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Joseph Hall and Seventeenth-Century Literature

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Richard A. McCabe. *Joseph Hall: A Study in Satire and Meditation*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.

John Millar Wands, trans. and ed. *Another World and the Same: Bishop Joseph Hall's Mundus Alter et Idem*. Yale Studies in English No. 190. New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1981.

Frank Livingstone Huntley. *Bishop Joseph Hall and Protestant Meditation in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study with the Texts of The Arte of Divine Meditation (1606) and Occasional Meditations (1633)*. Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1981.

Bishop Joseph Hall—satirist, devotional writer, Anglican apologist, "harbinger" of Donne's *Anniversaries*, opponent of Milton, friend and patient of Sir Thomas Browne—has attracted a fair share of scholarly attention over the past few years, including, in addition to the works mentioned above, Frank Huntley's concise biographical and critical study and definitive discussions of his meditative works by Barbara K. Lewalski.[1] Despite the claim on the dust-jacket of Richard A. McCabe's book—that Hall should be seen as "a figure comparable to John Donne as a satirist, prose stylist, and preacher"—Hall will remain a minor figure even for students of the period. Indeed, thanks to the recent studies of his works we probably now have as full an account as we need of Hall's literary merits. The thesis of this essay is that Hall's importance in seventeenth-century literature is not adequately explained by the good-natured criticism of McCabe, Wands, and

Huntley. Hall's works are of primarily historical interest; his career (one might even say his careerism), rather than the merits of individual works, compels attention for what it can tell us about relationships between political, religious, and literary practices of late Tudor, earlier Stuart England. The books under review seem, for the most part, designed to lift Hall's works out of this rich context; as a result, we still have an incomplete account of the successes and controversies that attended his long career.

And so I fear that Richard McCabe's attempt to reassess Hall's achievements as a literary artist will be of limited interest or use to students of the seventeenth century. Instead of engaging historically the fascinating inconsistencies of Hall's career—"aesthetically an irrepressible innovator, . . . to the end theologically orthodox and conservative"; "a lifelong contemplative. . . . a man of blazing indignation" (pp. 2-3)—McCabe chooses to argue for the "underlying unity" of the works under what he considers the twin aspects of satire and meditation, "the positive and negative aspects of the one outlook, the two facets of the ancient 'contemptus mundi'" (p. 3). The result is a study of which Bishop Hall would have approved. McCabe's Hall, like his study of Hall, tries to stand outside history (McCabe's last chapter is entitled "Epilogue: Towards Mysticism"). Hall was indeed something of a master at so presenting himself, but McCabe never probes or considers the reasons behind this kind of self-presentation in Hall's seventeenth-century England. In his first chapter, "The Man and His Ideas," McCabe concedes of Hall that "no one fully escapes the prejudices of his own time" (p. 23); the rest of his book tries to overcome those prejudices by bolting Hall's works to some abiding structures and conventions that are seen to place Hall in a great tradition of satirical and meditative writing. This is necessary work, but surely the student of such a figure as Hall ought also to investigate the prejudices of the times, to determine the extent to which Hall himself was involved in creating and maintaining those prejudices. In the course of responding to the books under review, I hope to suggest such an alternative approach to Hall, one that might offer a perspective on Hall different from that shared by McCabe, Wands, and Huntley.

The son of deeply religious Calvinists who had intended him for the clergy from an early age, Hall must have surprised his parents and teachers back in Leicestershire with his flamboyant literary debut in *Virgidemiarum* (1597) as the self-proclaimed first English satirist.[2] Over forty years later, Bishop Hall's Puritan opponents in

the pamphlet wars would remind their readers of the former Cambridge poet who was now one of the leading voices of the ecclesiastical establishment. McCabe quite easily dismisses the famous gibes of Milton in *Animadversions* and *An Apology* concerning Hall's confusion about the proper subjects and style of satire,[3] but I think he misses a crucial point in the Puritan attacks on Hall's *oeuvre*. Bishop Hall's Puritan opponents tried to discredit him by drawing attention to his salad days in Cambridge; Milton, for example, goes to considerable lengths to contrast his own serious university career with what he characterizes as Hall's antic one. Moreover, as Thomas Kranidas notes in a fine article on the Smectymnuan controversy, other Puritan writers attacked Hall the bishop as a flashy, proud, self-dramatizer;[4] this characterization, of course, suits perfectly the self-conscious persona of *Virgidemiae*. If there is a unity underlying Hall's various writings, it has at least as much to do with this feature of his self-presentation as it does with traditional *contemptus mundi*.

In his treatment of the satires, McCabe correctly identifies "the fundamental error of [Alvin] Kernan's approach . . . in assuming that the work of Marston, which is to a large degree *sui generis*, is typical of that of his contemporaries" (p. 34). And he demonstrates Hall's sophisticated understanding of generic problems in satire. Indeed, sophistication, as opposed to the roughness of Kernan's "cankered muse," is one of the distinguishing marks of Hall's satiric persona. Not the least of reasons for reading Hall's satires is to experience something of the literary excitement and challenge felt by young sophisticates like Hall in the late 1590s. Hall was intensely interested in the current literary scene and, as Huntley has persuasively argued in another publication, probably had a hand in the preciously literary and topical "Parnassus plays" at St. John's (1598-1601).[5] In the "Defiance to Envie" which prefaces *Virgidemiae* Hall self-consciously thematizes his familiarity with contemporary literature, establishing his persona as an informed but somewhat troubled beginner in search of his own subject matter and voice; attempting to imitate the career of his literary hero, Spenser, Hall substitutes satire for pastoral as the vehicle of his apprenticeship and as a means of conferring moral authority on the upstart poet.[6] Within the satires themselves, this persona tries to maintain a position of moral authority by identifying ethical (and even social) standards with literary ones, by treating rectitude as largely a matter of literary decorum. Thus, what Bernard Harris criticized as the "wholly

bookish" nature of *Virgidemiae* is just the point.[7] McCabe disputes complaints about Hall's bookishness with some good material on social and economic conditions in Hall's home county of Leicestershire, but in doing so he obscures the really notable feature of the satires—Hall's impressive fusion of literary and moral imperatives. This is a habit of thought that stayed with Hall throughout his career. Again, Kranidas' review of the Smectymnuan controversy is instructive. Milton and the Smectymnuans regarded this "fusion" as a deliberate confusion, and Milton repeatedly attacked Hall for, in his view, a conscious substitution of principles of art for moral principles:

> The [learned Hypocrite] is still using his sophisticated arts and bending all his studies how to make his insatiate avarice, & ambition seem pious, and orthodoxall by painting his lewd and deceitful principles with a smooth, and glossy varnish in a doctrinall way to bring about his wickedest purposes.[8]

Delete the slurs of controversial writing, and the passage can stand as a concise account of Hall's procedure in *Virgidemiae*: represented as coincident with moral and social orthodoxy, "sophisticated arts" confer authority on the speaker.

McCabe also overlooks another way in which Hall differs from Marston and Donne. This satirist is never satirized; he displays none of the psychological kinkiness of Marston or moral depth of Donne. His only "weakness"—an uncertainty about the possibility and value of the literary life—is converted into a strength, most impressively in Book VI, a little dunciad that completes Hall's satiric portrait of an age incapable of responding to the vision of nature, custom, and grace of a true poet like Spenser. This homage to Spenser by the "first English satirist" can be seen as one link between two generations of poets—that of Sidney and Spenser, on the one hand, and that of Donne and Jonson, on the other. In his work on the "self-presentation" of these poets, Richard Helgerson has treated *The Shepheardes Calender*, the book intended to launch Spenser on his career, as a work that worries "about the contrast between what English poets of his generation in fact were—the role they played and the kind of poems they wrote—and what ideally a Poet could and should be"; from this dilemma emerged Spenser's idea of the poet as "an unstable but necessary union of two ideas, embodied in two roles: shepherd and knight."[9] As

Helgerson notes, poets of the next generation found satire the most useful means of escaping the morally culpable role of lover-poet. Hall's *Virgidemiae*—designed as a literary debut and worried by a contrast similar to that nagging at Spenser in the *Calender*—shows us in considerable detail how one of this younger generation worked his way toward satire. Writing a year after the publication of the second half of the *Fairie Queene*, Hall marks the shift to satire by praising "th'eternal legends" of Spenser, his ideal of what "a Poet could and should be." Why does Hall not follow the illustrious example of Spenser? Perhaps because he recognized that even Spenser could no longer be Spenser; Hall seems to have felt something of the change, the disappointment, that many readers have marked in the Spenser of the later books of the *Fairie Queene* (Hall explicitly identifies himself with Talus in the first of the "biting" satires). He responded to Spenser's example and experience by writing satires, and in doing so he signaled a movement in literary history. This most interesting feature of *Virgidemiae* is neglected by McCabe who, in his concern to unify the career, treats the satires as prolegomena to the sermons.

No sooner did Hall announce his arrival onto the literary scene than he reverted to a conventional stance of apology for his literary recreations. In a "Post-script" to *Virgidemiae* he takes his "solemne Farewell" of poetry after having "shaked handes with all her retinue."[10] However, as Huntley (in an article already mentioned) and John Wands have suggested, Hall's literary activities at Cambridge were not limited to the writing of *Virgidemiae*: he was probably involved in the writing of the "Parnassus plays," and he was working at the Menippean satire, *Mundus Alter et Idem*. If Huntley is right, then Milton was probably connecting Hall's acting and the writing of the *Mundus* when he described that book as "the idlest and paltriest Mime that ever mounted upon banke."[11] Huntley's argument also suggests that Hall was prominent in Cambridge literary circles, and it may be that he hesitated, entertaining the idea of a literary career, before following his parents' wishes and entering the ministry. He received the M.A. in 1596 but was not ordained until December of 1600. In the interim, besides gaining recognition for his satires, Hall was twice elected to a University Lectureship in Rhetoric. Years later in his autobiography, Hall would represent this period of celebrity in conventional Augustinian fashion as a time of vanity:

> but finding that well-applauded work [his disputations as Lecturer] somewhat out of my way, not

> without a secret blame of myself for so much excursion, I finally gave up that task, in the midst of those poor acclamations, to a worthy successor . . . and betook myself to those serious studies which might fit me for that high calling whereunto I was destined.[12]

But there is evidence that Hall continued to seek such acclaim, even after ordination, with his *Mundus*. Wands' careful review of the printing history of this book demonstrates that it was first published surreptitiously in 1605 in London, not in Frankfurt as is indicated on the title page, by the printer of three editions of Hall's *Meditations and Vowes* (1605-06). Thus Wands can say with assurance "that Hall was intimately involved in its publication from beginning to end" (p. xix), in spite of claims in a preface by Hall's friend William Knight that Hall opposed publication. Moreover, Wands disproves Knight's statement that the work was composed "for his own training and amusement in a youthful and leisurely academic period": although the book may have been started at Cambridge, it evidences such a detailed knowledge of the house of Sir Robert Drury in Hawstead, where Hall held his first benefice, that we can be certain Hall worked on it after he left Cambridge in 1601.

I belabor this point (and applaud Wands' scholarship) because it complicates what McCabe (and Hall) tries to represent as a thoroughly coherent literary progress. Characteristically, McCabe accepts Knight's remarks on the composition of the *Mundus* as well as the (entirely conventional) disclaimer of Hall's interest or involvement in its publication. Thus McCabe ignores the interesting coincidence—one that undoubtedly struck Milton and his Smectymnuan friends—of the publication in the same year of the pious and sober *Meditations and Vowes* and this outrageous work whose author and place of publication were carefully concealed. As usual, McCabe chooses to extract the work from this historical context in order to defend it against Milton's attack, concluding his chapter on *Mundus* with this startling comment: "Now that the controversies of their age are over . . . we can assess both authors more accurately than circumstances allowed them to assess one another" (p. 109).

Milton, correctly I think, evaluated the *Mundus* as a work without a clear moral purpose. I would add that it is without a clear literary purpose. In the introduction to his translation, Wands

identifies no fewer than seven "aims" in the work, including prophecy, dissuasion from travel, burlesque of travel literature, satire on national traits, satire on Catholicism, and travesty of scholarship. This plenitude of purpose is at once the source of interest in the work and of dissatisfaction with it. The book displays the experimentalism characteristic of Hall's earlier works, but here that experimental quality seems related to a confusion of aims and techniques; the *Mundus* draws upon a multitude of sources and genres in the pursuit of an elusive overriding literary purpose. As a burlesque, it is moderately successful in mocking the fantastic accounts of Medieval and Renaissance travel books; however, the repeated exaggerations become less and less amusing, and the play with Medieval travel literature is an entirely academic joke. The work frequently uses allegory, but it is impossible to identify an allegorical structure underlying the entire plot. As a satire it suffers from a blurring of focus: beginning with what appears to be a systematic assault on the Seven Deadly Sins, Hall quickly shifts his attention to the Roman Catholic Church, then to man, the reasonable animal. Although such a procedure is not intrinsically flawed, Hall does fail to convince the reader that these particular and general attacks on human behavior are unified by a considered or strongly felt idea of human nature; perhaps the kind of book Hall wanted to write requires the moral indignation and wit of a Swift to succeed. Finally, Hall is not entirely in control of his parody of scholarship; his "learned" jokes and Latin place names approach the sort of pedantry he wishes to mock in his extensive footnotes and "Index of Proper Names."

Claiming that "*Mundus Alter et Idem* is a work born out of Hall's disenchantment with the world and with the spirit of the Renaissance" (p. xli), Wands seems to contradict himself by arguing at length for connections between Hall's aims and the jesting seriousness of books in the Renaissance Lucianic tradition—*Utopia* and *The Praise of Folly*. To be sure, Hall is jesting and serious (not disenchanted), but he lacks the unifying irony and paradoxical perspective of the greater writers. Like the persona of the first English satirist, the narrator of *Mundus*, Mercurius Britannicus, rarely becomes the object of satire, even though, as Wands' analysis of his character suggests, numerous opportunities for this kind of reflexive irony occur in his narrative.[13] Hall stocks his work with amusing paradoxes, but the book as a whole lacks the informing principle of paradox that draws us again and again to the texts of More and Erasmus.

Still, Wands and McCabe correctly turn to Menippean satire for a generic explanation of what Hall was up to in the *Mundus*. Northrup Frye's classic definition of the "anatomy" accounts for many features of Hall's book—its erudition, its preference for exaggeration and caricature over verisimilitude, and its sacrifice of narrative logic to the demands of an overriding intellectual pattern.[14] The difficulty, as I have suggested, is to identify that intellectual pattern. Wands writes of a "disenchantment with the world and with the spirit of the Renaissance." McCabe sees the work as an attack on the vanity of human wishes. Neither suggestion offers much in the way of an intellectual pattern. My guess is that Hall intended an anatomy of body and spirit: in Crapulia we observe the *reductio ad absurdum* of the pursuit of fleshly pleasure; in Viraginia, women, traditionally associated with the flesh, rule the men (although Hall, perhaps unwittingly, often seems to undercut the misogynistic premise); in Moronia, which is the obverse of Crapulia and resembles in many particulars Swift's Laputa, the inhabitants misuse reason and pursue various forms of false spirituality; and in Lavernia, the land of thieves, the consequences of materialism are exposed. The *Mundus* does have a moral center which nicely coincides with Hall's geography; in the middle of his *terra incognita*, in Moronia Felix, is the shrine of fortune where pilgrims experience for twelve hours a drug-induced dream of heaven upon earth. This House-of-Fame-like episode offers a psychologically acute, morally powerful criticism of life that distinguishes it from the rest of the *Mundus*.

And here I must return to Milton's critique of the work. McCabe is satisfied that he has defended *Mundus* once he has located the work in the humanist tradition of Lucianic satire. He encourages us to think that Milton was simply biased by the rhetorical situation of his controversy with Hall. But literary conventions and traditions are always being reshaped by such exigencies; we cannot afford to ignore the rhetorical circumstances of Milton's criticism. Although McCabe wrongly implies that Milton could not appreciate "the tongue-in-cheek enormities of Erasmus and More," he approaches the heart of Milton's dissatisfaction with *Mundus* when he observes that Hall "was addressing himself solely to a sophisticated, learned readership" (p. 79) with which Milton could never identify himself. Milton correctly traced the philosophical and literary antecedents of the *Mundus*, but he regarded the work as a piece of *mere* sophistication and learning, a trivialization of the "grave and noble invention which the greatest and sublimest

wits in sundry ages. *Plato in Critias* and our two famous countreymen, the one in his *Utopia*, the other in his *new Atlantis* chose . . . to display the largenesse of their spirits by teaching this our world better and exacter things, then were yet known, or us'd."[15] Milton's criticism of the *Mundus* is of a piece with his analysis of establishment policy on licensing in *Areopagitica* as a devaluation of the great tradition.

J. Max Patrick has argued that the "dystopian" writer can teach us "better and exacter things":

> The author of a dystopia must have a mental picture of the reality which he is satirizing in the description of an imaginary country; and in the back of his mind, he must have a fairly clear concept of his ideal state. He describes this by antithesis, suggesting how life ought to be by depicting it as it ought not to be. . . . Indirectly he creates a model of the good and beautiful society in his readers' minds.[16]

Hall's work fails because there is no clear concept of an ideal state that will adequately answer the "mental picture" of the reality satirized. Milton, of course, had such "a model of the good and beautiful society," and he was surely correct in taxing Hall on this point: "ask the *Author of those toothlesse Satyrs* who was the maker, or rather the anti-creatore of that universall foolery [*Mundus*], who he was, who like that other principle of the *Maniches* the *Arch evill one,* when he had look'd upon all that he had made and mapt out, could say no other but contrary to the Divine Mouth, that it was all very foolish."[17] The satiric objects of the *Mundus* are either so self-evident or so recondite, its burlesque of learning so precious, that Milton is convinced its primary purpose is self-display. As in *Virgidemiae*, such sophistication is the warrant of moral authority; moreover, the mental picture of the reality satirized—"that it was all very foolish"—is a powerful argument for the status quo that Hall defended.

John Wands is to be thanked for making Hall's sophisticated extravaganza available to us in an accurate English translation. Before his work the reader without Latin had to rely on John Healy's racy, but inadequate seventeenth-century translation, which Wands rightly terms an adaptation. Wands reproduces Hall's urbane style, restores his marginal notes, and includes his useful "Index of Proper Names." Although some might find a mild irony

in the copious 72-page commentary on this burlesque of scholarship, I am finally grateful for Wands' scholarly generosity. And, as I mentioned earlier, his untangling of the printing history of the book forces a revision in our understanding of Hall's literary development.

Hall was more successful in extending his satirical interests in the *Characters of Vertues and Vices* (1608), the first English effort in this popular seventeenth-century genre. Huntley has provided the most important clue to Hall's distinctive treatment of the Theophrastan character by noting similarities between the *Characters* and Hall's *Solomon's Divine Arts*, another experiment published nine months after the *Characters*, wherein he compiled "characters" out of passages in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.[18] I have argued elsewhere that Hall owes to Proverbial literature a decidedly un-Theophrastan conception of character, embodied in the famous clipped style for which Milton twitted Hall; in place of Theophrastus' concrete and detached presentation of characters acting in highly specific social contexts, Hall offers morally charged, often prescriptive sketches of characters whose actions issue from a core of faithful or faithless being.[19] The sophisticated Hall was certainly familiar with the "latest" scholarship on Theophrastus, Casaubon's translation of 1592, but it is misleading to assume, as McCabe does, that "to a large extent Hall simply followed in his wake" (p. 112). As Huntley suggests, more than classical scholarship was involved in the composition of the *Characters*. Hall's attraction to Proverbial models was also, perhaps primarily, motivated by his "almost sycophantic admiration" of the learning and sententious style of the English Solomon, James the First.[20]

An examination of Hall's activities during this period discloses the origin of the *Characters* volume in Jacobean courtship. Hall had been instituted at Hawstead in 1601, but all did not go smoothly there. According to Hall's own account, Donne's brother-in-law, William Lyly, had succeeded in turning Hall's patron, Sir Robert Drury, against the young curate sometime before 1603 when, in answer to Hall's prayers, Lyly died of the plague.[21] Furthermore, Hall was exasperated by Drury's refusal to grant him an additional ten pounds per year to which he felt entitled, and found himself "forced to write books to buy books."[22] Hall's restlessness at Hawstead was such that, according to the historian of the place, he "did not much reside here; for during his time there are not above two years in the Register of the same hand."[23] Hall explained his decisive response of 1607 to this intolerable situation as one of the

"specialties of divine providence in his life" (the title of Hall's autobiography): "One morning as I lay in my bed, a strong motion was suddenly glanced into my thoughts of going to London."[24] Hall immediately made the journey and visited Drury in the hope of improving his position at Hawstead. While in London he was introduced to the court of Prince Henry by a Mr. Gurry, who informed him of the enthusiastic reception at Court of his *Meditations and Vowes*. After preaching two sermons before the prince, Hall was made a chaplain to the Court. In spite of this success, however, the crusty Drury persisted in denying the increase in Hall's stipend, and the young clergyman resolved to leave at the first opportunity.

This resolve seems to have involved a number of literary projects; shortly before going to London, Hall had begun publishing at a feverish rate, entering between November 1606 and December 1608 no fewer than eleven titles on the Stationer's Register. Hall was writing books not only to buy books but to secure a better position. One of those in London impressed by his work was Lord Denny, to whom Drury had introduced his bright young cleric shortly after Hall's arrival in the city. It was probably after this introduction that Hall decided to dedicate the *Characters* to Denny and his son-in-law James Hay. On July 4, 1608, Hall resigned from Hawstead and took up a new position offered by Denny at Waltham Cross.

The book that either procured or rewarded Denny's gift is brilliantly suited to the formality and artifice of the courtly setting in which Hall found success. A prose version of the Jacobean masque and anti-masque, of Jonson's "feigned commonwealth" of virtue and vice in his *Epigrammes*, it, like the masque, celebrates the qualities of the central figure at Court. McCabe correctly notes that Hall's Virtues are rarely depicted in action, for "as Seneca had argued . . . virtue far more than vice is of a private, hidden nature. It is the mark of Hall's wise man to 'see the world unseen'" (p. 123). Thanks to Jonathan Goldberg's brilliant analysis of James' royal style, we can also find in Hall's "Senecan" manner and matter features of literary and political representation of the hidden, unmoving, yet exemplary British Solomon.[25] Hall earned favor at court as others did, by mastering the courtly style. The relationship between his work (and that of other Senecan writers) and the style of the Jacobean Court deserves further study.

Although Hall has long been noted for his "Senecan amble," in recent years what has attracted scholars is his work in meditation, begun around the time of the *Characters* and continued in one form or another through his long career. Louis Martz's seminal discussion of Hall's treatise, *The Arte of Divine Meditation* (1606), as an English counterpart of continental meditative theory has been challenged by U. Milo Kaufmann and, more recently and fully, by Barbara Lewalski.[26] Drawing upon Hall and other English devotional writers of the seventeenth century, Lewalski has defined an indigenous Protestant tradition of meditation which differed in crucial respects from Medieval and Counter-Reformation theory and practice. McCabe wishes to restore Hall to the continental tradition, citing resemblances between Hall's techniques and various stages of the *Spiritual Exercises* and identifying Jean Gerson as a decisive link with the continent. McCabe's brief discussion of Gerson's influence is his chief contribution to the debate about protestant meditation, not so much for what it tells us about Hall's theory itself as for its insight into Hall's talents as a presenter of "new" literary forms. Although Gerson died in 1429, his *De Excommunicationis Valore*, with its argument on the limits of papal power, was still being attacked in Hall's day by Cardinal Bellermine; as McCabe succinctly puts it, "Bellermine's enemy was the Reformers' friend" (p. 183).

However, neither his discussion of the influential *Arte* nor his useful chapter on what Hall felt was his most important meditative work, *Contemplations upon the Principall Passages of the Holy Storie* (1612-1634), establishes Hall's solidarity with Catholic tradition. McCabe's work on the undeservedly neglected *Contemplations* supports Lewalski's contention that Protestant meditation "did engage the mind in an effort to penetrate deeply into the motives and motions of the psyche" and thereby "contributed to the creation of poetry with a new depth and sophistication of psychological insight."[27] And McCabe seems unaware that he is ratifying some of Lewalski's specific points about Protestant devotion. The effect of reading Hall's compelling re-creation of Haman's tortured psyche—a passage treated at length by McCabe—is not to feel as if the scene were taking place in one's presence, but, as Lewalski argues, "very nearly the reverse," to locate Haman's predicament in oneself.[28]

McCabe also misreads *The Arte of Divine Meditation* when he argues for parallels to the Ignatian "composition of place" in various steps of Hall's recommended procedure. Hall's most vivid

evocation of a "scene" in *The Arte* occurs in a meditation on eternal life which Hall uses to illustrate his method; the scene is described in the section entitled "That which is divers . . . or contrary":

> Look round about thee and see whether thine eyes can meet with anything but either sins or miseries. . . . Here thou hearest one cry out of a sick body, whereof there is no part which affords not choice of diseases. This man layeth his hand upon his consuming lungs and complaineth of short wind; that other, upon his rising spleen; a third shaketh his painful head; another roars out for the torment of his reins or bladder; another for the racking of his gouty joints. One is distempered with a watery dropsy, another with a windy colic, a third with a fiery ague, a fourth with an earthen melancholy. One grovels and foameth with the falling sickness; another lieth bed-rid, half senseless with a dead palsy. . . . thine eyes see nothing but pride, filthiness, profaneness, blood, excess. . . .[29]

Although his language is undeniably imaginative, Hall is asserting the essentially fallen nature of the materials of imagination. In this respect, I think, Hall does depart radically from the Ignatian pattern; even as he directs the reader to "Look round about thee," he is preparing to confront him with a scene in which sense experience is depicted as a process of decay. Our eyes can meet with nothing "but either sins or miseries"; the imaginative composition of a scene cannot transcend this circle of corruption, and reliance upon sense experience will inevitably falsify spiritual experience. To put it another way, Hall decomposes rather than composes his scene. Similarly, in the complementary "Meditation of Death" which he later added to *The Arte*, Hall works a variation upon the Ignatian technique of enumerating the senses; again the transformation occurs in the step called "The Contrary":

> Thou shalt not be cast off, O my body; rather, thou shalt be put to making. This change is no less happy for thee than for thy partner. This very skin of thine, which is now tawny and wrinkled, shall once more shine; this earth shall be heaven, this dust shall be glorious. These eyes, that are now

> weary of being witnesses of thy sins and miseries, shall then never be weary of seeing the beauty of the Saviour and thine own in His. These ears, that have been now tormented with the imperious tongues of men, shall first hear the voice of the Son of God. . . . And this tongue, that now complains of miseries and fears, shall then bear a part in that divine harmony. (p. 113)

Paradoxically, sense experience is meaningful only after the resurrection of the body; only then is the body "put to making."

It may be that Hall's fondness for the antithetical style—evident in the passage just quoted—also contributed to his transformation of the Ignatian formula. I am struck, for example, by the way Hall closes off the potential for horror in his "composition" of a favorite Catholic scene in the *Contemplations upon the History of the New Testament*:

> O the torment of the cross! Methinks I see and feel, how, having fastened the transverse to the body of that fatal tree, and laid it upon the ground, they racked and strained thy tender and sacred limbs to fit the extent of their fore-appointed measure, and having tentered out thine arms beyond their natural reach, how they fastened them with cords, till those strong iron nails, which were driven up to the head through the palms of blessed hands, had not more firmly than painfully fixed thee to the gibbet.[30]

The meditator/reader is not emotionally involved in this scene. Hall succeeds in representing the crucifixion from a rather original perspective as a problem in carpentry, but the passage—especially the closing logical figure—is not calculated to awaken the reader's conscience through the senses.

McCabe correctly treats together Hall's major contributions to "extemporal," as opposed to "deliberate" meditation—*Meditations and Vowes* (1605-06) and *Occasional Meditations* (1630-33). His chapter adds little to the still reliable discussion by Harold Fisch.[31] Moreover, McCabe characteristically overlooks Hall's careful presentation of himself and his work and thus, I believe, misses an important innovation introduced by Hall into devotional writing of this kind. Hall's dedicatory epistle to *Meditations and Vowes* tells us how to read the book and characteristically stakes

the moral authority of the work on the person of the author: "having after a sort vowed this austere course of judgement and practice to myself, I thought it best to acquaint the world with it, that it may either witness my answerable proceeding, or check me in my straying therefrom."[32] Such a relationship between reader and writer is something new in devotional writing and contributes to the literary flavor of Hall's work. The normative relationship between a reader and a devotional text is quite different. As Reuven Tsur points out, the first person pronoun in a prayer or meditation generally refers to the reader; the reader makes the assertions and experiences the emotions expressed by the words of the author. Otherwise, the devotion is false or insincere.[33] In reading Hall's meditations, however, one is not expected to share uncritically the author's viewpoint but, rather, to "witness" and "check" his "proceeding"; we are aware of an author who shapes his experience by means of a distinctive style. This kind of relationship, closer to that between a reader and a persona than to that between the "I" and the reader of a prayer or meditation, helps Hall to raise a devotional genre to a new level of literary sophistication.

Hall's invitation to read critically also prompts this reader to note an occasional discrepancy between his moral recommendations, which at times sound like worldly wisdom, and his heavenly yearnings.[34] Most notable in the *Meditations and Vowes* is Hall's emphasis, as in the *Characters*, on the need for concealment (see number 71 of the First Century, 63 of the Second Century, 55, 60, and 72 of the Third Century). And, of course, his opponents in controversy would have noted the irony of the otherworldly bishop's tough statement on order and degree in Occasional Meditation 80: "For me, I do so love the peace of the church and state that I cannot but with [Paul], the charitable apostle, say, 'Would to God they were cut off that trouble them' [Gal. 5:12] and shall ever wish either no jar or no clappers."[35] This discordance between worldliness and spirituality is perhaps related to the chief problem of the *Occasional Meditations*, the strained relationship between profane experience and spiritual significance (see, for example, "Upon the sight of a well-fleeced sheep," "Upon the sight of a man yawning," "Upon the sight of a bladder"). Hall, of course, chose odd and unpromising subjects deliberately; as he wrote in *The Arte*, "that which we are wont to say of fine wits we may as truly affirm of the Christian heart, that it can make use

of anything" (p. 74). But if, as Harold Fisch comments, the meditative writer seeks "some existential principle of unity between the outer and inner world, between the secular and the sacred," Hall often falls short as a meditative artist in his extemporal works.[36] This critical judgment does not, of course, diminish Hall's importance as an innovator or an influence on meditative prose and poetry.

In light of the recent debate on meditation and its relationship to seventeenth-century literature, an edition of Hall's *Arte of Divine Meditation* and *Occasional Meditations* was a good choice for the first volume in Binghamton's series of Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies. Hall's poems and characters have long been available in modern editions, but the meditative works have remained tucked away in Philip Wynter's ten-volume, unannotated Oxford edition of 1863 (reprinted by AMS Press, 1969). Professor Huntley declares his allegiance to the Lewalski thesis in his title. He adds to our understanding of protestant meditation by emphasizing its greater variety of subject matter, a variety generated by the protestant's reading of the three "books" of God—nature, scripture, and the soul. Corresponding to these three books, Huntley argues, are three kinds of meditations included in Hall's works: meditations of the creatures in *Occasional Meditations*; meditations on scripture in the *Contemplations*; and "soul meditations" in the "deliberate" meditations of *The Arte* and in such later books as *The Devout Soul* (1644) and *Susurrium cum Deo* (1651). Thus Huntley differs from most scholars in classifying meditations according to the subject matter rather than the method. Huntley is careful to note, however, that "neither the kind nor the 'book of God' from which it is drawn is ever discrete" (p. 41). This is an important point, for much of Hall's appeal in *The Arte* derives from his flexibility, even in the more methodical, deliberate variety of meditation. Huntley's discussion of the three "books" helps to account for the *genera mixta* of protestant meditation, but Hall's own distinction between two kinds of meditation, a distinction based upon both subject matter and methodology, is still the classic formulation: "this [meditation] must needs be either extemporal and occasioned by outward occurrences offered to the mind; or deliberate and wrought out of our own heart" (p. 72). Hall's description tells us more about the characteristic structures and tones of protestant meditation of the seventeenth century—the occasional type resembling the seventeenth-century essay or resolve, the deliberate taking on the

features of the sermon. Indeed, Huntley's choice of *The Arte* and the *Occasional Meditations* for this volume supports Hall's division into two kinds.

Professor Huntley's edition in itself is an example of a *genus mixtum*. His introduction clearly addresses the scholarly debate on protestant meditation. On the other hand, the book is a kind of homage to Bishop Hall; Huntley clearly admires his subject and aims at "making a book that Bishop Hall would be pleased with" (p. 61). The latter purpose, I take it, underlies Huntley's decisions to modernize spelling, punctuation, and typographical presentation and to keep footnotes to a minimum; rather like Hall, who had a genius for appealing to the lay reader of the seventeenth century, Huntley wants to produce a book "that a twentieth-century undergraduate can read with understanding and delight" (p. 61). I applaud Huntley for this appeal to the common reader, but it does lead him to make some questionable editorial decisions that have been set out in a review by John Wands.[37] Moreover, Huntley's simultaneous address to scholars and undergraduate readers leads to some inconsistencies in his introduction. On the one hand, we are given capsule descriptions of Platonic philosophy (which opens with the proposition that "The Renaissance in Italy may be thought of as the victory of Platonism over Aristotelianism"), Augustinian psychology, and Pauline-Calvinist theology. On the other hand, Huntley offers an extended, and I think convincing, Ramistic analysis of *The Arte* and devotes four pages to arguing with Martz and proposing Thomas à Kempis as the "obscure nameless monk which wrote some hundred and twelve years ago" mentioned by Hall as a source for his *Arte*.[38] Finally, Huntley's enthusiasm for Hall, like McCabe's, results in a rather one-sided view of the Bishop as an other-worldly proponent of the interior life. Both scholars represent Hall as he liked to represent himself, Huntley, perhaps, going even farther than McCabe in conjecturing that "Had not Hall died ten years before *Paradise Lost* was published, he might have acclaimed the great poem by his former adversary to be above, in doctrine and poetic sublimity, the poems of his beloved Spenser and 'divine du Bartas'" (p. 57).

This view of Hall needs to be corrected. Few seventeenth-century specialists will want to dispute or add to the discussion of Hall's undoubted literary virtues offered by McCabe, Wands, and Huntley, but we have not yet entirely accounted for Hall's significance to seventeenth-century readers and writers. Through much of his career Hall displayed a penchant for intuiting and producing

what the age demanded. McCabe was right to attempt "a radical reassessment of Bishop Hall's status as a creative artist and a literary innovator" (dust-jacket); but a truly radical reassessment must examine Hall's career—his self-presentation and the style and content of his works—in light of the social and political conditions of his rise to eminence. Huntley's chapter on *Solomon's Divine Arts* and the *Characters* in his biographical and critical study and Kranidas' provocative article on Hall and the Smectymnuans begin such an inquiry, one that might eventually revise the traditional assessment of Hall as a spiritually minded Elizabethan moderate out of step with his time.

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Notes

1 Frank Livingstone Huntley, *Bishop Joseph Hall 1574-1656: A Biographical and Critical Study* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1979); Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Donne's Anniversaries and the Poetry of Praise* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973) and *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1979).

2 The complete title of the 1597 volume is *Virgidemiarum conteyninge Sixe bookes with these titles followinge*; the "titles" included the three books of "toothless" satires—"poeticall," "academicall," and "morall." Although Hall envisioned a collection of six books in 1597, he did not complete the project until the following year when he published the three books of "biting" satires. I follow critical convention in referring to the satires in the nominative plural, "Virgidemiae." Hall may have used this rare word, meaning "a harvest of rods," to signal his departure from pastoral (identified with the pre-agricultural Golden Age), conventionally the beginning poet's genre.

3 Milton's comments are reprinted in A. Davenport, ed., *The Collected Poems of Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter and Norwich* (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1949), p. 159.

4 Thomas Kranidas, "Style and Rectitude in Seventeenth-Century Prose: Hall, Smectymnuus, and Milton," *HLQ*, 46 (1983), 244.

5 Huntley, "Joseph Hall, John Marston, and *The Returne from Parnassus*," in *Illustrious Evidence: Approaches to English Literature of the Early Seventeenth Century*, ed. Earl Miner (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1975), pp. 3-22.

6 Hall apparently did attempt to write pastoral. In a poem on the accession of James I he claims that, "in the wardship of my weaker age," he translated Vergil's Fourth Eclogue and applied it to the birth of Prince Henry. This poem has not survived. See Davenport, p. 112.

7 Harris, "Men Like Satyrs," in *Elizabethan Poetry*, ed. John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris, Stratford-upon-Avon Studies 2 (New York: St. Martin's, 1960), p. 193.

8 *Animadversions Upon the Remonstrants Defence Against Smectymnuus*, in *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1953-82), I, 720.

9 Helgerson, "The New Poet Presents Himself: Spenser and the Idea of a Literary Career," *PMLA*, 92 (1978), 901, 908. Helgerson expands his thesis in *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983).

10 Davenport, p. 98.

11 Quoted in John Millar Wands, ed. and trans., *Another World and Yet the Same: Bishop Joseph Hall's Mundus Alter et Idem* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), p. xiv.

12 *Some Specialties of Divine Providence in His Life Noted by His Own Hand*, in *The Works of the Right Reverend Joseph Hall*, ed. Philip Wynter (Oxford, 1863), I, xxvi. Hall's account of these university days also conforms to what Helgerson calls the "prodigal" plot of Elizabethan fiction in *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976).

13 Hall approaches the reflexive irony of More and Erasmus in the epitaph of one Vorturnius (as Hall tells us, from "vertendo," to be turned about) whose monument was erected in Moronia Mobilis by "H. I.," a play on Hall's initials (p. 75), and in Mercurius' account of his adventures in Aphrodysia where his virginity is preserved thanks to his unattractive appearance and whence he escapes by virtue of his womanlike face.

14 Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 310-11.

15 *An Apology against a Pamphlet*, in *Complete Prose*, I, 881.

16 Glenn Negley and J. Max Patrick, eds., *The Quest for Utopia: An Anthology of Imaginary Societies* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1952), p. 92.

17 *An Apology*, in *Complete Prose*, I, 880-81.

18 Huntley, *A Biographical and Critical Study*, Chapter 4.

19 "Joseph Hall's *Characters of Vertues and Vices*: A 'Novum Repertum,'" *SP*, 76 (1979), 28-35. The difference between Theophrastus' and Hall's conception of character is perhaps related to differences between Greek and Hebrew styles of representation treated by Auerbach in the first chapter of *Mimesis*.

20 Huntley, *A Biographical and Critical Study*, p. 53.

21 On Hall and Lyly, see R. C. Bald, *Donne and the Drurys* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 81-83.

22 Wynter, I, xxxiv.

23 Wynter, I, xxxiii note.

24 Wynter, I, xxxiii note.

25 Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1983), esp. Chapter 2, "State Secrets."

26 Kaufmann, *The Pilgrim's Progress and Traditions in Puritan Meditation*, Yale Studies in English, No. 163 (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 120-33; Lewalski, *Donne's Anniversaries*, pp. 82-92 and *Protestant Poetics*, pp. 147-78.

27 Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics*, p. 150.

28 Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics*, p. 149.

29 Huntley, ed., *Bishop Joseph Hall and Protestant Meditation in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study with the Texts of The Arte of Divine Meditation (1606) and Occasional Meditations (1633)* (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1981), p. 95. References to *The Arte* are from this edition.

30 Wynter, II, 660-61.

31 Fisch, "Bishop Hall's Meditations," *RES*, 25 (1949), 210-21.

32 Wynter, VII, 439.

33 Tsur, "Poem, Prayer and Meditation: An Exercise in Literary Semantics," *Style*, 8 (1974), 416.

34 For an illuminating discussion of the related methods of worldly wisdom, or prudence, and heavenly meditation, see Raymond B. Waddington, "Shakespeare's Sonnet 15 and the Art of Memory," in Thomas C. Sloan and Waddington, eds., *The Rhetoric of Renaissance Poetry from Wyatt to Milton* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), pp. 96-122.

35 Huntley, *Bishop Joseph Hall and Protestant Meditation*, p. 166.

36 Fisch, *Jerusalem and Albion: The Hebraic Factor in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 55.

37 *Modern Philology*, 81 (1983), 199-203.

38 Martz argued in *The Poetry of Meditation* that this figure was Maubernus, author of the *Rosetum*. Huntley's evidence includes the appearance of a "nameless' edition of the *Imitatio* in 1492, "close enough to Hall's 'some 112 years ago' since he became aware of the art of meditation in 1605"; Thomas à Kempis' emphasis on humility and heart over mind and his divisions into pairs of contrary states; and an epistle by Hall which mentions "the table of an unknown author at Antwerp" (the 1492 *Imitatio* begins with a "*tabula capitulorum*" dividing the book into two parts). Huntley ingeniously combines biographical and bibliographical evidence, but he shifts the ground of debate over influence from verbal and structural resemblances to a vaguer spiritual indebtedness that would be difficult to prove. Thus I think he overstates the case for Thomas à Kempis when he writes that "the inspired heart of Hall's theory . . . is very likely to have come from a memorable reading in Antwerp in the year 1605 of the *Imitation of Christ*" (p. 30).