring together political and religious themes; after all, they are the ones that remain essentially intact throughout the body of his work. Starting with the Essays, then, and moving through the Grounds and Reasons and the Letter I shall put his main theses into groups and context and compare the worldview that emerges from his tracts with that of some of his contemporaries.

Horae Vacivae, or Essays, Some Occasionall Considerations was the first of Hall's published work (1646). They were dedicated to John Arrowsmith, then Master of St John's College, in hopes that "if they chance to survive their Father, they may testify he was Sir Your most humble servant." Hall admitted the pieces were "Faint breathings of a minde burthened with other Literary employments, neither brought forth with Care, nor ripened with Age, yet such as if they bee not now blasted may be

the first Fruits of a larger Harvest. . ." (dedication). Their timeliness is implied by reference to them in a contemporary letter by John Howell: "I Entertain'd [them] with much respect; for I found therein many choice and ripe Notions, which I hope proceed from a pregnancy, rather than precocity of spirit in you. . . . I find you have a genius for the most solid and severest sort of Studies. . ." (Howell 432).

There are fourteen essays, averaging one thousand words in length, and filling a duodecimal volume of two hundred pages. The subjects were standard ones of the period (Freeman 385), and included discussions of opinion, time, felicity, preaching, fame, studies, company, friends, dissimulation, recreations, war, religion, rewards and fables. What was not so standard in these essays is their overwhelming emphasis on politics, politicians, and religion. Hall was bold and self-assured in this work; the fact that they were written during and shortly after the first Civil War, in Durham and Cambridge, helps to explain their strong partisan spirit, and they certainly prefigure an active, caustic, effective propagandist. The most provocative pieces are the ones in which he outlines his political and religious convictions: "Of Opinions," "Of Preaching," "Of Fame," "Of Dissimulation," "Of Warre," "Of Religion," and "Of Rewards." They will be the principal subjects of my analysis. But before I examine them, I shall survey what Hall does in the other essays. In "Of Time," for example, he plays with the mainstream Renaissance religious notion of the short span of earthly life and the value of

preparing for the next: "we ought to looke how wee spend our houres here, knowing they are but the praeludium of that which shall be no time but Eternity." He proposes that the surest way to "wrest the Sythe out of the hand of Time" (this is a theme to which he returns in "Of Fame") is to have, as everyone desires, everlasting fame: to draw out "the short threed of life, by interweaving it with choice Actions, and making it though small, yet well wrought." By "acting" a person ensures "he should continue himselfe in the Admiration of Posterity," for those who act are the people most prized by poets and historians. History, and especially chronicle, writers tend "like flattering Limners to draw too favourably, or shadow ore a wrinkle; and slily forge in some secret grace. . . ." The need for admiration would seem, by the way, to be something to which royalty is particularly prone:

[Poets] taught Princes to feed them, seeing it was a cheaper way to outbrave Oblivion, then by emptying their Treasures on heapes of stones. ("Of Fame")

In "Of Felicity" one can sense the tolerant and Puritan presence of the Christian Humanist Henry More and the other Cambridge Platonists with whom Hall was involved at this time: "Now the Soule by the almost unanimous consent of the Heathen, being a Divine substance, and only mued up in this cloyster of flesh, cannot but entertain strong desires of liberty. . . ."

There is a strong verbal parallel to Bacon in "Of Studies," when Hall writes "some wits can digest before others can Chew, and some hot Stomacks turne all to good Nourishment whereas

others are so weake, that they cannot away with anything that is not Chylus before they receive it. . . ." Bacon, in his own "Of Studies" had written that "some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested. . . ." Other aspects of the essay also echo Bacon, especially its treatment of the relationship of specific ideas to suitable subjects of analysis, but there is little to be noted of the influence of the Hartlib group, which was to be so strong in his later writing on the subject of education.

Studies must be interspersed by recreation in order to be fruitful; otherwise

Bookewormes, whose heads being the Tombes of so many brave Writers, might well be supposed animate libraries, while they converse with the dead, become in a manner dead themselves, and like dreaming Dogs they retaine only some confus'd notions, which by Heterogenous mixtures beget armies of Chimera's that like Cadmus souldiers fall a quarreling among themselves. . . . ("Of Recreations")

The social, "apish" nature of humans is stressed in "Of Company", and he writes that a wise person is always aware that "Man is content to take up his manners many times on trust, yea, and at the worse hand; Customes insensibly Naturalize themselves, and wee draw them from those wee live with. . . ." It is not safe to emulate even good examples unquestioningly:

Great Men are like Summer Suns; we delight to eate the fruits of their bringing forth, but care not for lying under them, without the Interposition of a shade; yet in Winter when they are low, and feeble, we are content to admire the beauty of their Rayes. . . .
("Of Friends")

Finally, in "Of Fables", Hall expresses an interesting idea of the ideal narrative structure, one which would leave its traces on the definition of classic realism a couple of centuries later: "Where many Relations are to be knit up in one series," he wrote,

it shewes excellent cunning to joine them without a seame. Ovids Metamorphoses speake him extreame happy in this . . . whereas Ariosto will interruptly shake hands with the Reader, at halfe a Tales end and wrest his Attention to a new busin~~ess~~se.

In the Essays Hall demonstrates the insight and wit which would mature to yield such works as the Humble Motion and the Letter. That they contain little that is original is not surprising if the circumstances surrounding their production are taken into account. Their warm reception, however, argues their timeliness.

Hall's general subjects are common ones, his consuming interests, manifest as early as this first work, perhaps not so common. Embedded in the explicitly political or religious Essays are several theses which repeat themselves with notable frequency, and which Hall develops further in his later work. The three most immediately arresting are first, his basic dislike and contempt for the "multitude", as he called them; second, the destructiveness of division and faction in church and state; third, his belief in the necessity of reason and personal judgment and its proper place in religion. His general notions on politics and policy are also interesting. Hall dealt with all these issues throughout his writing career, but where a focus had

to be chosen between one or the other, he almost invariably chose politics. He was, after all, primarily a political writer.

"The multitude," he writes in "Of Opinions",

is succceptible of any opinions, being ever unconstant, suspitious, credulous, violently hurried away with them for the time, which is never long; ever greedy of liberty, though neither knowing to obtaine nor possess it. . . .

The idea of the "multitude" and Hall's awareness of it are fascinating. Some of his later work--especially with the political journals--would be aimed at precisely this group, and we may infer from the above quotation that Hall manipulated his medium consciously. By 1647, the manipulation of mass opinion was a widespread art, practised by almost every group in the complex political spectrum. Consider, for example, C.V. Wedgwood's description of London in 1641 and the early years of the war. When Charles I returned to London from Scotland in the autumn of 1641, the fountains ran with wine, and the "Citizens, heartened by the claret . . . cheered loud and long." "The welcome confirmed the King in his belief that, when it came to a trial of strength between him and Parliament, the City would support him" (18). During the Christmas season, however, a time when the Court was held traditionally in London, the King was absent and the city was economically depressed. In spite of the fact that there were many possible reasons for this depression, "the Londoners could easily enough be persuaded to debit their troubles, however unjustly, to the King's account" (36). They were in an angry mood, "and it would be easier, during the next few weeks, for Pym

and his friends to raise the Londoners than for the Lord Mayor to maintain order" (37). In 1643, Parliament in turn had its hands full trying to assuage growing discontent from people who had little money, food or fuel left after a long winter. "Suspicion and slander grew. It was freely said that the Parliament men feathered their own nests" (197) and to mollify the public Parliament thought to have that "monument of idolatry" Cheapside Cross pulled down; this backfired, however, because many Londoners were fond of their Cross, "and a troop of horse had to be sent to prevent a fight over its demolition." The nature of public opinion varied, then, throughout the conflict and beyond. Allegiance to a party depended upon where (geographically, religiously, economically, socially) individuals and groups were located, and this was as changeable as partisanship, especially in a time of nation-wide turmoil.⁵ This "fickle" group was the multitude for whom Hall had little but contempt, and whom he seemed, nevertheless, to understand very well. His feelings were shared by many--Parliamentarian and Royalist alike (Macpherson 228). If they were a nuisance, they were necessary, however. The public was needed to fund the purchase or build weapons and ammunition, and to make up the ranks of the Army:

⁵ More detailed treatment of this subject is found in Valerie Pearl, London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution (London, Oxford University Press, 1961) and Brian Manning, The English People and the English Revolution, 1640-1649 (London, Henemann, 1976).

Householders were now paying towards the relief of war distress, the cost of fortifying London, and for men, horses and arms for Essex. Richer citizens were compelled to lend money on the feeble security of "the public faith". . . . On Sundays from the pulpits they were exhorted to give alms for stricken Brentford, for refugees from Ireland, for the sick, wounded and orphans. (Wedgwood 196)

Most importantly, perhaps, public opinion often manipulated by rhetoric or sensationalism (as it was, for example, in the Cheapside Cross affair) could be decisive in almost any situation. Despite their integral part in political events, the London populace was for Hall, as for many seventeenth century intellectuals, like the working class in general; "a class apart, scarcely if at all to be counted as part of a civil society" (MacPherson 5). This social, intellectual and economic division was an ideological assumption which would not change with Hall's maturation.

Hall's comment in "Of Opinions" about the masses comes to a very illuminating conclusion: the multitude is

easie to be wrought on in matters of Religion, and that rather out of a reverentiall confidence of their Priests, than reliance of their owne Judgements, either adoring or detesting their Governours.^ò

This quotation reiterates the notion of the stupidity and fickleness of the general public, and it introduces two themes

^ò This view of the control of the masses by religious powers is the same as that held by Thomas Hobbes in his Behemoth:

B. But how came the people to be so corrupted? And what kind of people were they that could so seduce them?

A. The seducers were . . . ministers; ministers, as they called themselves, of Christ; and sometimes, in their sermons to the people, God's ambassadors; pretending to have a right from God govern every one his parish and their assembly the whole nation. (2)

which would occupy Hall to an ever-increasing degree during the remainder of his career. But it also reveals the basis both for Hall's contempt of the masses and for his interest in politics and religion. An emphasis on individual judgment and reason were gaining ascendancy in most aspects of social life during Hall's time, and his own respect for independence of judgment is a reflection of the prevailing attitude, an attitude that would eventually elevate skepticism over any religious belief.

By simply watching the events which surrounded him during the Civil War, Hall saw the influence of religion on civil policy, and it was inevitable that all his political writings would have strong religious overtones. It was an intensely religious age he lived in, and I do not think Freeman's dismissal of Hall's religious belief ("He had accepted Bacon's separation of philosophy and Christian theology and makes nothing but conventional comment about the latter" [387]) is justified. Hall was neither a theologian nor a scholastic philosopher, but all his writings show a sharp awareness of the interrelationship of religion and politics. To speak of one during this period is to speak of the other, so when Hall deals with politics, religion is never far away. Hall was not an atheist, but his curiosity did not lead him into a disinterested exploration of doctrine. What interested him was the influence religion had on civil affairs. He had experienced the vicissitudes of war and saw the resultant division in Parliament. Like all moderate Puritans he realized that religious faction could only result in renewed strife and

bloodshed, and the Commonwealth could ill afford the expense:

Multiplication of Opinions in Religion, argues that mens minds are unsettled, and the Tapour of Devotion burnes but dimly; they generally usher in uproares in the State, seldome end in verball contestation; nay One Sect subdivided, persues her owne differences with the most rancour . . . whether it be that they think errours that approach nearest to the Truth to be most pernicious, or that they can the worse tolerate them where they least expect to finde them. ("Of Opinions")

Religious persecution, regardless of its justification, is always harmful, destructive on a large scale, and above all, irrational. During a time when reason was questioning the logic of unthinking faith, and civil strife was eating away at everything else, mighty lucid explanations were needed to satisfy the questions of "rational" citizens such as Hall. They were not always forthcoming, and this fact helps to explain his intolerance of intolerance. "Wise men," he wrote, "are timerous in the disfranchising of their judgement before they suffer their consideration to be regulated with reason" ("Of Opinions").

What was forthcoming rather than reason was rhetoric, and in politics and religion both, the masses especially were led as much by the exercise of sophistry as it was by the exercise of individual judgment. The almost limitless power of the spoken and written word was well recognized by all political sides in the Commonwealth (witness, for example, the proliferation of pamphlets and political journals, the Cheapside incident, the Putney debates, the widespread fame and notoriety of preachers.) Politicians knew that their power lay in the good opinion of the masses; these are the people who give the hegemonic group their

mandate to decide difficult social, economic and other questions and to act responsibly on these decisions. In other words, the public was led by politicians capable of convincing them that the decisions made on their behalf were the decisions they themselves would have made had they had the time and opportunity. Hall understood the usefulness of rhetoric, the most central tool in the propagation of Puritanism, whether or not it had a proper place in actual religious practice:

yet what poore Orators doth God (to convince reason itselfe of his Glory) oft make use off, that they may not speake in excellency of mans wisdom, but demonstrations of the Spirit? but abstract them into a voyce, and what differs the meanest Minister, from the greatest Rabbi, humane learning being a good Hand-maide and an ill companion to divinity. ("Of Preaching")

There existed an important tension between the plain language of the Gospel and the florid language of the worldly preacher. "Embossed Language tickles the eares, nervous twitches the Heart: the one is better for an Oration, the other for a Sermon, in which there would be Ethicall Truth as well as Logically" ("Of Preaching"). Parables are most effective for the masses: "things by this doe more slily drop into the minds of Men, especially the vulgar, who will bee best led by things that come nearest to the senses. . . ." ("Of Fables").⁶ Hall's solution to the tension

⁶ Bacon too believed in the efficacy of parables, especially in the introduction of new or unusual ideas:

And every man, of any learning, must readily allow that this method of instructing is brave, sober, or exceedingly useful, and sometimes necessary in the sciences, as it opens an easy and familiar passage to the human understanding in all new discoveries that are abstruse and out of the road of vulgar opinions.

between logic and faith rested in a parallel distinction between the Old and New Testaments. The lessons which lie in the opposition of the Law to the Gospel could be extrapolated to apply to the current struggle: "The Law speakes wounds, the Gospell oyle. . . . The one shewes us we leane on the bulrush of our own merits, the other how we may find acceptation through Christ our Lord. . . ." ; "The vehemency of the one, and the delicacy of the other, are the best rhetorike to win a Soul. . . ." ("Of Preaching").

Unfortunately, among those people for whom individualistic reason was gaining ascendancy over faith, the "things that are faith's" were being cast away if they clashed with the laws governing experimentation and inductive reasoning. This is another aspect of the dilemma surrounding reason and faith; although the tension between the two had been growing clearer and more important in the sixteenth century, Bacon seems to have been the first to express the division categorically: "It is therefore wise most soberly to render unto faith the things that are faith's," "Science has hitherto been corrupted by the admixture of theology, superstition, logic, fancy, or poetry; now we must try to have it pure" (New Organon 62). As soon as things become compartmentalized into "science" versus "faith", people become aware of what they once took for granted (the things that are "faith's") and begin to make judgments, ranking some things as more "valuable" than others. An implicit religious faith which had strong ties with scholasticism and its attendant rationalism

was regarded with extreme skepticism by the new thinkers. The ignorant, wrote Hall, were bound to judge religious faith by the same criteria as "rational" science and politics, and this was disastrous. There was no great cause to wonder at the corruption of divine revelation, "since being not fordable by Humane reason, humane Reason brought it downe to that lownesse it could wade over it, and fitted it to her owne capacity, since she was not wide enough to Receive it as it was it self" ("Of Felicity"). For those completely bound by their rationality, there is little choice but atheism. When forced to "prove" religion to folk adamant in their persuasion, he suggests one follow this prescription: "The ascension of causes to one supream for Reason; and the Energy of nature, for sense, best confutes them; the one calls home their wandering senses, the other composes them" ("Of Religion"). Hall did not assume that religious faith was a by-product of reason, but he realized sectarianism was, and the fact that it largely rested on religious division argued that something was very wrong. He also struggled, as many did, with the exact place of reason in religious belief:

To prove Religion by reason, is like those tricks ^o which before performance seeme impossible, after, contemptible; . . . when our hearts are once possest of the truth of it, it seemes nothing, but a sublimated and refin'd Reason; but did Reason ever perswade it to any heart, or Antidote it, against Apostacy? ("Of Religion")

^o I have replaced tticks (from the edition of the Essays used here) with tricks, which is almost certainly the correct word. It was in common usage when Hall wrote this essay. OED

He acknowledged the validity of mainstream Puritan concept of revealed faith, but called this revelation a type of "refin'd" reason.

Since politics and religion are so closely bound, one of the foremost functions of individual reason was to mediate between the two, especially in Parliamentary proceedings, and in cases of necessary "dissimulation" the exercise of appropriate judgment would allow politicians to lie wisely:

but if it once leap over those bounds prefixed to it by Religion and Honesty, (as they say) steppe beyond the altar, what a man gains by it in his affaires he looses in the serenity of his conscience; . . .
("Of Dissimulation")

Deceit was so commonplace as to almost be a necessary part of public affairs, "both sides in their performance rather supposing they act in the darke to others." There was an extremely delicate balance between tactful vagueness and downright lies, "for wee understand not at all Machiavellian Machinations, wrought by perjury and Inhumanity, [read: the actions of the Cavaliers] but an honest and columbine kind of cunning" (ibid).

If we look at the Essays as a body they point very clearly to the formative period of a politically aware and active writer. As we have seen, Hall covered conventional topics for essays when he produced this work, and the whole reflects the attitudes fairly standard in the Parliamentary faction at the end of the first Civil War. It was, nonetheless, the writing of a man eighteen years old at best, and for a more complex and complete treatment of these subjects, one must look to two pieces of his

political maturity, the Grounds and Reasons, and his Letter. Hall became more conscious of his role as propagandist in these later pieces. What was only hinted at in the rationalism and individualism of some of the Essays (for example, his emphasis on faith as "refined" reason) is manifest clearly in this later work. In the Grounds and Reasons and the Letter Hall uses a consistent rhetorical device: once he has chosen a position, he characterizes it as "reasonable", "rational"; common sense is what all intelligent citizens should base their observations on. The opposite side, usually, is described in generalities, compared to non-empirical philosophy, and accused of the heresy of abstraction.

The Grounds and Reasons is a thirty-page pamphlet in two parts, written by Hall while he was in Scotland on commission with Oliver Cromwell and published in Edinburgh and later in London. Eventually it was prefixed to the later editions of James Harrington's Oceana. Virulently anti-monarchical, it was written to remove "the scales from the eyes of the understanding, and shew the will how better to bring about her great design of good"(preface).⁵ Since the tract was written in 1650, and Hall had acknowledged his debt to Descartes in 1649, we can assume that the influence of the French philosopher is at least partly

⁵ In his Advancement of Learning, in a close verbal parallel, Bacon had written that "the office of rhetoric is to apply reason to the imagination for the better moving of the will" (139).

responsible for the skeptical tone of the preface, although the balance is provided by Hall himself:

And it is my opinion, that as skepticism is not only useless, but dangerous; if in setting our thoughts in a posture of defence, it makes us absolutely wavering and incredulous; yet had I rather be skeptical in my opinion, then maintain it upon grounds taken upon trust, and not demonstrated.ö

Hall's objective in this piece was very clear. He was out to discredit, for obvious reasons, the institution of the divine right of kings and the veneration that it represented. He is up against the interrelationship of religion and politics again, and employs the same tactics he implied were useful in his Essays. You see, he explains, the concept of the divine right of kings, no matter what its origin or real justification, is a human appeal to religion for the sake of political expediency.

The idea of the divine right was made to seem natural by those who were best served by the people's adherence to it. This was easily brought to pass by the exploitation of their gullibility: "He knows nothing that knows not how superstitiously

ö Descartes also believed in a balanced skepticism. For both writers there existed a fine, equivocal line between that which can be explained empirically or rationally (the subjects for skeptical research), and things which were unsuitable or untouchable with this tool (the things that are faith's). Descartes wrote that, "in truth only God is perfectly wise, that is, endowed with full knowledge of the truth of all things" ("The Principles of Philosophy" 204). Further, "no more useful inquiry can be proposed than that which seeks to determine the nature and the scope of human knowledge"; we are able "to define the limits of that understanding of which we are directly aware as being within us" (Rules for the Direction of the Mind 33). The fundamental distinction between the philosophy of Descartes and that of Hall, however, lies in the latter's explicit belief in the "hand of Providence" guiding human affairs.

the generality of mankind is given to retain traditions, and how pertinacious they are in the maintenance of their first prejudices" (2). So custom spawned tradition, and coupled with education, the splendour and dazzle of court, the reverence for the heroic deeds of past ages, it formed a powerful tool for the continuance of the royalist tradition. The ignorant were led to believe that "the body politic could not languish of an internal disease, tho' its complexion be fresh and chearful" (3).

The ignorant supporters of monarchy were easily dismissed by virtue of the qualities outlined in the essays on religion and opinions. The educated and intelligent monarchists, however, were less easily explained away, and they were the group of people that Hall was bent on convincing in this paper. He endeavoured to persuade them by appealing to their faculty of reason, and he would do the same thing, to an even greater degree, in his Letter. The Grounds and Reasons is, above all else, an elaborately structured intellectual argument. It begins, on one level, with a consideration of the particular case of divine right and its raison d'être. It moves on to a comparison of the Puritan ideal of the active versus the misguided notion of the contemplative (read: non-empirical) philosophy. It ends with a series of vociferous appeals to "reason" in his audience.

The divine right is tolerated, he states, for the same reason that so many traditional institutions have stood for so long: unquestioning faith and lack of rational skepticism. Most people, "instead of bringing the senses and reason of things into

rule and method, use on the contrary to measure them by their own presuppos'd speculation; and by that means become incapable of weighing rightly the various incidences and circumstances of business" (4). The tension here is between contemplative minds and the active minds. The former, represented by the philosophers of the non-empirical tradition, are content to exist with things as they are politically and socially because they are concerned with problems only in the abstract. The active, however, are less likely to ground their arguments incorrectly, for they base them upon experience and are involved with conflicts on the concrete level. The generality of "speculative men"--the non-empirics--guide "their understandings by those notions which they find in books [and] fall not seldom by this means into considerable errors" (5). By reading about the sacredness of one ruler and extrapolating, these abstract thinkers are easily led to believe in the divinity of all rulers. Rational beings who deal in the concrete, however, realize that rulers are rulers only because of the "trust and power lodg'd in them" (5), and by extension, "a number of men by just means . . . invested with the same trust and power, are every jot as sacred, and of as much divine right as any monarch is. . . ." Those people not satisfied with abstract generalities, those involved in "the consideration of particularities, where the great scruple and difficulty for the most part lyes" (5) know that the perpetuation of the idea of the divine right is unequivocally evil. These are people who regularly "call their reason into counsel."

Rather than any cosmic claim, Hall reasons, monarchs become monarchs through war and conquest, and this renders the validity of an inherited crown void. If one looks back three or four generations (as he will do in the second part of this pamphlet) one "will meet either som savage unnatural intrusion, disguiz'd under som forc'd title or chimerical cognation, or else som violent alteration, or possibly som slender oath or articles, hardly extorted and imperfectly kept" (6). If examined rationally, the absurdity of a claim of divine sanction by a human being on the basis of political position or heredity will be obvious. History is the the best teacher, he confidently writes, because it is empirical:

And I truly conceive reading of history to be the most rational course to set any judgment right, because it instructs by experience and effects, and grounds the judgment upon material observations, and not blindly gropes after notions and causes. (7)æ

The fundamental political argument of the Grounds and Reasons runs as follows, and it will be reiterated in the Letter. A leader can be a leader only through some right, and this right depends either on election or invasion (heredity, he dismisses as an illegitimate ground for leadership, for reasons which will become clear). No matter upon what grounds a leader is established, he is bound by explicit or understood contract to the subjects he governs, and if the leader breaks this contract,

æ Bacon had written that "the form of writing which of all others is fittest for . . . variable argument of negotiation and occasions is . . . discourse upon histories or examples" (Advancement of Learning 178).

the citizens are under no obligation to fulfil their part. Further, a leader is bound to protect the people, and if unable to do so for any reason, again the people are within their right to refuse to serve or acknowledge him. This is where the idea of hereditary leadership is confuted: "whereas it is to be consider'd, that the people chusing one man is commonly in consideration of his person and personal merit; which not being the same in his son . . . that very intent is frustrated and ceases. . ." (9).

Reason provides an answer even to arguments based on political "law". Hall writes that he is often encumbered by the opinions of those who insisted that monarchy is the "law of nations" (11). To refute this he points out how

the understandings of most men, whom we know or have convers'd with, seem to agree in som general maxims, but unpolish'd, unnumbered, and unmethodiz'd, yet we see many nations differing from us in many things, which we think clearly, fundamentally, and naturally true; neither do climats and education only so diversify the minds of men, but even their understandings, and the different ways of thinking so distinguish even those of one country (12)

There are no laws (besides the "law of nature") obeyed by all people; therefore the divine right is no national law. Nor is it "natural". All people are created equal and free according to "natural law" and if nature is to design someone intentionally superior to others "then would nature fall into a double irregularity, first in deserting her method of creating all free, and secondly in making her general work merely subservient, and

secondary to her particular; which how contrary it is to that beautiful harmony of hers, I need not much insist" (11).

It is both interesting and significant that Hall uses little religious justification for his position. He admits that "[I] the briefer pass over this head, in regard that it has been so copiously treated upon by those under whose profession it falls, and that it does not immediately conduce to my design" (8). Since the institution of the divine right is a religious one, it is more difficult to argue against it from an orthodox religious position than from a secular one. Even more importantly, since the entirety of Hall's argument is based on an assumption of individual rationality in his audience, the style is not conducive to an examination of dogma or divine will. Divine Will is inscrutable and is not a fit subject for political tracts, no matter how closely the government of church and state are bound together.

Hall ends the first part of the Grounds and Reasons with a sentence that is at once an explanation, a disclaimer, and an introduction to the second part of the work:

But this is but to converse in notions, wandring, and ill abstracted from things; let us now descend to practical observation. . . . (14)

An empiricist, Hall must ever return to the examination of objects in themselves, and this he proceeds to do in the second part of the pamphlet. Conversing in notions is the role of metaphysics, an unworthy topic for an enlightened intellectual of the 1650s.

The second part of the pamphlet is not central to an understanding of Hall's politics. Titled "An instance of the preceding Reasons out of the Scottish History," it is a sarcastic, malevolent chronicle of the violent deaths of the Scottish monarchy. It reads somewhat like an inverted "Begats":

After him Corbret the second, whose son Luctat . . . the people put to death; then was elected Mogald, who following his vitious predecessors steps, found his death like theirs violent.

His son Coner . . . succeeded but . . . was clapt in prison, and there dy'd.

Ethodius his sister's son succeeded, who was slain in the night in his chamber by his piper. (16)

Hall's Letter was written on the occasion of the dissolution of the Barebones Parliament in 1653 and published in London the same year.^ø It is an extraordinarily well written piece, rhetorical and convincing, and was until recently attributed to the pen of John Milton. A twenty-page pamphlet, pro-Cromwell and anti-Parliament, written largely in formal prose, it can be considered the most mature and self assured work of Hall's political career.

He begins the work by denouncing the need for justifying the take-over of Parliament by Cromwell and the army, because the "greatest" "Revolution" to take place in English history was the result of the "Emanations of Divine Will" (3) and he, for one, is not prepared to question the inscrutability of Providence (2). God has a firm hand in the political process:

^ø The Barebone's Parliament was an interim measure set up by Oliver Cromwell after the termination of the Rump Parliament in 1653. It was succeeded by the Protectorate in December of the same year.

his designations in the altering the affairs of any State should . . . tend to a bettering of that State, and . . . that power into which he puts it, is. . . in his mind, more fit and proper to manage it than that from which he took it. . . . (3)

In two paragraphs Hall presents a religious argument justifying Cromwell's dissolution of Parliament and assumption of absolute power. The argument is similar to the treatment afforded dogma in the Grounds and Reasons. He praises the army to excess and he expresses nothing but admiration and respect for its leaders (especially Cromwell) and its actions throughout the Wars and after. These were

a sort of men whom God hath so singularly own'd, and crown'd by so many remarkable successes, that it was easily perceivable that God intended them to do strange things. (9)

Parliament, on the other hand, "lay little designes for their own greatnesses; so that, while they seemed to look direct upon the publick Interest, their businesse was to look asquint upon their own. . . " (4). The terms of praise are religious ones; the terms of criticism are secular and utilitarian. His representation of the actions of Cromwell and the men under him is vague, euphemistic and couched in religious terms. The action of Cromwell "was no more his action than it is the action of the Head moved by the Tendons and Muscles which are parts of the Body, and without which the Head itself could not possibly at all move" (15).

The position against Parliament is built on as strong an intellectual, rational argument as the earlier Grounds and Reasons. It is grounded in concrete fact. Parliament is

responsible for the mismanagement of Commonwealth property and funds. They sold off the lands of the Royalists and the Church, but employed so many middle merchants in their transactions that there was little profit for the country's coffers (6-7). They were so corrupt that in exchange for kickbacks and favours they sold land to persons who paid for it in installments from the money earned by the properties themselves, and "the Kings Lands, which being allotted for the payment of the Souldiery, were commonly over-valued by one half" (7). From these arguments Hall comes to a rational conclusion. The proper governing of a state, especially one just recovering from extended civil war, "is a businesse either to be done by the Parliament, by the People, or by the Army. The first like cunning Brokers would not do it; The second like troublesome Ideots cannot do it, and the third as wise Guardians must do it" (12). Notice, again, the secular characterization of Parliament, the contempt of the masses, and the religious connotations of the role of the Army.

The question of rightful obedience is a natural result of the replacing of Parliament by the Protectorate. To whom does one owe one's alligiance? To answer this question Hall falls back on the same argument he used in the earlier Grounds and Reasons. The laws made by any leader are binding for the actions of the leader him or her self as well as to any and all subjects, and so in procrastinating and dissimulating the case of its own dissolution, Parliament broke the law and the people are no longer bound to obey. Further and fundamentally, the people owe

no allegiance to a body unable to protect their interests. That Parliament was ineffectual in controlling the Army argues their incapacity to govern. That the Army was successful in the takeover of Parliament means that the people now owe their obedience to the party capable of defending them, namely the Protectorate. "Allegiance and Protection are so related that they cannot be separated one from another, and . . . absurdities of the contrary are such as cannot rationally be avoyded" (17).

Hall's allegiance in politics and religion underwent a growth but no radical reversal during the active part of his career; granted, he started off with only vague notions of policy and polity, but as he matured and experienced the influence of powerful political and religious figures he intelligently assimilated those parts of their philosophies which he admired and dismissed what he felt less valuable. If this examination of his political and religious ideas has yielded anything, it shows the speed at which new ideas and theories are adopted and discarded. It also affords a glimpse of the extremely complex, shifting relationship among those in control of different aspects of social life: control of the Church (the Anglicans and the Puritans--preachers and divines); and control of the State (Royalist sympathizers versus the many factions in Parliament, Cromwell and the Army). Peripherally it exposes those who were at the receiving end of the control game (the public, especially in London), and upon whom the whole structure relied for its success.

STYLE

Hall's style of writing prose reveals much more than at first it might seem to reveal, largely because the style of each piece is so different from that of the others and because the differences in each case are so closely related to Hall's sense of the particular audience he was writing for. At the same time, if one looks at his work progressively, from the Essays through to the Letter, one finds a real sense of increasing control as Hall gets older. It is regrettable that he stopped producing so young; we have no "mature style" for him: no two pieces are fundamentally the same.

Many of the techniques Hall used, some of which he tried for a time and then discarded, were ones he had encountered in the writings of earlier prose masters. The first thing I shall do in my analysis is to outline some of Hall's rhetorical techniques and give an indication of where they came from and what purpose they served. I will then look at Hall's writing against the background of the seventeenth-century consciousness of audience. A seventeenth-century writer's style strongly reflects his or her attitude toward environment, audience, and the nature of the written word as a medium of communication. In The Eloquent "I" Joan Webber characterizes the two major prose styles of the period as "Conservative Anglican" and "radical Puritan" (5). Hall's work belongs to the second of these categories, characterized by a very timebound, active viewpoint, an almost

desperate desire to convince his readers of the sincerity and importance of his subject matter, the centrality of concrete detail and the concern for current events and history over metaphysics.

When one looks at Hall from this viewpoint, one sees very clearly the typical position he held during the active part of his career. In my analysis I will look at the Essays, the translation of Johann Valentin Andreae's Societas Christiana, and the Letter. In a sense the Essays are peripheral because they were academic exercises, but they are interesting nonetheless as examples of the influence of Bacon, as reflections of early seventeenth-century attitudes, and as embryonic manifestations of his later spirit. The translation of Andreae's work was assigned to Hall by Samuel Hartlib, and was part of the reformer's plan for pansophia. As such, the translation was specifically addressed to the initiates of Hartlib's and Comenius' circle, and incidentally to those who might be influenced by the piece toward support of the group's proposals for religious and social reform. The Humble Motion was addressed to Parliament for the particular end of effecting immediate political change in the Commonwealth's scholastic and university systems. The Letter served a particular political purpose--to defend the forced dissolution of the Barebones Parliament--and was aimed at a particular audience, those who were equivocal but potential supporters of Cromwell and the Protectorate. All these pieces deal with very current events, and in this they fit nicely into the dominant Puritan trend of

prose writing, and where it suits his purpose Hall is very comfortable using popular stylistic techniques. His work is most interesting, however, in how it changes according to its audience and purpose, and this will be what will concern me most.

First, however, a short introduction to Hall and his early style--what he had to work with from the beginning.

In the preface to the Essays Hall's tutor at St. John's College attests to the individuality of their form and content:

For the language, tis continued everywhere so like itself that any may perceive he hath nowhere stretch'd his own meaning to make way for another's fancy . . . and for the matter, know this, they who are well acquainted in the closest shops where wares of this kind lie, say that he is a true man and hath not robbed any Author; the whole web (such as it is) is his own, if thou will believe him (who alone saw it woven).

(John Pawson)

Despite this avowal, even a cursory glance at the essays reveals close verbal and syntactical parallels to earlier and contemporary works, especially the Essays and Counsels, Civill and Morall, written around the beginning of the century and amended and changed in several editions by Francis Bacon. That Bacon exerted a strong influence on the early style of Hall's work is not surprising. "The appearance in 1597 of Bacon's first volume of essays," writes Ian Gordon in The Movement of English Prose, "marks not only a new literary genre but the beginnings of what is to become the dominant English prose of the seventeenth century" (108).

It is a commonplace that the "dominant English prose of the seventeenth cenntury" had as its foundation the belief that the

communication of knowledge was most efficient in its simplest form. The empirical method assumes that a "kernel" of truth is least likely to lead to errors in judgement. Hall would later characterize the role of communication as the removing of "the scales from the eyes of the understanding, [to] . . . shew the will how better to bring about her great design of good" (preface to the Grounds and Reasons), and it would be gratifying but it is not possible to attribute this same motivation to his early prose. What we can comfortably say is that the purpose of the Essays was to fulfill the requirements of a university curriculum. We can also say, however, that the essays were written with the hopes of academic advancement. If Hall did not have his career in mind when he wrote the pieces, he must have when he published them. We may assume that he wrote in a manner he thought appropriate to his academic ambitions and the academic milieu. In 1646, that manner was Baconian, and that it was indeed appropriate is witnessed by the extravagant praise awarded the work. The influence of Bacon's style shows clearly in the syntax and overall form of Hall's essays as opposed to their content, and this indicates that the works of the Chancellor were at least available for inspection at Cambridge while Hall was in attendance there, and were considered suitable stylistic models.

If one looks at the style of a few of the Essays, one can see the ways in which they were derivative. Hall begins the first paragraph of "Of Dissimulation" by setting out his proposed subject and its different sides for analysis:

Dissimulation quickens Policy, and mortifies Divinity;
in the former the tongue is the sole actor, in the
latter the heart is also an agent; the first may
sometimes be connived at, the latter always detested:
wee shall according to our cursory and imperfect
manner . . . look upon a part and joyntly.

Hall has divided dissimulation into two categories and in the body of his essay he systematically examines first one and then the other, exploring the boundary between them.

This "divide and conquer" way of examining subjects had been used in the recent past in scientific discourse (Vickers 30) and its descendant can be found today in scientific journals. The greatest usefulness of the method lay in its structure, which facilitates the amalgamation of disparate facts by breaking down any subject into precisely enumerated and therefore manageable parts. In this, it echoes its progenitor, the scientific or empirical method that Bacon himself wrote so much about.⁵

⁵ The new method Bacon wrote about consisted of two main emphases. First, there was the "Natural and Experimental History," a comprehensive collection of experiments and observations, gathered over the whole field of nature, to furnish data from which the mind could construct a universal philosophy by means of the inductive method. There were (according to R.F. Jones) three features distinctive of the inductive method. First, where syllogistic logic only glances at particulars and at once establishes high generalities, induction dwells orderly among particulars and rises gradually to general principles: "the interpretation of one experiment furnishes a principle which suggests other experiments, and these in turn lead to higher principles" (19). Second, the method is based on a purely physical foundation. Matter rather than ideal forms should be the the object of attention. Third, the basis of induction is the principle of exclusion. It operates in cases where several natures are not found when the nature under investigation is present, or are found when the given nature is absent. For example, flames produce both heat and light, but the moon produces only light. Therefore, in investigating the form or law of heat, exclude light.

From the "divide and conquer" of empirical discourse it is a short step to the same emphasis in writing sentences. According to the inductive method of research, the simplest known facts ("axioms") are combined to form a larger structure; so too in the prose style congenial to this mentality. Morris Croll, in his celebrated essay on seventeenth century prose styles, characterizes one of its main features as follows: each member of a period "does not necessarily refer back to any particular point in the preceeding member; nor does it commit the following member to a predetermined form . . . [the conjunctions employed are loose], and disjoin the members they join as widely as possible" (221). The second important characteristic of this style is its balance, achieved in these instances by members of equal length, and most often purposely interrupted for rhetorical effect. An example from the works of Bacon is in order here: "Studies serve for pastimes, for ornaments and for abilities. Their chief use for pastime is in privatenes and retiring; for ornamente is in discourse, for abilitie is in judgement" ("Of Studies").

Hall often throughout his career employed this style, but his Essays are a good place to examine it, because here his is a less polished, complex, and practised talent.

We will take a short view of Poetry,
since it hath such Relation to Fables,
that it may bee a Question
whether Poetry beget Fables,
or Fables Poetry;

it is a sweete kinde of madnesse,
which yet argues an Harmonious Soule, . . .

tis too high for a Recreation,

and too sleight for an imployment;

where it meetes with a pronesse of Nature,
very bewitching, and not easily avoyded, . . .
("Of Fables")

Here he writes about the close relationship between poetry and "fables", the nature of the poet's soul, the nature of poetry and its place in society, and the tendency innate in some people to become completely engrossed in it. Here is the energy of a mind thinking.

To get a feeling for this structure at its best, it is useful to look at Bacon: he often wrote sentences and paragraphs in which each clause would seem to be an independent thought--related to that which came before, but with a different thrust or point (Morris Croll's "energy and labor of minds seeking the truth" [208]). For example:

For as knowledges are now delivered, there is a kind of contract of error between the deliverer and the receiver:

for he that delivereth knowledge desireth to deliver it in such a form as may be best believed and not as may be best examined;

and he that receiveth knowledge desireth rather present satisfaction than expectant inquiry;

and so rather not to doubt than not to err:

glory making the author not to lay open his weakness, and sloth making the disciple not to know his strength. (Advancement of Learning 134)

In these five members Bacon is making at least four distinct but related points: first, that the current method of transmitting and receiving knowlege is faulty; second, that those who teach are interested only in superficial retention by their students;

third, that students are conditioned to expect material already half-digested for their intellectual meals; and fourth (after an aphoristic summing up of the previous member), that glory leads to pride in the teacher and sloth to weakness in the mind of the student. The quotation is an excellent example of what Croll would define as the "loose and free" style of prose writing.

Hall dates himself in the Essays by the use of parallel syntax. The legitimacy of its use in early seventeenth century prose is a much debated topic. It had for its model the works of Cicero and was consequently, according to Croll and others, a vestige that was dying, as its source, the Ciceronian style, was being obliterated by a trend toward and beyond the aphoristic and the Senecan, people having begun to hunt after more "scientific" prose styles. Vickers and others assert to the contrary that the use of parallel syntax constituted a "perfectly valid exploitation of the resources of prose, and [was] itself an art form" (115).

Bacon used it extensively:

. . . more after words than matter; and
more after the choiceness of phrase, and
the round and clean composition of the
sentence, and
the sweet falling of clauses, and
the varying and illustration of their works
with tropes and figures
than after the weight of matter,
worth of subject,
soundness of argument,
life of invention, or
depth of judgment.

utterly to reject it,
a heady lightnesse.

The last technique I will examine is the use of metaphor or "similitude". Especially as the century progressed, many writers scorned its use, most specifically in the sermon (Gordon 126). Nevertheless the earlier conception of its usefulness is thoroughly described by Henry Peacham:

First, they [tropes in general] give pleasant light to darke things, thereby removing unprofitable and odious obscuritie. Secondly, by the aptness of their proportion, and nearnesse of affinitie, they worke in the hearer many effects, they obtaine allowance of his iudgement, they move his affections, and minister a pleasure to his wit. Thirdly, they are forcible to perswade. Fourthly to commend or dispraise. Fifthly, they leave such a firme impression in the memory, as is not lightly forgotten. (Vickers 148)

The "similitudes" used by Hall are common ones, and they appear frequently in his Essays:

Thus are we like flowers nurst by the wind, and if we escape a violent hand in our bloome, we after wither and droope into the Bosome of our mother Earth: . . .
("Of Time")

These are like Noahs Crow sent out in Espiall of the weather, which being entertained with carrion was content to live in exile. ("Of Felicity")

. . . Historians like flattering Limners draw too favourably, or shadow ore a wrinkle; and slily forge in some secret grace; . . . ("Of Fame")

It is worth noting that one of the few comments made by Hall on the theory of style is concerned with the nature and use of the metaphor: ". . . it is but truth apparelled like a fiction; things by this meanes doe more slily drop into the minds of Men, especially the vulgar, who will be best led by things that come nearest to the Sense" ("Of Fables"). This is reminiscent of

Bacon's justification of the use of "parables" "as a method of teaching, whereby inventions that are new and obtruse and remote from vulgar opinions may find an easier passage to the understanding" ("Of the Wisdom of the Ancients" 698). This similarity is not surprising, nor can it be construed as proof that Hall had read this particular passage, for both writers in this sense were clearly in line with contemporary opinions on the value of this stylistic device (Vickers 152).

The project of writing essays was assigned to Hall as an academic exercise; he chose a style for them that was strongly influenced by the academic audience who read them and presumably judged his career in the balance. That they were successful extra-academically argues their appropriateness to the attitudes current in England in the earlier 1640s. That they were almost entirely derivative in both form and content is not surprising; their author was nineteen years of age in his first year of university, and not only topics, but in all probability his sources, would have been determined by curriculum. Once he started moving away from the university community, Hall's influences, and audience, would change.

A Modell of a Christian Society was a commissioned translation of Johann Valentin Andreaea's Societas Christiana. The piece was written with a specific reader in mind: an educated, "rational", enlightened reformer, sympathetic to the cause of Puritan religion and universal learning. This is a useful work to look at, both because we know specifically to whom

it was addressed (the translation was dedicated to Hartlib), and because it is a set piece, that is, a translation in which Hall would be especially aware of his syntax and style.

The thesis of the work is briefly outlined by Hall in his dedicatory letter to Samuel Hartlib:

. . . for as tis observ'd in great works of Providence, that Commodities are dispers'd into severall Countries to occasion mutuall relief and consequently Commerce, why may we not judge it of minds? since one Countrey can neither engrosse all great spirits, nor one great spirit all knowledge.

A Modell of a Christian Society outlines a plan for the successful "dispersal" of minds into "severall Countries"--pansophia. His task then, like Andreae's earlier one, is to make his enlightened audience aware of the obvious: to prove, as it were, the feasibility of the pansophic enterprise. To this end he employs a language and style familiar and trusted by those to whom the letter and following text are addressed. This style was the "loose and free" that Hartlib himself, along with his associates, practised.⁶ It is close to that of the Essays, but

⁶ Hartlib's "loose and free" is representative of the style practiced by his group and other educational reformers of the 1640's and 1650's:

Secondly, I think it fit to move that assistance may be given towards the endeavours of Ecclesiasticall Pacification, and taking away of scandales and differences amongst Protestants first, and then also if it bee possible amongst all other Christians, that the first part of our Evangelicall profession may be to set forward to some perfection: And the assistance to be given to this endeavour, may be besides the Spirituall Councell (which by men of Spirituall parts should be suggested to the Agents;) and unblamable and peaceable conversation toward all men (which every one is bound to intend for himselfe) though different in judgment from each other, a supply of meanes to maintain the

less self-consciously structured. Hall was maturing and seemed to avoid, for the most part, the laboured style he sometimes fell prey to in his earlier work. "The 'loose and free' of men well grounded in Latin," writes Gordon, "was the result of a conscious choice of a firmly controlled style for serious communication" (116). And further, "the educated renaissance writer had been brought up to accept (to quote Greene) . . . 'a certaine decorum'; the manner should suit the matter" (123).⁸ The overall tone created by the prose style of A Modell of a Christian Society is one in which a sensible and rational gentleman states obvious truths and implies others, addressing himself to those who share his concerns. The text relies heavily on human "experience", universal by implication. Here is his first paragraph:

That nothing approaches nearer to God than Unity, nor recedes further from him than dissonancy, the consciences and experiences of all men do sufficiently evince: yet doth that enemy of mankind the diuel sow such dissentions in their hearts, that while everyone wholly applies himself to his own particular, all faint under the generall burthen, and raise nothing but

correspondency and the printing of treatises and letters; without which the negotiation of this matter towards Divines will bee wholly lame and imperfect ("A Motion Tending to the Publick Good of this Age (1642)" 102).

⁸ Gordon's definition of the "loose and free" is similar to Croll's, but he makes a distinction between the "Baroque" (writers such as Browne, Taylor, and the sermons of Donne), and the more compact and less ornate style of writers such as Bacon. "'Loose' to a seventeenth-century writer meant simply non-Ciceronean and implied a Senecan basis; 'free' described a sentence-structure in which the clauses were not interlocked but each emerged from the previous by a process of accretion" (113-114).

various complaints, now exclaiming against the difficulty of nature, now accusing the importunity of the world, now deploring the shortnesse of life, now blaming the slipperinesse of fortune, and in a word, shaking, by any excuse, the fault from themselves, while all these evils might be most happily redress'd, and good things promoted (so farre as the state of man and the world would permit) by a free communication of all things among good men.

First, note that the paragraph consists of only one period, but that the period can easily be divided into at least three different members. The first is a statement of the general thesis, that God desires unity, but humans, through the interference of the devil, sow dissonance. The second member supplies different examples of how this dissonance manifests itself in the lives of humans, and the third proposes a very simple solution to this universal problem: free communication. Certainly this follows the dominant pattern of "loose and free" in the earlier seventeenth century. The opening member can exist as an independent thought, and does not rely on the following ones for its sense--they are not interlocked but, in the words of Ian Gordon, "each emerge from the previous by a process of accretion" (113-114). On first examination there would appear to be an internal balance in the paragraph, the long initial and final members containing the short, stacatto bursts of the middle one, but the argument does not have the circular structure usually attendant on Ciceronean periods. The reader's attention is most successfully maintained by the changes back and forth in member structure-- the effect is enhanced by the movement from the abstract "Unity of God" and "dissonance of the Devil" to the

concrete examples of this dissonance, back to the generalization of universal knowledge as a cure-all.

Hall has chosen a style that suggests that the truths and implications he is revealing are obvious and self-evident ones. The way in which this is accomplished can be seen in the method he employs to "prove" his argument. The first member is an obvious truth. This is the proposition he proves through what follows. The second employs different form (parallel syntax) to set up a series of paradoxes, suggestions contrary to the self-evident first member. Each one expands this paradox and seems to make it less refutable. One can almost see the reader nodding more and more vigorously in agreement as s/he progresses down the list. The final member interrupts the one preceding it (which, presumably, could have been continued indefinitely) and sets out a logical resolution to the paradox. Hall was employing a very common prose style in which, "the desired effect [in this case, to 'prove' the efficacy of the third member] is . . . characteristically produced by conspicuous differences in form, either with or without differences of length" (Croll 213). Hall's enlightened audience could appreciate the complex but progressive and lucid description of the universal human experience.

The concrete nature of the narrative and the lack of tropes such as metaphor in this period reflect a growing tendency toward the plain and simple which would culminate in the Royal Society's insistence on the use of the "language of Artizans, Countrymen

and Merchants" (quoted in Gordon 123), although, with a "certaine decorum" and an awareness of the educational and intellectual background of his audience, Hall need not go to extremes in this case. It would appear that Hall is here less concerned with impressing his audience with his vocabulary than with convincing them by the style of his translation. This reinforces the suggestion made at the opening of the analysis of the piece that an assumption underlying the whole is the shared quality of human experience, and this is reflected in both the argument itself and his conscious choice of unostentatious words. The vicissitudes listed in the central member are ones undergone by most people, and the opening member relies on "the consciences and experience of all men". The final member posits a "happy" and simple solution of universal proportions, and again, one which has been proven effective in the past through experience (a solution such as the dedicatory letter to Hartlib alludes to).

The success of this translation depends on its retention of the social spirit of "pansophia", or universal knowledge, the subject of the piece. That it is a successful example of original prose written in, but not restricted by, the dominant prose style of the period is proven by its adherence to general rules of good "loose and free" grammatical construction, coupled with Hall's consciousness of the demands of his enlightened, elite, Puritan audience. He comfortably works in the overarching theme of the universal, social nature of pansophia without compromising the

stylistic ideal of the examination of the particular--the "divide and conquer" technique.

An Humble Motion to the Parliament of England Concerning the Advancement of Learning: and Reformation of the Universities (1649) demonstrates very nicely the quick maturation of Hall's prose style. Written two years after he left Cambridge in disgust and strongly influenced by his involvement with the Hartlib group, it gives us our first glimpse of Hall as a talented and persuasive political writer, one who would soon be involved with Marchamont Needham and the journal war raging between the Parliamentarians and the Royalists. His audience still includes most of the people who would have been interested in A Modell of a Christian Society, but has expanded to include the leaders of the new Commonwealth, people who are, he hopes, progressive, idealistic, and at least potentially susceptible to radical proposals emphatically presented. The major difference between this piece and the last one examined is that Hall is no longer assured of a sympathetic audience. Consequently he must be at his most assertive and convincing. It is also in this piece that we first encounter Hall as a self-conscious writer. The second half of the Humble Motion is written in the first person, presented as a type of empirical quest, and in it we can hear echoes of the style of Descartes' Discourse.

We can isolate three major determinants of the style of the Humble Motion: the standards of the Hartlib group; the work's own purpose and setting, that is, to persuade the Barebones

Parliament to a specific course of action; and the empirical ideal to which the work attaches itself and which it hopes to further. The first determined the attitudes expressed towards learning and education and perhaps also determined the strong religious overtones of parts of the text. The second determined the vocabulary and what I can only call the "oracular" style of the piece, although this style may also be partly accounted for by Hall's desire to use the prose techniques available to him to their utmost capacity. The third determined the fundamental spirit and argument of the Humble Motion.

The opening of the Humble Motion evokes the same spirit of utility as other educational tracts of the earlier seventeenth century. In the preface to Some Proposalls Toward the Advancement of Learning (1653) Hartlib wrote:

if these suggestions may be allowed, and found practicable in this our generation, we may rejoyce with those that shall reap the benefit thereof, and have this comfort to our Consciences, that we have with faithfulness performed our dutie, in a time wherein it was accepted. (Webster 166)

If the pervading essence of A Modell of a Christian Society is of the universality of human Christian experience, that of Hall's Humble Motion must be of the responsibility of every human being to take his or her part in the programme of advancement. The utilitarian spirit is coupled with a Puritan religious one, and the two combine to form a very powerful oratorical tool.

The tract can quite easily be divided into four main parts. The first is an address to Parliament, asking for their magnanimity and generous ear on behalf of the cause of

educational reform; the second is a warning against dismissal of the proposals the work makes, along with a description of the rewards to be reaped by their adoption. The third section, written in the first person, is a description first of the current state of education and then of the need for specific reforms, and the fourth is an enthusiastic vision of an enlightened Commonwealth. I will examine these sections individually, pointing out how Hall's style changes with each change in emphasis.

The first and last sections of the piece are fundamentally alike in style and purpose. They are laudatory, written in a dominantly Senecan style, and make use of many classical references for oratorical effect. For example

You have done great things for us, and equally
to what hath been done in any Nation, either
stoutly or fortunately. And if you will but
now make good our hopes in this one thing, you
will put an end to all our wishes, and settle us
in a condition which will somewhat resemble
that eternal fruition which we all breathe
after, a time of praises. (13)

The passage is written in the first person plural--one gains the impression that the writer is only the instrument of a much larger group. This adds volume to the cry for Parliamentary hearing for the proposed reforms to follow. Parliament is flattered; their achievements have been equal, indeed are superior, to those of any other nation. The second period consists of three members: "And if you . . . all our wishes; and settle us . . . we all breathe after; a time praises." The rhetorical strategy consists of parallel syntax in the first

(which expresses a contained, complete thought), linkage of the first and second by a weak comma, lack of formal coordination between the second and third. The trailing members add vividness to the first. These stylistic devices are part of the arsenal of an anti-Ciceronean, an empiricist, and a conscious or unconscious student of contemporary prose.⁵ Hall's genius uses all these rhetorical resources, and the overall effect is of a forceful man, almost demanding that Parliament should hear his plea. The religious allusions are spread abundantly throughout both sections, and the final section rises to a wonderful crescendo, painting a veritable utilitarian heaven on earth. For this effect he employs extended parallel syntax, starting off with a series of members beginning with variants of "you shall see"

. . . you shall see the Taper of a learned Piety burne
among us . . . You shall see Nature traced through all
her Turnings . . . you shall then see us freed from all
these fabulous illusions . . . You shall see the number
of Arts daily increased . . . You shall then see
Scheams of the Commonwealths brought forth . . . You
shall then see Policy reconciled to Divinity . . . You
will then have it in its native simplicity . . . You
shall have the use of the Tongues daily increase . . .
You shall have the wayes of Education made smooth . .

He then interrupts them with a long final member: "your Names shall increase in the silent motion of Time, and all Posterity

⁵ The passage is Ciceronean, however, in its argument pattern. Its main point, that Parliament "put an end to all our wishes" is contained in the middle of the period, and all other members refer either forward or back to it.

shall looke backe upon you with an eye of Piety and adoration"
(45). 8

We can classify the first and last section of the Humble Motion as standard seventeenth century address. Hall deals in generalities and specifics with the same even tone, praises Parliament's role in his encapsulated history of the last twenty years, uses conventional, rhetorical devices to set a familiar tone to the piece.

The second section deviates considerably from this pattern. Hall is directly addressing Parliament, poking them in the metaphorical chest with his forefinger and threatening dire consequences if the current deplorable state of the educational system is not rectified:

That God who is abstract wisdom, and delights
that his rationally creatures should search after
it, and that his Ministers should study to
propagate it, will expect that you should be
Foster-fathers of knowledge. He may punish your
natural children with stupidity or ignorance, if
you do not take the day while it is yours, to lead
them into the paths and Mazes of Science. (15)

The courteous, formal, and florid language of the first section is replaced by shorter periods and sharper, more violent diction. This quotation is made up of seven clauses of more or less equal length and emphasis, making point after point, building these up to form a concise and compact list of the responsibilities of Parliament. The urgency and righteous anger

8 Notice also how he incorporates the extended sight metaphor through to the last of the period.

of the educational reformer are revealed in both argument and syntax.

It is in the third and central part of his argument, however, that Hall reaches the peak of vehemence. He begins with an idea:

. . . I could never yet make so bad an Idea of a true University, as that it should serve for no nobler end, then to nurture a few raw striplings, come out of a miserable Country-school, with a few shreds of Latine,

that is immusical to a polite ear as the gruntling of a Sow can be to one that is acquainted with the Laws of harmony. (25)

This is immediate, impatient and violent first-person discourse. Five parallel members are struck down by the final one--the writer carrying the reader along successive waves of disgusted words to an irreverent and funny simile. This attack continues for several periods and is followed by a succession of parallel rhetorical questions concerning the whereabouts of useful knowledge. The whole section is highly, obviously, and elaborately structured. He uses lists, classical and modern examples, parentheses, and, above all, the technique of divide and conquer so beloved by Bacon:

Secondly, that as you would (with all due provision for the civill peace) take off that hatefull gagg of licencing which silences so many Truths, and frights so many ingenuities, and makes them abhorre the publicke; so you would put such a gentle imposition upon Books, that upon every Impression two might goe to the publicke Library; and that forreigne Bookes, brought over hither in any number, might doe the like, or at least at some reasonable rate. (30)

Three equal members and effective subordination make the beginning and ending of this period equally strong and simulating. Hall, throughout this stylized and very self-conscious work, is promulgating the very "radical Puritan" point of view Webber has written about. The piece is very topical; it subordinates the artistic to the purposes of the political; its entire imaginative energy is bent on persuasion; similitude and classical reference are used, not for decoration, but to reinforce the argument (Webber 2-3). The use of metaphysics in writing, Hall states, "were so abstract, and so remote from use, that they seemed to hurry the minde too far away, and make it too volatile and aery, and so difficultly attainable" (38).

The fourth and last piece to be looked at in the examination of Hall's evolving prose style is A Letter Written to a Gentleman in the Country, touching the Dissolution of the Late Parliament and the Reasons Thereof (1653), and in it we can see Hall using available rhetorical resources with a self-conscious mastery that makes the piece his most impressive. To appreciate the style we must keep in mind the purpose of the work. It is avowed propaganda, its purpose similar to that of the translation of Andreae: to prove the obviousness and natural "rightness" of what

⊗ In this, too, Bacon and Hall followed the same stylistic model. "Bacon's definition of rhetoric" wrote George Williamson, "involves all that may be added to an argument in order to make it persuasive; . . . Hence 'the office of rhetoric is to illustrate reason by imagination for the better moving of the will'" (163).

he is commanding, in this case, the actions of Cromwell and his army.

The piece can be divided into two parts; the first asserts the role of Providence in the late dissolution, and the second asserts a social and political justification for the same acts. The most striking stylistic resource employed in the tract is the voice--it is a very comfortable and self-conscious first person discourse, set up as an imaginary conversation between Hall (the enlightened, politically aware and confidant central figure) and the "gentleman" (characterized as enthusiastic and open-minded, but naive and ignorant to the true meaning of the forced dissolution of Parliament, and perhaps potentially swayed to either side of the ensuing debate).

The entire piece is hard-line pro-army, pro-Puritan, pro-Cromwell, and anti-Parliament, and it glorifies the recent actions of the military as enthusiastically as the actions of Parliament had been glorified in the Humble Motion. The introduction, or first section as I have termed it, is Senecan in style, consisting of mostly short, breathless members interspersed with longer, more elaborate ones. The impression is one of immediacy--one can sense the author leaning over a dinner table and trying earnestly and religiously to convince a confessed skeptic:

. . . for as this [the dissolution] . . . hath afforded the greatest Revolutions that I think any memory affords us, of any time or place, so I believe this to be the greatest of them; and so much the greater, as that it was done, in a manner, in an instant, without contestation,

without effusion of blood, and, for any thing
I can perceive, without the least resentment of
those whom it generally concerns. (11)

There is a feeling of personal involvement, and the repetition of "great", the short, choppy members, and especially the final one (where he confesses to have his finger on the political pulse of London, so to speak) introduce us to the person who is going to enlighten us as to the real meaning behind the recent actions. Hall, a good Puritan, expresses bewilderment at the recent actions of Providence:

What man could have suppos'd, after the dissolution of the Parliament preceding this last, to have had another so soon? and for this last, who could have imagin'd that by Act it should have continued, much more gloriously have undertaken the defence of an injured people by open arms against an Oppressor, and that these undertakings, with admirable variety of succeſſe, should have been crowned with the extirpation of Tyranny, and the decollation of the person of a Tyrant; that the great Omniscience should so blesse the endeavours of a Common-wealth, now as I may say in its very swadling-clouts, as by them absolutely to reduce those dominions in 3 years, which a series of proud & lusty Monarks could not in 6 Centurys do? (1-2)

This quotation not only exemplifies the immediate, Senecan style of the prose and supposed bewilderment of the narrator at the acts leading up to the recent dissolution, but it also, and most importantly, introduces the dominant pattern for the rest of the text. The body of the Letter consists of a series of rhetorical questions, followed by an acknowledgement of possible objections, a refutation of them, and finally a revelation of the true meaning behind possibly contradictory actions. For example, to this series of questions he responds that he is "neither Stoick"

to believe in Fate, nor resigned to "that saying of Plato, that To pray or fear is needlesse, it being out of our power to prevail by either." These are possible, but erroneous responses to the questions he has just raised. By implication, they are those of his "gentleman." After providing these responses he presents his own personal reaction: he has, "upon the breaking out and discovery of every hidden Counsell of above . . . thrown . . . [his] face upon the ground and submitted to it . . ." (2). This is, for every professed Puritan, the pious and proper course of action. So ends the first section.

Of course, rational explanation is required by people not so sure of the hand of Providence in political affairs. The rest of the piece is directly addressed to the imagined queries of the "gentleman":

. . . I for my part humbly submit to this mysterious and sudden action; and because I perceive you not so well satisfied with it, am content with what present reasons I can, and out of my little intelligence, and small understanding of things, give you an account. (4)

Perhaps nowhere in Hall's oeuvre is his propaganda more obviously manipulative than in this piece. The body of his argument "presupposes" the reasonableness of his reader, in the sense that to disagree with him would imply the opposite. To reinforce the rationality of what he is arguing, Hall used extended, honest, concrete examples (to reveal the corrupt practices of Parliament). This extreme topicality, if nothing else, exposes the pamphlet for what it was intended to be--an immediate boost

to the cause and morale of the newly formed Protectorate. Hall was not writing for posterity; he was producing propaganda:

. . . there have been many lands sold, first the Bishops, then the Dean and Chapters, then the King's, Queen's, and Prince's, then the Freefarms . . . and all this to be dispatched by Trustees nominated by the Parliament; . . . (7)

The narrative stance of the presumed author of the Letter is probably the single most revealing aspect of the work. The person Hall presents himself as is central to the rhetorical purpose of the Letter. A twentieth century confirmed cynic might propose that he wrote the first section of A Letter--the part in which he ascribes Divine motives to political action--to protect himself against possible action against him by Parliamentary sympathizers or Puritan zealots. Centrally, however, he presents himself as modest, and at the same time extremely trustworthy. He invites disagreement as well as collaboration, and accepts the limitations of his knowledge and sources of information. He is tentative. Many paragraphs begin with disclaimers: "And truly in my apprehension . . ." (3), "I for my part humbly submit . . ." (4), "For to speak freely . . ." (5), ". . . I conceive you to be of the opinion . . ." (9), ". . . I have thus much briefly to say, . . ." (13). Instead of bullying the "gentleman" into agreement, he gently leads him through his arguments into accepting his words as true and obvious. This is very effective rhetoric. The "gentleman" is carried gently to the same conclusions Hall had held all along. If asked after reading the piece to sum up the contents of it in one sentence, the

"gentleman" might easily reply: "One cannot 'rationally' malign the actions of a body of people (the Army) who have, throughout the Civil War and beyond, done nothing but look after the best interest of its citizens, especially against the late great but now slothful and self-serving Parliament."

Hall's assumed audience is defined by its skepticism of the efficacy of the actions of the Army. He is a potential supporter of Parliament, but because he is reading this piece he probably has some Army sympathy. That Hall wrote this pamphlet then, not for a group of people who shared his view, but for one who was perhaps not quite so enlightened is another indication of its manipulative side. He is presenting an encapsulated history of the last twenty years of English Parliament for those whose memory is a little bit hazy, and moreover presenting it as fair, incontrovertible and unbiased. I mentioned before that Hall claims to examine possible objections to his reasoning--he is rational, in control, and above all, sure of the rightness of what he is saying:

The Liberty of the People being recovered by the Sword, that is to say the Army, this Army continuing as a Mediator, or . . . a Supervisor of the Peoples Liberties, it must be proper for them to see that no encroachment may be done thereupon. (9)

The Letter is, because of the sophistication of the stance of the narrator, probably the most effective piece of propaganda Hall produced. It lacks the simplicity and obviousness of the Grounds and Reasons (Hall's other arguably manipulative text), but still clearly reveals its purpose by its construction. His

style has matured to the extent that he can has sufficient control to achieve exactly his purpose: to equate support of the Protectorate with "reason" in his audience.

EDUCATION

When Hall went up to Cambridge in 1645 the university was in turmoil. Both Oxford and Cambridge were undergoing a period of rapid and bewildering transition. Hall experienced it, was deeply affected by it, and wrote about it in his best known and possibly best piece of prose, the Humble Motion. It must have been disconcerting to find the system in the shambles in which he found it. As he explained in the first few pages of the Humble Motion, "the body of learning lyes scattered in as many pieces as ever Medea cut her little brother into" (5-6). He isolated five major areas of trouble. First, the purging of the universities of people refusing to swear allegiance to the new order "removed many persons of a more thriving and consistent growth in learning, then it either left there, or planted in their stead" (5). Second, although Parliament had already changed the academic hierarchy of the schools, it had refused to deal with the university's archaic and inefficient system of funding by particular bequest. Third, no government body was canvassing for or organizing donations to the university, as the established Church had done for centuries. Fourth, "we seem insensible to the great genius which animates and conducts this present Age," that is, to the advances in philosophy and science which were widely

recognized in the universities on the Continent. And fifth, those persons "being many times big with Heroick designs, perish for want of assistance in the delivery" (6). All these deficiencies are directly attributable to the neglect of Parliament. Hall found it bewildering that a body which had done so much toward the furtherance of fundamental liberty could "remit one grand consideration which must diffuse it selfe through all, and knit them together . . . The most effectual advancement, I meane, not the bare permissive propagation of Learning" (5).^ñ

The Humble Motion, then, is a tract that proposes specific answers to each of these problems. It includes a description of past and current attitudes toward learning. It counters possible objections to educational reform: that the Commonwealth universities were already the most well-known in the world, that their interests were being sufficiently looked after, that to change the system of funding would be to violate wills extant and establish a dangerous precedent. Hall answers these charges in concrete terms, and the Humble Motion, through sections which deal individually with each of the disadvantages faced by a university student, is transformed into a recipe for what Hall

^ñ Hall's indictment of the universities may have been somewhat enthusiastic, but it was based on solid fact. The traditional Cambridge curriculum was in a state of transition. The logic of Aristotle was being replaced by that of Ramus. History was being studied for the first time with "intelligence" (Mullinger 420). Nevertheless, the study of mathematics had been replaced as compulsory by that of grammar (Mullinger 401-402). And, though the mechanical arts were flourishing in Continental universities, Commonwealth scientists, to a large extent, were in self-imposed exile from an academic community which did not encourage their study (Mullinger 573-574).

calls the "great designe of Religion" (11), that is, the advancement of learning.

In Hall's view it was a scandal that still in the late 1640s students were graduating from university furnished

. . . with those rare imaginations of Materia prima, Privation, Univesalia, and such Trumpery, which they understand no more than their Tutors, and can no more make use of in the affairs of life, then if 3000. yeares since they had run through all the Hyrogliphicall learning of the Egyptians, and had since that time slept in their Mummy, and were now awoken.
(26)

In this, Hall was in agreement with many others who wrote in favour of university reform: the greatest abuse of the existing system was the undue veneration for the authority placed in the wisdom of the ancients. He argues that the hierarchical rank of different branches of learning stands only "by assent of sense, distorted by education and browne by custome" (22). And he worries that in particular the canon studied currently in universities

must be accounted just such with us as the favour or envy of Poets and Historians are pleased to make and represent them, so vast is the Prerogative of letters, that they can dispense not onely life, but estimation and glory unto whom they please, and command the reputation of past and the belief of present and future ages. (10)

He The common opinion held by most educational reformers in the 1640s is characterized by R.F. Jones. He writes that "if servility to the authority of the ancients precluded examination of traditional beliefs, no hope could be held out for increased knowledge, and if assent were too easily granted, without clear proofs and demonstrations, no certainty could reside in learning" (119-120).

Ages prior to the current one, he writes, "were darke, beset with mists of ignorance and superstition, and they could onely direct their . . . [inquiry] that way so far as they knew it best" (18). To rely on the authority of these ages is restricting and foolish. "I thought it would be too stupid humility, to rest with the traditionall wisdome of our Ancestours, and not to looke after further enlargement and advancement" (35).

This "too stupid humility" is what he, by implication, is accusing Parliament of. The whole of the Humble Motion is suffused with a sense of urgency and a very explicit notion of history as a tide which will move forward and lead to social progress with or without Parliament. This tide has very strong religious impetus:

But to advance knowledge to its highest and truest end, how necessary and subservient will it be to that great design of Religion, which without an immediate concourse and favour of Providence, can scarce either subsist without it, or preserve itself untainted with gross errors, or distempered imaginations. . . .
(10-11)

In this theme Hall resembles no-one more than Samuel Hartlib, who believed that "education is the solemn obligation of the state, since it is a necessary condition for salvation, which is the primary goal of man" (Webster 11).

The opening pages of the Humble Motion contain an implicit threat to Parliament; one that is almost pointed enough to be slanderous:

It hath been the usual design of Eternall Wisdome in the pursuance of any of his high Designes, to render his Instruments, while they continued faithfully usefull, full of honour and successe: But when they

once began either to stand still, or look back; to decline that honour which he had formerly cast upon them, and to wrap it up in a cloud of forgetfulness and misery. . . . (1)

Hall insisted that the advancement of learning would glorify the Commonwealth and canonize Parliament:

What better meanes have you to confute all the scandals and imputations of your deadly adversaries . . . then by seriously composing your selves to the design of cherishing . . . [Civility and Literature]? (13-14)

What better ways to your profit, then to command an abundance of fruitful wits, which shall every day bud forth with some invention, serviceable either to the necessities of the poore, or graver magnificence of the rich? (14)

The glory of the Commonwealth is directly dependent on Parliament's support of its subjects, and it is Parliament's religious duty to advance the new learning. The utilitarian argument, that the state of the Commonwealth can only improve by Parliament's encouragement of learning, and the Providentialist one (that educational advancement is a religious duty) combine to form a new, very powerful argument.

Hall flatters Parliament in a way reminiscent of the dedication of Bacon's Advancement of Learning, but the foundation upon which his case is based shows some interesting biases about the state's proper role in education. He writes:

That God who is abstract wisdom, and delights that his rationall creatures should search after it, and that his Ministers should propagate it, will expect that you should be Foster-fathers of knowledge. . . . And will he, think you, forgive you (you being Fathers of the Publickweale) if you forget those that are your children in that relation? (15)

Parliament is the father to its subjects, and as such has an ultimate responsibility towards each individual's wellbeing, for which it is answerable to God. The role of Parliament, then, is similar to that of the universities: to "tend . . . to a publicke advantage." The rulers of a nation must be enlightened, and in order to be enlightened a ruler must be educated (8). This emphasis is peculiarly close to Bacon, who wrote, in an almost exact parallel,

under learned princes and governors there have been ever the best times: . . . if they be illuminate by learning, they have those notions of religion, policy, and morality, which do preserve them and refrain them from all ruinous errors and excesses. (Advancement of Learning 44)

In the universities of the late 1640s, there were several fields of inquiry--Hall mentions Chemistry, Anatomy, Mathematics, the examination of old tenets, History, surveys of Antiquity, and Languages--which were either not being studied at all, or if they were, were being studied according to a set of outdated assumptions:

We have hardly Professours for the three principall faculties, and these but lazily read, and carelessly followed. . . . [Where have we learning] Free from Pedantisme, and the impertinencies that kind of learning hath been pestered with? And all this done not by some stripling youngster, who perhaps understands that which he professes as little as everything else, and mounts up into the chair twice or thrice a yeare, to mutter over some few stolne impertinencies. . . ? (27-28)

This is, according to Hall, the end of the current university curriculum. Students are sent up too young, spend their time reading works in old languages by writers long since

dead, too ignorant or lazy to understand even if the authors were alive to explain their work. Fellowships are awarded by favour, rather than being bestowed on "men, excellent in their particular endowments, and peculiar for some use or other" (29). Instead of producing men able to deal rationally with the many difficulties they are bound to encounter in life, the universities are producing men who are no better off than they were on arrival:

I could never yet make so bad an Idea of a true University, as that it should serve for no nobler end, than to nurture a few raw striplings, come out of some miserable country-school, . . . and to be delivered over to a jejeune barren Peripatetick Philosophy, suited onely . . . to wits that are seated below Mediocrity. . . . (25-26)

Adherence to the old canon is leading to students who are

turned loose, and with their paper-barks committed to the great Ocean of Learning; where if they be not torne, they return backe so full of desperation . . . and sad remembrance of their youth so trivially spent that they . . . suffer themselves either to sinke in a quagmire of idlenesse, or to be snatched away in a whirlpool of vice. (26)

One is tempted to question to which of these two terrible fates Hall succumbed, but it would seem that he suffered no lasting adverse effects.

As is to be expected, Hall has in mind very specific reforms for the university curriculum, and he devotes the most passionate eloquence of his Humble Motion to the delineation of them. He asks,

Where have we anything to do with Chimistry, which hath snatcht the keyes of Nature from other sects of Philosophy, by her multiplied experiences? Where have we constant readings upon either quick or dead Anatomies, or ocular demonstrations of Mathematicall

Theorems and Instruments? Where a promotion of their experiences, which if right carried on, would multiply even to astonishment? Where an examination of the old Tenets? Review of the old experiments & traditions which gull so many junior beliefs, . . ? Where a ready and generous teaching of the Tongues? (27)

What most of these proposed changes have in common is the empirical method they assume. The empirical method, for Hall, is centered on the belief that

it were profitable to take in many needlesse things, then to leave out one needfull, because a judging mine out of many particularities, could draw better estimate of things, and deduce more certaine, and unquestioned axiomes. (36)

The inductive method of reasoning and experimentation was given its first comprehensive elucidation in the works of Bacon. The method depended on the aphorism:

. . . knowledge, while it is in aphorisms and observations, it is in growth; but when it once is comprehended in exact methods, . . . it increaseth no more in bulk and substance. (Advancement of Learning 34)

Further

. . . the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the works of God, worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby; but if it work upon itself, . . . then it is endless. . . . (Advancement of Learning 26)

These quotations contain several important empirical ideas: first, that research into material nature is limited by human experience of that nature and that inductive research is the proper method for questing after knowledge; second, that visible fact, judged by reason and proven by experiment, is the foundation of inductive research; and third, that skepticism,

rather that implicit faith is the habit of mind necessary for valuable discovery. Hall writes:

I could not devise any better meanes then to make the mind pliant and passable to any Truth, to free her from all these inguinated prejudices of education, tradition, or childish observation, and then withall to plant such a doubtfulnessse in her, as should not easily assent to any one thing which was not fortified with strong reason and right experience. (39)

That the empirical ideal permeates the whole of the Humble Motion is not surprising. Its implementation is only part of a new emphasis on the natural and simple as opposed to the complex and obscure that Hall felt had dominated science and education to its great detriment. In Hall's list of subjects slighted in the existing curriculum (chemistry, anatomy, mathematics, examination of old tenets, history, surveys of antiquity, languages) what become immediately obvious is the centrality of experience. Every human being has the capacity to perform the mechanical processes involved in the study of the applied sciences and individual inclination has only to be discovered in order for everyone to contribute in a meaningful way to the advancement of science. Hall's emphasis is on the "naturall and easie" (39); the "genius of each one . . . [should] be employed and cherished in its own kinde" (35). As things now stand, however, knowledge seems "rather to follow the conceptions of the Observatour, then to be naturally enforced from the things themselves" (36). Education should be started in early childhood. This is the time when "the natural vergency of . . . [individual] Genius should be found out and assisted;" (35)--"education would thrive the best in any

place, that was the least cumbered with unnecessary notions, and did the most facilly and orderly insinuate it selfe into the understanding" (34). Unnecessary notions are what make up the bulk of the non-empirical philosophy currently being taught: "the Predicaments were so untowardly ranged, that a man's minde shall not without some hesitation know where to fasten; and then when he hath pitched there, he is but engaged in dispute" (38). The path to successful, enlightened, experimentation and progress is a simple and straightforward one:

For then it will prosper with Learning, when rewards fit themselves to men, and men are not forced to distort themselves to rewards; when every mans Genius moves in its owne orbe, and is not hurried aside in an eccentrick motion. (30)

Hall not only proposed drastic changes in curriculum and scientific method but insisted that they be supplemented by an efficient, centralized organizational hierarchy introduced to control all aspects of academic life. In order for the advancement of learning to be effective it was necessary that the colleges assume the role of supporter to the new, controversial, and experimental fields of enquiry. This would ideally result in an amalgamated, national, comprehensive system of education and experimentation. Hall emphasizes that such support must not only be of a financial nature (in the form of internal and external endowments and fellowships) but must be structured in such a way that it will "tend rather to publicke advantage, then to the private fostering of many idle Pedantick Brotherhoods. It now lies lick mucke, and possibly is noysome to the place where it

is, but spread it abroad, it will manure all the Land, and return the increase of an unvaluable and happy harvest" (17).

Politically, Hall felt it was Parliament's prerogative to reorganize the internal and external academic structure. Internally, he recommended that the system of funding be revamped and the awarding of fellowships be made more equitable. As things now stood, the bulk of existing endowments were earmarked for the support of fellows, with very little being reserve for professors. Hall believed the opposite should be the case; after all, the advancement of learning could not be guaranteed by "many Idle Pedantic brotherhoods." The restructured system of funding would allow for three things: first, for the support of professors, "excellent in their particular endowments, and peculiar for some use or other"; second, for the aid of instructors, who are "others of more patient heads . . . [engaged] to instruct those severall persons which should make addresses to them." Finally, support should be given to "a third possibly, worne out with contemplations and those greater labours of the mind . . . [that they] might sit warme, and know nothing lesse then necessity in their honoured old age" (29). The balance of available funds should go where they are most needed--administered by a committee set up for the purpose.

Externally, all Commonwealth colleges should be organized under a state structure. As they existed with no-one to answer to, most of the smaller institutions are "without any delight to any but those who love bawling and canvasing . . . unlearned

opinions. . . ." (30). He also proposes that licencing be removed, "Antiquities" be collected in libraries, and that "all respect and honour" be cast "upon learned forreigners, although you use no largess toward them" (31).

The financial and academical reforms proposed by Hall in his Humble Motion would all be enhanced by the third concept which is of central concern to him: the utilitarian end of exploration and experimentation. If these are encouraged in the proper way, he writes, "You shall see Nature traced through all her Turnings, to a clear demonstration of her first cause, and every day bring forth varieties of experiments either to the relief, astonishment, or delight of men." Further, "You shall then see Policy reconciled to Divinity, Morality, and it self, and yet better able to lay designes and prevent dangers" (44). Science, education and the new philosophy hold the key to the relief of human estate, increased happiness and temporal comfort, the avoidance of civil disorder, and the glorification of the state. In short, it promises mastery over the nature which from time immemorial had held mastery over humankind.

Closely related to the social role of learning is the social role of the community of learning itself. In the Humble Motion Hall writes of the ideal of a large open network of community and communication to exist among the universities and people of learning throughout Europe. "I have ever expected," writes Hall,

from an University, that though all men cannot learne all things, yet they should be able to teach all things to all men, and be able either to attract knowing men from abroad

out of their own wealth, or at least be able to make an exchange. (27)⁶

If the structure of the university system in the Commonwealth could be amalgamated into a unified, comprehensive hierarchy under one governing body (the Parliament or a committee appointed by them) and its academic emphasis changed to a combination of the employment of the empirical method on concrete studies to a utilitarian end, then all of the current system's inherent abuses could be counteracted.

The Humble Motion is, above all, a very good example of Hall's inclination to combine the best of some dominant mid-seventeenth-century patterns of thought. Its utilitarian, empirical and skeptical themes emphasize personal judgement and rational "experiences" (experiments) and clearly echo the popular philosophical notions derived from the words of Bacon and Descartes. Rational skepticism got a big popular boost in the seventeenth century, especially in the writings of Descartes, and both skepticism and empiricism were central notions in the earlier work of Bacon. First of all, "experience," for Hall, "was nothing but a sober deduction and summing up of many observations" (35). This is a very familiar seventeenth-century

⁶ The idea of "pansophia" (the term is Comenius's) occupied a large part of the efforts of many social reformers during the first half of the seventeenth century. Samuel Hartlib, John Dury, and Comenius, for example, are usually spoken of together as three of the century's most zealous reformers. They said "though our tasks be different, yet we are all three in a knot sharers of one another's labours, and can hardly bee without one anothers helpe and assistance (Webster 8). Bacon proposed the establishment of a college of natural history in a further bid for cooperation (III, 323).

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tenet; Bacon "enshrined the work ethic" (Jacobs 33) when he wrote that the correct methodology of science was "the laborious and sober inquiry of truth" in opposition to "the high and vaporous imaginations" and the non-empirical emphasis on "sympathies and antipathies, and hidden proprieties" (Advancement of Learning 42). He wrote that a common error "is an impatience of doubt, and haste to assertion without due and mature suspension of judgment." "[I]f a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties" (Advancement of Learning 35). Of course, Descartes is most famous for his philosophy of skepticism. Jacobs writes that

Descartes offers simple rules to guide . . . bold new spirits in their quest for a scientific mastery over nature: "Never accept anything as true that I did not know to be evidently so," avoid prejudice, include in your reasonings only that which presents "itself so clearly and so distinctly" that it cannot be doubted; . . . order your priorities, begin with the simple and go to the complex, . . . (59)

these writers were defining, and creating as they defined, was the empirical and skeptical frame of mind which is still dominant in science and society today.

Both Bacon and Descartes declared utilitarian ends for knowledge. The former wrote that nature exists for "the benefit and use of man", and science should be advanced "for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate" (36). The latter describes his Cartesian creation as one who "wills to use his reason to create that which he wants for himself and to 'lessen man's work'" (Jacobs 58).

The utilitarian impulse and the religious one were certainly not incompatible. It was foremost a religious mission Parliament claimed to have undertaken--performing the work of God here on Earth and preparing its subjects for the millennium. Perry Miller writes "in the seventeenth century the intellectual elements were adjuncts to faith, but in our perspective they often take on more importance; out of the philosophy came the lines of thought that continued to develop long after the religious impulse had waned." "Among the attributes of God was perfect rationality as well as absolute will and infinite sovereignty, and man was created in the image of God" (69). I quote this to emphasize the close association between utilitarianism and religious motivation. The former was not always acknowledged as the primary impulse for reform in the educational system. What many educators believed was that the end of the new learning was a clearer understanding of teleological design primarily, and the relief of human estate followed naturally from a proper adherence to this design. Hall puts forth that God is "abstract Wisdom" and wants his children to search for him through the "mazes of science"--he will punish them if they fail to do so (15). There is an assumption here that has to be made clear--the primary impulse of education was the furtherance of religion, and its secondary one could then be classified as utilitarian.⁸ The two were closely

⁸ There seem to be two main impulses in rational Puritanism: first, to judge all motivation and action by the highest possible standard; and, second, to entertain all thought and perform every deed with an indomitable intensity of purpose (Miller 45). The first of these would be a descendant or result from Original

bound, but the latter was definitely subordinate to the former. The advancement of learning assured a succession of literate, educated ministers for the churches. Although we must keep distinct the "savory sense an inward experience and cordial embracing of the ways of God" from the "intellectual, notional, though right knowledge of the truths of Christianity" (Miller 83), the second aspect was integral. A minister could, through the use of intellectual argument, lead his flock to a greater desire for an experience of knowledge and truth, though he could not provide this directly. The conclusion to which Edward Reynolds arrived for this marriage was that "Sanctified Wit beautifies Religion, sanctified Reason defends it, sanctified power protects it, sanctified Elocution persuades others to the love of it" (Miller 84).

There are aspects of Hall's Humble Motion which are more compatible with a Puritan ideology than others, but the overall spirit of the work is mainstream, rational, enlightened and religious. If education is given the encouragement it deserves, he concludes,

Sin--human beings were created in the image of absolute perfection (the standard), and we are immeasurably debased. The second goes hand in hand with the doctrine of grace--humans must remain conscious of the divine norm and judge everything by the standard of the infinite, even if we cannot conceive of the infinite. If we define the seventeenth-century utilitarian worldview as one characterized by the impulse toward the greatest good for the greatest number of people, the two doctrines seem to dovetail nicely. Puritans, because their doctrine taught that whatever was practically useful was invented or discovered by the providence of God, would naturally support advances in science, or education, as long as their utilitarian ends could be proven.

You shall see the Taper of a learned Piety burne among us, I hope, like an immortall lampe, fed with refined and sublimest knowledge, whilst all those false lights of ignorance, humane forgery, and superstition shall vanish away, or be put out, and the stubborne perversity of humane reason turn'd into a gentle compliance to divine truth. (43-44)

CONCLUSION

The most striking qualities of the work of John Hall are its unevenness and its overall heterogeneity. From writing poems in conventional lyric forms and then essays in the best Baconian tradition, Hall moved on to social and educational reform, and that introduced him to politics. He published books, journals and pamphlets and circulated material in manuscript. He supported both Parliament and the Protectorate at different times, and changed his prose style as often as he did his subject. The question we are left with is this: is there any principle of consistency around which the collected works cohere?

As my analysis of Hall's work will have shown, I believe there was a principle of consistency in what he wrote, and I believe it was his empirical habit of mind. That habit is most readily apparent in his Humble Motion, where (for example) his argument for the encouragement of students' natural inclination is delivered in the form of an inductive quest. Among the men he had examined individually he found

particular Temperatures . . . and some secret Sympathies and Antipathies to some, or some particular studies, whilst there were very few intellectuall complexions that desired all; and these enjoyed not the particulars so fully as those bent that particular way. . . . From this masse of observations I fell to consider thus, . . . (32-33)

It is very difficult to overlook the emphasis on the "particular" here and the presence of Baconian procedures for discovering the general truth incorporated in a set of particulars. Hall's

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Essays, too, show his empirical bent, in the centrality of aphorism: "For Atheists, . . . tis better to tell what they think not, then what they thinke" ("Of Religion"); like Bacon, he is thinking of an aphorism as the container for the results of an empirical examination: it is pregnant with the truth that lies behind a set of particulars.

Accurate observation of particulars and clear-headed discrimination of general truths are hardly possible without the exercise of that individual judgement that Hall insisted upon throughout his career and that rational skepticism that he espoused after reading Descartes. Both, then, are a part of his empirical bent, and this being so, his recommendations in his Humble Motion, to ground the curriculum in the study of concrete subjects, to award financial support by merit rather than tradition, to use learning to an ultimately utilitarian end, all testify to his empirical habit of thought, as does the rationalization of the Grounds and Reasons, with its appeal to the skeptical nature of rational people: "had I rather be sceptical in my opinion, than maintain it upon grounds taken on trust, and not demonstrated" (preface). Hall's rhetorical stance in the Letter derives from the same spirit: he presents his mission as one of convincing a skeptic, argument by individual argument, that behind the dissolution of Parliament lay fortuitous benefits for the nation.

Throughout the course of his career, then, Hall remained an avid Baconian empiricist and Cartesian skeptic, firmly convinced

that subject matter, rhetoric and style alike depend on individual rationalism for their effectiveness. Hall's writing demonstrates how inductive methods, which were in the process of taking over scientific research, made their influence felt in other areas. Rational skepticism, reaching out from scientific inquiry to influence actions and thoughts in other areas of life, was becoming the answer to the problems facing the enlightened seventeenth century intellectual: "You shall then see Policy reconciled to Divinity, Morality, and it self, and yet better able to lay designs and prevent dangers" (Humble Motion 44).

This emphasis on rational skepticism did not make Hall a modern positivist or materialist or relativist, however. Despite his largely scientific outlook Hall still strongly believed in the essential mystery of human existence. Human learning could only extend to a certain point at which the hand of Providence naturally took over. He maintained, for example, the medieval notion of the "book of nature" ("Master Pawson: An Ode"), but made the reading of it a twofold plan. It could be examined by any student, but could be "understood" only rarely, through extreme diligence, and not without divine guidance. He also believed human learning to be an essential path to salvation. Mere acceptance of the human condition leads to no advancement, and our natural state is that of the animals; we are only differentiated from them by our faculty of reason (Humble Motion 6-7), and it is our duty to make the most of our divinely granted reason. If learning is our duty, then it is the larger duty of

the state ("being Fathers of the Publickweale") to encourage the advancement of learning. Learning can lead only to one thing, naturally: the betterment of the human social condition. So, in the big picture, successful utilitarianism is a sign that human beings are on the right track. Such principles of coherence in Hall's work are reinforced by several important assumptions that underlie them and are present in his writing from the beginning. The central one is that nature can be understood, and it relies on others: that it is the human endeavour to understand nature, and that the ultimate end of learning is to approach as near as possible to an understanding of the nature of the divine, that is, to an understnaidng of the human place in the Providential scheme of things.

Am I better, though I could
All wisdom with a breath unfold,
And a heart boundless as the Ocean hold?

Not a whit unless that he
By whom these glorious wonders be
Lead me and teach mine eyes himself to see.
(Emblem 8, Book 1, 15-20)

Hall's work, in the assumptions and principles of coherence that tie it together, but also in its very multiplicity, dramatically reflects a mind caught up in the various elements that composed the most important moment in the development of the western intellect. In doing so, it also reflects, revealingly and movingly, much of that moment itself.

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