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Michael Brown

When the political earthquake destroyed France in the summer of 1789, how far north were the tremors and aftershocks felt? The question is worth asking because, according to what amounts to a historiographical orthodoxy, Scotland escaped the upheaval. Indeed, Bruce Lenman has pithily surmised that Scotland was 'the most undemanding and subservient of Britain's provinces'.[1] Certainly only slight shifts were registered on the ground, virtually no political houses fell, few lives were destroyed and the architecture of church and state retained their pre-eminence on the skyline. T.M. Devine, in a summation of this view has provocatively turned the enquiry on its head, asking not how far Scotland was shaken by the Revolution, but, rather, why it was not.

The failure of radical reform in Scotland was, in this rendition, comprehensible because of 'the social and economic context', by which Devine implies 'the power of the greater Scottish nobility'.[2] This came about through the extension of ancient legal powers and 'an ideological commitment to agricultural improvement'. This symbiotically ensured that 'the "unreformed" political system was entirely capable of accommodating and implementing legislation crucial to the advance of capitalism'.[3] In contrast to the 'resilience of the Scottish state' the reformers could only muster an 'ephemeral outbreak of radical unrest', in part because 'for much of the period the evidence suggests a modest rise in living standards for the majority of the people'.[4] So too, he recognises, particular local circumstances conspired against the conspirators. These included the war with France from 1793, the proliferation of places within the state and colonial systems, and the emigration which lay open to the truly disaffected.

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[1] Bruce Lenman, *Integration, Enlightenment and Industrialisation: Scotland, 1746–1832* (Toronto, 1981), 58.

[2] T.M. Devine, 'The Failure of Radical Reform in Scotland in the Eighteenth Century' in T.M. Devine (ed.), *Conflict and Stability in Scottish Society, 1700–1850* (Edinburgh, 1990), 54.

[3] Ibid., 58.

[4] Ibid., 54, 55 and 60.

The terms utilised here are of interest. The economic base is understood to be driving the political and intellectual superstructure, and the real revolution is one of industrial development, capitalism and, implicitly, of class relations. In that, Devine seems wedded to an analysis of the Revolutionary age as shaped by traditional Marxist-inspired models of transformative epochs in the mode of production culminating in political upheaval. This is despite the fact that in the particular case, that of Scotland, Devine highlights how industrial change did not lead inexorably to revolution. That conservative trajectory, he concludes 'depended ultimately on the role and responses of the landed class itself.'[5] Coming close to contradicting his statement about the capacity of Scottish society to accommodate capitalism, Devine also avers that 'there is considerable evidence that before 1800 the Scottish landed classes were still committed to a broadly paternalistic role which was not entirely eroded by the new principles of commercial management.'[6] Scotland it seems struck an ideal balance between innovation and conservation, between economic development and social stability.

Historians are now, however, revising that rather static, stable view of Scottish society in the 1790s, and indeed, throughout the century.[7] In recent years increasingly acute seismographs have learned to register the echoes of the Revolution that reached the far-off reaches of North Britain. E.W. McFarland has capably documented the parallels and connections between the radical sediment in Scotland and the more volcanic variant found in Ireland while the contributors to *Scotland in the Age of the French Revolution* have begun to rethink the configuration of the political geography and geology of the 1790s.[8] Bob Harris' monograph on *The Scottish People and the French Revolution* has helped to quantify and categorise the nature of the Scottish radical movement.[9] Emma Vincent Macleod has helpfully situated Scottish developments within the broader *War of Ideas* she sees occurring in Britain as a whole, while the essays in *These Fissured Isles* have provided a broader narrative of upheaval and

[5] Ibid., 61.

[6] Ibid., 61.

[7] Christopher Whatley, 'An Uninflammable People?' in Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whatley (ed.), *The Manufacture of Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1992), 51–71; idem, *Scottish Society, 1707–1830: Beyond Jacobitism, Towards Industrialisation* (Manchester, 2000), 263–301.

[8] Elaine W. McFarland, *Ireland and Scotland in the Age of Revolution: Planting the Green Bough* (Edinburgh, 1994); Bob Harris (ed.), *Scotland in the Age of the French Revolution* (Edinburgh, 2005).

[9] Bob Harris, *The Scottish People and the French Revolution* (London, 2008).

dislocation for developments across the Three Kingdoms.[10] Yet, despite the expertise that has been applied to the search for revolutionary damage, the picture Devine offers of a society stratified by social and economic concerns has, intriguingly, been substantially upheld.

This is partly because much of the Scottish historiography concerning the 1790s shares Devine's semi-Marxist analytical frame, resulting in the hunt for a nascent working-class sensibility. John Brims, for instance, uses the analytical categories of class to conclude that, in the case of the 1792 riots at least, the conjunction between political radicalism and popular economic unrest had not yet emerged. Indeed, 'there was little or nothing in these disturbances, or in any of the others that broke out in the summer of 1792, to suggest that the "lower orders" had adopted the revolutionary republican ideology of Thomas Paine'.[11] Indeed, 'the available evidence pointed to the conclusion that the radical societies sincerely deplored the activities of the mobs'.[12] Elaine McFarland, while working outside of the Marxian rubric, concurs, writing of how:

> It would be simplistic to view these [riots of 1792] as the Scottish people suddenly shuffling on to the historical stage, given that riots and popular protest had been recurrent features of the urban scene earlier in the century. It also seems the case that some of the unrest still stemmed from localised economic grievances … What was novel about the riots in the larger Scottish towns – Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen and Edinburgh – was the linking of more general economic grievances, notably the tax burden and the new Corn Law of 1791, with explicit 'political' overtones. Despite the fears of the authorities, these owed less to Painite ideologies than the perception that the governing classes were showing an ill-judged and arrogant disregard for popular feeling … What the demonstrations underlined was the contrast already developing between the vigour and immediacy of popular action and the restraint of middle-class reformers.[13]

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[10] Emma Vincent MacLeod, *A War of Ideas: British Attitudes to the Wars Against Revolutionary France, 1792–1802* (Aldershot, 1998); Terry Brotherstone, Anna Clark and Kevin Whelan (eds), *These Fissured Isles: Ireland, Scotland and British History, 1798–1848* (Edinburgh, 2005).

[11] John Brims, 'The Scottish Association of the Friends of the People' in Devine (ed.), *Conflict and Stability*, 32.

[12] Ibid., 44.

[13] McFarland, *Ireland and Scotland*, 66.

McFarland's own sentiments are made clear when she writes of 'the privileged and petulant world of middle-class reformers'.[14] Gordon Pentland uses the almost equally damning phrase 'Foxite worthies'.[15] These are not the stuff revolutions are made of, clearly.

The general impression of stable, complacent conservatism is, if anything, exacerbated when we look towards the intellectual *avant garde* of Scottish society – the enlightened literati. Devine, again, states the consensus: 'much of the corpus of published work of the Scottish Enlightenment helped to give a new intellectual credibility to a system of government dominated by a tiny propertied oligarchy. The great men of the Enlightenment … were all intellectually innovative but politically conservative. Whereas the *philosophes* in France stimulated revolutionary fervour, the *literati* in Scotland legitimised the existing political order'.[16] This inclination was justified for, in line with his benign assessment of Scottish society in the 1790s, Devine remarks on how Montesquieu 'was revolutionary in the French context. But Scotland had already achieved the "ideal" government on which he bestowed so much praise a century before'.[17]

Nor is Devine alone in taking this position. The Scottish Enlightenment is commonly depicted as characterised by the Moderate party, which in the 1790s was led by the counter-revolutionary figure of George Hill; they constituted what Ian D.L. Clark has called 'the Dundas party at prayer.'[18] Indeed, Devine's view is echoed by Richard Teichgraeber, who deemed the movement 'epistemologically radical and socially conservative'.[19] The Scottish Enlightenment is politically loyal, socially well-placed and theologically settled. There is little room for radical idealism left.

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[14] Ibid., 81.

[15] Gordon Pentland, 'Patriotism, Universalism and the Scottish Conventions, 1792–1794', *History*, 89 (2004), 341.

[16] Devine, 'The Failure of Radical Reform', 56.

[17] Ibid., 56–7. This echoes his assertion that 'a revolution on the French model could not have occurred in Scotland in the 1790s because a century before the decisive shift between monarchy and aristocracy had already taken place' which itself belies his acknowledgement that 'the country was ripe for political reform.' Ibid., 54 and 52.

[18] Ian D.L. Clark, 'From Protest to Reaction: The Moderate Regime in the Church of Scotland, 1752–1805' in N.T. Philipson and Rosalind Mitchison (eds) *Scotland in the Age of Improvement* (Edinburgh, 1970), 202, citing William Ferguson, *Scotland, 1689 to the Present* (London, 1968), 127.

[19] In Richard Teichgraeber, *Politics and Morals in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Ph.D. thesis, Brandeis University, 1978).

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I want to revise this view by proposing that the Scottish Enlightenment, that apparent bastion of right-minded trenchant unionist loyalism, actually fractured under the seismic pressures of the French Revolution, and that the homogenous picture of the Enlightenment as a single, undiscriminating and unified movement imposes an unexamined political agenda onto what was always a fissiparous and fluid formation. In so doing, I may be understood as making a contribution to delineating the 'War of Ideas' not as it happened within Britain, although this is a necessary context, but within Scotland itself, marking out the contours and peaks of a culture war which occurred within Scottish élite culture in the revolutionary decade. And, I want to support this contention by dwelling here on the rather unprepossessing figure of Sir James Hall.

Hall was, in many ways, a characteristic Scottish literati of the second rank – which makes him all the more significant for my purposes, where plodding typicality not idiosyncratic genius is more illuminating. Born on 17 January 1761 at Dunglass, East Lothian, Hall was educated at Christ's College Cambridge and the University of Edinburgh, where he attended lectures by John Robison and Joseph Black. He also went on the Grand Tour, from 1783 to 1786, travelling through France, Switzerland, Germany and Italy. It was while in Rome that he sat for Angelica Kaufmann, having already sat for her paramour, Sir Joshua Reynolds, before his departure. It was during this tour that Hall first evinced a serious interest in the natural philosophy that would associate him with the Enlightenment. He began observing rock formations and exploring sites of unusual geological interest. While in Italy he climbed Vesuvius at least five times, while also exploring Mount Etna and Stomboli. In documenting and dwelling on what he had seen, Hall makes an entry in the lists of geological scholarship, as a pioneer of field work. Thus, for instance, Stuart Hartley has concluded that the diary Hall kept of his tour was 'also more' than a Grand Tour narrative, revealing 'a concern with understanding nature's works in the field to explain and to verify theories arrived at a priori'.[20] Hall was to twin this interest in geology with his training under Black in developing a series of experiments, often using devices of his own construction, that verified the thesis of Sir James Hutton that heat acted on rocks to liquefy them (not, as previously thought, that heat was a by-product of rock formation).

[20] Stuart Hartley, 'Appealing to Nature: Geology "in the Field" in Late Enlightenment Scotland' in Charles W.J. Withers and Paul Wood (eds), *Science and Medicine in the Scottish Enlightenment* (East Linton, 2002), 290.

In the typical polymathic character of a dilettante, Hall also sustained a theoretical and practical interest in Gothicism, a concern which culminated in his 1813 tract, *An Essay on the Origin, History and Principles of Gothic Architecture*, in which he contended that the form derived from primitive construction techniques in wattle. Like Uncle Toby in Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, Hall's determination to prove his thesis led him to build a miniature wattle cathedral on the grounds of his estate at Dunglass, East Lothian. He was elected a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, that élite Enlightenment club, in 1784 (a year after its foundation) and served as its president from 1812 to 1820. He also entered the lists of the Royal Society itself, being elected a fellow in 1806.

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So far, so standard; so safe. And in many ways, the travelogue that Hall kept while in France in 1791 is in keeping with that impression, expressing some of the standard concerns and characteristics of such documents. But that is not all that it contains. It is also a remarkable account of a traveller's encounter with the country in a period of political turmoil and social change.[21]

It should be noted that, unlike Wolfe Tone's evident anxieties about language, Hall's ability in French seems to have been excellent, for he follows a range of conversations, political debates, public lectures and arguments in crowded and noisy locations with evident capacity.[22] For example, on 17 July, Hall was in conversation with M. de la Place, who was expatiating on his objections to a paper by Sir John Playfair which Hall had sent him. Hall noted these 'were taken down literally', being transcribed in French into the diary.[23] Only occasionally did his French fail him, as when attending a particularly boisterous session at the National Assembly, when he lamented 'on this occasion there was a great deal of altercation that I did not clearly follow.'[24] In Limoges, he also found himself struggling to comprehend some of the conversations he overheard, excusing himself by saying 'their language when they talk together is a patois that I can make nothing of. They say it contains

[21] Hall's travelogue is contained in four diaries kept over the period 3 April to 7 August 1791. National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS), MSS. 6329–6332.

[22] On Tone, see Sylvie Kleinman's essay in this volume.

[23] 17 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 149. This is probably the mathematician and astronomer, Pierre Simon, marquis de Laplace (1749–1827)

[24] 19 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 64.

Latin, Italian, English.'[25] Otherwise his previous experience in France, in 1785, and the lessons his education must have granted him, proved entirely adequate, giving him access to French culture.

Hall's interest in French culture was partially due to the scientific developments which were occurring there. He reacquainted himself with Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier, whom he had met on his previous expedition, and took the chance to examine equipment, going for instance: 'with [Lord] Daer to the furnace at M. Seguir'.[26] So too, he occasionally took advantage of events which were pertinent to his concerns taking place in the capital. Thus he 'went to a lecture by M. Charles on electricity.'[27] Arts as well as science drew him. He had already seen Haydn play in London – thinking him rather overrated – and regularly went to the Opera in Paris. The journal is dotted with pithy remarks on the spectacles he witnessed, calling 'Le Vendemie, an Italian Opera, rather dull', for instance.[28] So too, on occasion, the visual arts distracted him. He quickly noted how on 13 May he 'saw the rape of the Sabines by Rubens.'[29] He also recorded how he

> went with T[homas Douglas] and D[aer] to see M. David's pictures. His sketch of the Tennis Court oath has much genius in it. A beautiful picture of the elder Brutus in his family at the moment his son is being brought in dead after the execution. The expression both of the father and of the women is just and grand. Owing I think to a fault in the light and shade, Brutus himself is not sufficiently conspicuous. You look for him before you find him.[30]

In particular, Hall used the diary to remark on the architecture he encountered. Primarily his interest was piqued by Gothic constructions, notably churches. One notable building brought him to digress from his route in order to see it: the palace at Versailles. Yet, of it he rather prosaically complained of the damp – it was built on reclaimed swampland – and of how 'the palace is no longer warmed by crowds and courtiers', understandable as the monarch was by now

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[25] 19 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 141.

[26] 5 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 49.

[27] 17 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 49. This is probably the physicist Charles Augustin de Coulomb (1736–1806).

[28] 1 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 137. Possibly by Giuseppe Gazzaniga (1743–1818).

[29] 13 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 22.

[30] 1 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 135–6.

under house arrest in the Louvre.[31] Also chiming with his enlightened curiosity, Hall regularly took time from his travels to examine the agricultural practice of the region he was travelling through. In particular, the diary is peppered with discussion of plough technology – Hall regularly supplied lengthy descriptions of the various tools he encountered, and often even supplied a brief sketch of the equipment on the facing page.

It was not just the physical landscape and its management that concerned Hall, however. He also took cognisance of the physical attributes of the people, particularly the women who caught his eye. He reports of how on 14 July 1791, he spent the evening celebrating the Revolution at the Jacobin club, where there was 'a good lively party and the women looking better than any set I have seen in Paris'; while those in Evreux, he called 'a more handsome breed of women than I think I have seen in this quarter'.[32] Of those living west of Paris, he ungallantly remarked: 'the women are very much sunburnt and not handsome.' Yet the manners of these provincials did meet with his approval, for he described them as 'good humoured and free. They are most vigorous … they show great industry in cultivating every little spot.'[33] He was less complementary about the people of Limoges: 'I never in my life saw such a collection of wild animals. Pale faces, long black hair hanging quite loose, blue coats and garters tied under the knee.'[34]

Yet, the diaries Hall habitually kept when travelling were indeed 'more than' an account of his exploits and experiences on the Grand Tour.[35] And, when documenting the trip taken in the summer of 1791, they begin to create a subtle subsidence in the concept of the Scottish Enlightenment Hall seems to so ably occupy. Indeed, the diary itself is far from being a standard journal kept by a traveller. We can begin to uncover the cause of these tremors by looking at how Hall's concern with manners intersects with the political circumstances in which he found himself. This might be illustrated through reference to

[31] 29 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 129.

[32] 14 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 120; 27 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 116.

[33] 23 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 84, 82–3.

[34] 19 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 141.

[35] Aside from Hartley's reference, see also F.C. Green 'Sir James Hall's Impressions of France in 1791', *French Studies*, 16 (1964), 236–43. For a scientific assessment see J.A. Chaldecott, 'Contributions of Fellows of the Royal Society to the Fabrication of Platinum Vessels: Some Unpublished Manuscripts', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 22 (1967), 155–72 and idem, 'Scientific Activities in Paris in 1791: Evidence from the Diaries of Sir James Hall for 1791', *Annals of Science*, 24 (1968), 21–52. I would like to thank Dr Rosalyn Trigger for bringing Chaldecott's work to my attention.

two events. One occurs early on in Hall's sojourn. On 15 May 1791 he noted how 'Abbé Gordon says that gambling never ran so high as it does just now in Paris. Now since we have been here we have not seen a card. The fact is that our acquaintance is among the democrats and his among the aristocrats.'[36] Thus manners, rank and politics combined to generate modes of amusement as well as means of activism. Later, and in a scene that could be drawn from a political melodrama, Hall recorded how on the night of 17 July he attended a soiree at the home of the British ambassador, Earl Gower.[37] Nearby, however, something sinister was occurring.

> During dinner all seemed quiet, so much so that dancing was begun. Afterwards however it began again with greater intensity. A great and confused noise was heard towards the Champ de Mars; drums beating the *generale*, cannons hurling, shouts and screams of people. This increased to an alarming pitch till at last we heard a great number of discharges of small arms which lasted with many interruptions for about a quarter of an hour … It was remarkable however to see how differently people took it. Some were running in terror. Others were walking quite coolly as if nothing had happened.[38]

This was the massacre at the Champ de Mars. In the wake of the monarch's flight to Varennes, the National Assembly had determined upon blaming the ministers, notably the marquis de Bouillé, the commander chief of the army, and declared the king suspended on 15 July. The public was not convinced by such unseemly manoeuvres however, and pubic protest escalated, with the signing of mass petitions. One such gathering turned ugly when two men were killed by an angry mob at the Hôtel de Ville. The result was the declaration of martial law. When a crowd gathered at the Champ de Mars, and stones were thrown, the National Guard panicked and let loose a volley of shots. In the pandemonium that ensued around fifty people were killed and numerous others wounded.[39] We shall return to Hall's rendition of this event.

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[36] 15 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, facing 35.

[37] George Granville Leveson-Gower, the first duke of Sutherland, was recalled in 1792. He was later notorious for his role in the Clearances. His papers concerning his sojourn in Paris were published as Oscar Browning (ed.), *The Despatches of Earl Gower* (Cambridge, 1885).

[38] 17 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 155–6.

[39] The details of this event are drawn from D.M.G. Sutherland, *France 1789–1815: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (London, 1985), 129.

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The question of the diary's idiosyncrasy comes further into focus when one examines its composition. The diary amounts to 800 octavo pages, written into four bound volumes, and covers a journey which took Hall from Scotland, through London, and from there to Paris. Arriving in the French city on 19 April 1791, Hall was accompanied by Lord Daer, his brother Thomas Douglas (who later became the 5th Earl of Selkirk) and a third Douglas sibling, John. The visit in the French capital was punctuated by two trips into the provinces – the first lasting from 21 to 29 May took Hall to La Roche-Guyon north west of Paris; the second lasted from 12 to 26 June, during which time he ventured south as far as Clermont, in Auvergne. While Daer left Paris on 8 July, Hall eventually decamped back to Britain on 20 July, arriving at his estate, Dunglass, on 7 August. Each day is accounted for by an often lengthy entry.

However, what begins to intrigue is the way in which Hall carefully categorised and inventoried his entries. Alongside each paragraph a line is drawn, and each is carefully annotated with a letter. At the front of the first volume a code is given, deciphering these. Thus M means manners, H is husbandry and P is for politics. Furthermore, Hall took the trouble to generate a contents page at the back of each of the four volumes, with the events of each day briefly described, and again the category under which his observations fell carefully noted. Without wanting to make too much of this habit, it is worth observing that this implies that Hall was clearly desirous of navigating his way around the diary – and was therefore thinking it probable he would refer to the text again in future years, or perhaps even publish his account.

This concern for revisiting the text is further evinced where Hall reconsiders what he has written, coming back to excise comments and reformulate impressions. And one such revision provides an entry point into the debate concerning his political experience in France. On 23 June, while at the Pont de Chateau outside Clermont, Hall received the following dramatic news: 'After dinner we heard the news of the king being fled from Paris and we set out instantly for Clermont. The news was confirmed when we came there and we resolved to set out by daylight tomorrow for Paris.'[40] Yet Hall clearly decided that this interjection was too prompt, and might overshadow some more mundane observations he wished to make concerning husbandry. Thus he crossed out these two sentences, and continued with a discussion of plough

[40] 23 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 194.

technology, even taking the time to sketch the object that had captured his attention on the facing page. Only after some further remarks on geology and with an eye to narrative and plot, did he come back to the events unfolding in the capital:

> Crossing the bridge we met the lady and her family in great consternation at some news they had just received from Clermont, that the king and all the royal family were fled from Paris, that all was in an uproar, that the gates of Clermont were shut against everybody, and that some dreadful calamity was every minute to be expected.[41]

The first excised entry finds Hall off-guard, having just received the news and feeling overwhelmed by its implications. The second finds him thinking of the diary's dramatic structure and hints at the possibility of having readers other than Hall himself.

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This might in part make sense of Hall's determination to be close to the hub of political action, wherever he might be. Certainly, having left the quiet cranny of Dunglass in Haddingtonshire, East Lothian, he availed of the opportunity to act as a political observer. When passing through London on his way to France he was waylaid by the chance to see the House of Commons in session, noting how he 'Saw [the] debate on Grey's motion on state of the nation and potential war with France. Liked Sheridan, thought Dundas spoke in a good manner, better than I expected from him.'[42] Once in Paris, he successfully sought out a permanent ticket to the visitors' box in the National Assembly, observing:

> The room is long with benches all round. The president's chair is on one side and in the middle of the length. There are three desks called Tribunes, one opposite to the president and one at each end of the room, at which the members stand when they make a speech of any length. In the common course and little is to be said, a man stands up and speaks in his place, as they do in the House of Commons. The left

[41] Ibid., 209. See also Timothy Tackett, *When the King Took Flight* (Cambridge, 2003).
[42] 12 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 17.

> hand half (of the president) is occupied by the democratic party and the other half by their opponents. This last was very thinly peopled indeed. As we sat at the extremity of the left end we heard only when a particular silence was held.[43]

Once there he took copious notes on the various debates and speakers, and even compared his sense of the occasion with that he had witnessed in London, writing of how M. Charles Lameth's 'speaking is more in the style of the English parliament than any of them I have heard as he dealt much in attacks on the other side and levelled some pretty severe things against [Pierre Samuel?] Dupont [de Nemours]. His figure is good. I was more pleased with the figure of M. [Jean-Paul] Rabaut de St Etienne than with any of them I have yet heard.'[44] Although Hall frequented the National Assembly with an astonishing regularity, he also made his way to the gallery of the Jacobin Club, to which his travelling companion Lord Daer had already made recourse. On 29 April he observed there was 'a very numerous company of them, say 7 or 800 people. They have the form of an Assembly and many of the members were present. They have correspondents all over the kingdom with societies connecting with them by what they call filiation. Their influence must be immense.'[45]

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As well as being a discrete observer of French national affairs, Hall made it his business to seek out and converse with the leading actors in the drama. Something of an intellectual groupie of politicians, he was even willing to travel some distance to consort with figures of repute or notoriety. On his way back from the estate of the marquis de Lafayette he records how when near Versailles, Hall and Daer 'called on Mr Payne (sic.), author of the answer to Burke and of Common Sense. He dined with us, he considers himself as having made the Revolution in America and seems to think he will make one in England.'[46] So too, he diverted from his planned trip when he heard that the

[43] 21 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 46–7.

[44] 26 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 81. St Etienne was a member of the National Assembly from 1790, rising to the office of President in 1793, although he was guillotined in the same year.

[45] 29 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 103.

[46] 29 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 129.

duke of Bouillon was at his Chateau in Navarre. Having met, Hall adjudged him to be 'a lively, clever old man and a mind of high broad fashion.' Caution however, prevailed during this encounter for Hall lamented that,

> the Duke, as it may well be supposed, is no friend to the Revolution, but he keeps this to himself, and during a long party the conversation never once turned on the subject while he was present. I understand he is suspicious of having spies about him. He offended the people absurdly by not accepting the command of their national guards.[47]

Not that Hall was wanting for someone to discuss the Revolution with; there was no end of debate and argument within the circles in which he moved in Paris. Of the Abbé Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, Hall provided the following assessment:

> [He] consults nobody but M. Condorcet. On his ideas of government he forms his ideas complete and round in his own mind and brings them out in the Assembly without preparation and consequently under disadvantage. It is a pity he is not a more pliant temper as his genius and sentiments are of the noblest kind. He seems, I have observed, to have a mortal aversion at being questioned. Some points about him are, I think, like Dr [Joseph] Black in point of character and temper.[48]

Pithier was his assessment of Jacques-Pierre Brissot, who 'talks and shows himself much. He is clever but I think rash about the characters of men.'[49]

Rather more detail was provided about an encounter at dinner with Robespierre, whom Hall had already damned with faint praise as a poor speaker, remarking that 'Robespierre went to the Tribune and spoke better than I have heard him towards the end of his speech. For in the first part I rather think he lost himself in the definitions of republic and royalty.'[50] Nor did Hall take to him privately, describing him as 'a man of morose patriotism. He has a tendency

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[47] 27 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 118–9. This was Gódefroy-Charles Henry, sixth duc de Bouillion (1728–92).

[48] 5 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, facing 159. On Sieyès see William K. Sewell, *A Rhetoric of Bourgeois Revolution: The Abbé Sieyes and What is the Third Estate?* (Durham, 1994).

[49] 9 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 35. On Brissot's colourful career see Robert Darnton, 'A Spy in Grub Street' in *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge MA, 1982), 41–70.

[50] 13 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 111–2.

to see things on their black side. He considers all the old officers, and all the old nobles, with hardly any exception, as aristocrats' – something which the sympathetic Sir James Hall found awkward. This antipathy was furthered when Robespierre proceeded to opine about a 'letter from the English Revolution Society announcing the fete to take place in London on the 14th.' To the news that this transaction would restrict 'the business of the day … to the affairs of France without any notice being taken of those of England' Robespierre took umbrage. Hall recorded how the following altercation ensued:

> He [Robespierre] swore that the government of Spain was preferable to that of England. When I made him explain this however he allowed that ours would be the best to live under if no change could happen in either but that Spain was in a situation much more calculated for receiving good government than England as our aristocracy is strongly rooted and maintained by the actual comfort of the people in the present circumstances.[51]

Not that Hall took to Robespierre's rival, either. He derided Danton as 'a man with a thundering voice, even stronger than Mirabeau's. He is not respected and under the mark of much frankness is suspected of being very cunning at bottom.'[52] The next day Hall reiterated his negative assessment, scathingly opining that 'Danton's voice is most astonishingly full and grand, and if his talents corresponded to it, the effect would be prodigious.'[53]

Hall also fell in with British visitors to the French city, although he rarely found himself at ease in their company. One such evening left him slightly disconsolate: 'Dined with Lord Gower as the king's birthday. Met a great party of English. Lady Sutherland very good humoured. Mr and Mrs Balfour, Mr and Mrs Dempster, Lord Mountmorris, Mr Perregause, Mr Sykes, young Buchan of Kelly, Mr Hashingson. Vague general conversation; not tiresome but nothing interesting.'[54] Equally unfulfilling was his encounter with John Paul Jones, with Hall being distinctly unimpressed by his fellow countryman: 'After breakfast

[51] 5 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 64–5.

[52] 12 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 99.

[53] 13 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 114.

[54] 4 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 148–9. Lady Sutherland was Earl Gower's wife. Lord Mountmorris is possibly Matthew Robinson Morris, later second Baron Rokeby (1713–1800). Mr Perragause is probably Jean-Fredrick Perregaux, treasurer to the Committee of Public Safety, Mr Hasingson is probably William Huskisson (1770–1830) an intimate of Earl Gower. The others are as yet unidentified.

the famous Paul Jones called. He had met with Daer before; I was with him for the first time. Nothing extraordinary in his figure. He talked much of Russia and the Turks and what he said confirmed the idea I had of them; but I could not bring him to speak of his adventures in Great Britain.'[55] This reticence on the part of the American patriot is understandable when it is recalled that part of his British exploits included an attempt to capture and hold to ransom a peer of the realm, the chosen target for his unsuccessful venture being the earl of Selkirk, father of Thomas Douglas and Lord Daer.[56]

Obviously under-whelmed by Jones, Hall reserved his praise for someone he had not met – perhaps preserving his second-hand impressions in aspic. This hero figure was Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, and Hall spent a great deal of time seeking out anecdotes about him. The death of his idol just before he left for France left him bereft, as he recorded on 9 April:

> Read in the *Moniteur* the paper on wills that Mirabeau on his death had sent to the National Assembly. It strikes me as the first composition I have read in every point of view. I had heard of his death the day before from Daer. [Note that Lord Daer is if anything better informed than Hall; this is a recurring theme.] In reading this paper and in thinking of what the world has lost and what I have lost in not seeing him I was more affected than I ever remember to have been at any thing of the kind.[57]

Later, of the National Assembly members, Hall noted 'Mirabeau's death has made a sad blank among them. They feel themselves now unhinged and at a loss how to go on. They had no idea (as some of them acknowledged to Daer) till he was gone how much they were led by him.'[58]

The identification with Mirabeau makes some sense if you take into account the assessment of François Furet, who in writing of his status within the Revolutionary pantheon, argued:

> Many of the leaders of 1789 were nobles – Lafayette, the Lameths, Talleyrand – yet a liberal noble was not a déclassé noble but quite the

[55] 7 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 166.
[56] J.M. Bumsted (ed.), *The Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk, 1799–1809* (Winnipeg, 1984), 6.
[57] 9 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 12.
[58] 2 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 119.

> opposite: liberty was the common property of the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy … In 1789, amid the chaos of events, France was still groping toward the formation of an 'English-style' élite, combining the liberal nobility with the enlightened bourgeoisie of the Third Estate … Who could speak for the new élite before the still young 'nation'? Who was both enough of a democrat and enough of an aristocrat to lower the flag of tradition before the flag of Revolution? Mirabeau was the only noble sufficiently déclassé, and the only déclassé sufficiently noble, to join the past with what was happening now.[59]

To what extent Hall saw himself in his hero is arguable, but it certainly chimes with his later open attraction to French republican proposals, and accords with his anxiety when meeting Robespierre that all the titled might not be standing against the tide of history.

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This passion for frequenting the political actors of the day led Hall inexorably into the game of political analysis. For this, he needed reliable sources of news, and the diary gives a strong sense of a city in turmoil, with people constantly enquiring from each other how things were proceeding. The exposition of the 17 July massacre highlights the complex role of gossip and rumour in disseminating news. It also stands as evidence as to how Hall composed the diary in the quiet time between social engagements. Thus, on the day itself, he was told by Champagne 'that he had seen the Curé of Gros Callonx, with some guards who told him that the people had cut off the heads of two invalids who were going to blow up the Autel de la Patrie. This story looks quite absurd, but I'm afraid it has some foundation.' After writing this entry, later in the evening, Hall 'dined with Lord Gower. His house stands in the Gros Callonx in which the hanging of the two men was said to have happened. [Note how the mode of death has changed.] We found that the story was true and that the people had been killed very near to Lord Gower's.'[60]

News was even harder to get in the provinces. Thus, when the king fled the capital, it took a number of days for the news to reach Hall who was staying in

[59] François Furet, 'Mirabeau' in François Furet and Mona Ozouf (eds), *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), 268.

[60] 17 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 152–3.

Clermont. And as he made his way through the region, 'every person we met told us the story with new circumstances. That the king had made his escape out of a window …'[61] Of the authorities in Limoges he remarked 'It was curious to see how little this company, certainly among the best informed in the place, know of the various parties in the National Assembly. They know in the Assembly only two parties and make no distinction between M. Barnave, M. Robespierre &c.'[62]

Yet, given Hall's proximity to power, he was often well-informed and soon became a competent if rather partisan political analyst. As early as 22 April he remarked on how 'there certainly is a spirit now rising in the country which may end in the establishment of a pure republic', self-evidently for him a good thing.[63] So too he was given to critiquing the position of the various parties in the Assembly. With regard to the debate on the citizenship rights to be granted to the colonial natives of the French empire he was trenchantly on the side of those arguing to grant them the status of active citizenship. As he stoutly stated on 12 May, 'all I heard [in the Assembly] tended to convince me more and more that the committee were to blame for not having decided at once that the *gens de couleur* who were proprietors were as good active citizens as any others and that it was disgraceful that there should be two minds in the Assembly on such a topic.'[64] By 14 May his patience was being tested by those opposed to the reform: 'nothing new was stated, only the continuation of the same abominable style of reasoning that had been used on the other day by the colonists and their friends and the same unanswerable replies on the part of the friends of the *gens de couleur*'.[65] To his annoyance he then had to record that the vote went 'against the *gens de couleur*' by a majority of 130.[66] The resulting legislation merely ensured that those born of two free parents were recognised as citizens; a measure that effected about a thousand or so people. The principle that colour was not a bar to citizenship was enacted, however; a fact that prompted sufficient resistance in the colonies that the matter was revisited and the law revoked in September 1791.[67]

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[61] 23 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 209–10.

[62] 18 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 130.

[63] 22 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 60.

[64] 12 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 9.

[65] 14 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 29.

[66] Ibid., 31.

[67] Robert Forster, 'The French Revolution, People of Colour and Slavery' in Joseph Klaits and Michael H. Haltszel (eds), *The Global Ramifications of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1994), 99.

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The one occasion on which Hall toppled over from biased observation into active participation in the Revolution occurred during the second trip out of Paris, in Limoges.[68] On 18 June Hall 'passed by the Place Dauphine' where he 'noticed a fountain set up in the worst taste imaginable in honour of the birth of the Dauphin. On this inscriptions or monuments they told us were put up for the Intendants of Limoges. They told us they were taken down yesterday as anti-patriotic by the municipality'.[69] Hall's revolutionary ardour was raised and later that day, when he found himself attending a session of the *Sociétié des Amis de la Constitution*, he acted:

> The room was full and held they said about 150 men. One of the members and the president read addresses to us as strangers and we made our bows. I was tempted at that time to get up and propose to them to erect a monument to [Anne-Robert-Jacques] Turgot in place of that of the other intendants that were pulled down yesterday. I had not courage or was not prepared enough at that time and let the opportunity pass and the business of the meeting went on. At the end, as they were beginning to disperse, and part were gone, I whispered to the president that the thing should be proposed. He immediately resumed the séance and told them what I had proposed. It was received rather dryly; however it was not opposed and they decreed that the two marbles on which the names of the intendants were written should be set up and that on the one should be written the *droit de l'homme* and on the other the names of the great men who had deserved well of the country, with M. Turgot at their head.[70]

It was a small venture, and met with moderate success, but it is illustrative of a broader trend in Hall's progress through France, from distanced observer, to private commentator, engaging in behind the scenes debate, through to public avowal and limited activism. And, it paralleled his increasing commitment to a republican agenda for the Revolution as a whole.

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[68] For an account of Limoges in this phase of the Revolution see Paul R. Hanson, *Provincial Politics in the French Revolution: Caen and Limoges, 1789–1794* (Baton Rouge, 1989), 53–67.

[69] 18 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 128.

[70] 18 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 132–4.

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Despite his evident biases, Hall's politics were reasonably fluid and were regularly reshaped while in France. Thus for example, we can find him struggling to determine his views on whether a member of the National Assembly should be disqualified from re-election. His jotted musings of 19 May admit:

> The question is one of the most difficult I have ever met with and I am by no means satisfied how it should have gone. The question I think should be studied thus – shall a man be re-electable indefinitely or shall a man be allowed to sit but once in his life. The first is no doubt most conformable to the freedom of election and is most likely to produce an assembly of clever men and the fittest on all accounts for business. On the other hand, the second would be most conformable to the spirit of universal equality that is the basis of the French constitution and would tend to bring the legislative body as nearly as possible to coincide with the actual body of the nation.[71]

When Hall arrived in Paris, he was broadly in favour of the Revolution, but was supportive of its constitutional limitations. Thus he could report on Easter Sunday, 24 April, that

> M. du Chatelet called on us before dinner. He is a relation of M. de la Rochfoucauld. He is a zealous republican and not only thinks that the country would be better without a king at all but he even approves of the present business and considers it a proper interference of the people. I suspect there is some levity in this view of the matter and that those who are of that opinion do not see the danger of the law being overruled by the fancy of any set of men not acting by the authority of the nation. This habit of disobedience seems to be an unhappy consequence of that famous disobedience of the Garde Françoise at the beginning of the Revolution. The conduct of the king in receiving the enemies of the Revolution has been in the highest degree absurd, but this absurdity should have been counteracted in a constitutional manner.[72]

[71] 9 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 62–3.

[72] 24 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 68–9.

But by the end of his stay Hall was freely expressing republican sympathies. As early as 15 May he was remarking on the monarchy in distinctly unflattering terms (note that Daer's presence may have helped shape the response jotted here):

> Walked with Daer in the Tulleries. Saw the king pass going to Mass. A great crowd of people of various classes from the rank of the bourgeois to the lowest blackguard. No observations made that I could hear. The king looked if possible more vacant and stupid than formerly and his countenance showed perhaps some degree of dejection, tho' this might be imagination. What made me less sure about his face was that when they passed I was not sure which was he and which was his brother. I likewise saw the queen. She was so much harangued and her countenance set to a book of etiquette that I could make nothing of her appearance.[73]

Note here also how, although his identification of the king is unclear, Hall still directed an insult based on the monarch's appearance.

Similarly Hall's attitude to the Jacobin club metamorphosed during his stay. On 29 April he remarked on how 'The society seems to be an asylum for all the discontented people, who are sure to find commiseration at least.'[74] Yet he soon found himself chiding the Jacobins for their reticence in forwarding a republican agenda, only finally commending them on 10 July, when the idea of deposing the king was mooted: 'this is the first time the Jacobins have fairly spoken out.'[75] The National Assembly, as was the case across Paris, fell commensurately in his esteem. Leaving one debate on the fate of the king, he saw 'the president Charles de la Meth, Barnave and the rest of their junto pretty smartly attacked by the mob … This is new to them who were the first to move the people and ruled long by their means. They seemed not to like the business at all.'[76] Indeed, in an extraordinary moment that shows how far Hall had moved from his concern for legal propriety, he declared on 14 July, 'it is in the highest degree probable that some great commotion will take place and nothing can save the Assembly but a good fight by which it may be driven into a nearer approach to the

[73] 15 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 35–6.
[74] 29 April 1791, NLS, MS. 6329, 103.
[75] 10 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 96.
[76] 13 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 110–1.

public opinion'.[77] Violence was now acceptable. Three days later martial law was declared.

Hall was subsequently to become rather more cautious, in all likelihood when back in Britain. We can see this shift in mood evidenced through an excision made to the journal which recounts that 10 July debate. Hall recorded how 'M. Brissot de Warville rose next and spoke one of the most elegant and certainly the most effectual speech I ever heard. He turned the inviolability [of the king to punishment for his actions] into ridicule. *He said it was a convenient doctrine set on foot by Charles the second in order to save himself from having his head [illegible]* and he showed clearly that in justice and common sense he ought to be tried'.[78] The passage marked here in italics was judiciously crossed out, perhaps at a later date, and was clearly deemed by Hall to be a dangerous expression, even if attributed to someone else.

The same political caution seems to lie behind Hall's decision to mark out the name of Thomas Paine in his entry for 3 June. We know it was Paine because Hall forgot that his detailed index identified him, with the entry stating how 'Mr Payne dined with us'.[79] Thus, we find out how Paine

> observed the republican spirit now in the act of rising. That he valued this observation more than any particular act, as we notice the barometer with a convex surface in the act of rising. We asked M. *Payne* what he thought of M. du Chatellet's affiche. He said that he understood French so imperfectly that he could not judge properly of it but that as far as he knew it was good. He said that tho' M. La Fayette could not at present declare, he was certainly a decided republican. M. *Payne* told us that on the day of the king's arrival [in Paris after the flight] he was in the midst of the crowd; that he lost the cockade out of his hat. In order to conceal the loss he kept his hat in his hand, but the king passing he was obliged to put it on and then he was obliged to hold up his hat under some pretence or other to hide the place where the cockade should have been. Luckily nobody perceived his situation or he might have been in a scrape with his ignorance of the language. It would have been a matter of no small triumph to the enemies of the rights of man if *Payne* had been carried to the lanterne.[80]

[77] 14 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 121.
[78] 10 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 93–4.
[79] 'Index', NLS, MS. 6332, 5.
[80] 3 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 49–50.

This passage captures in a microcosm many of the cross-currents Hall's diary explores – linguistic difference, manners, etiquette and radical politics. It also hints at the republican destination longed for by Paine, and indeed by Hall. And, it gestures towards the violence that emanated from the revolutionary process, and which finally drove Hall physically, if not intellectually away from Paris. Perhaps even more significantly, Hall's decision to mark out Paine's name chimes with Gordon Pentland's observation that, by 1793 at least, 'Painite radicalism had become too dangerous to espouse in a climate where radical ideas were proscribed and were presented as unpatriotic and foreign.'[81]

The limit to Hall's endurance came with the mayhem at the Champ de Mars on 17 July. The morning of 18 July saw him go 'with Lord Selkirk and Thomas [Douglas] to the committee of the section of the Palais Royal to have a certificate made out which is a necessary first step towards getting a passport.'[82] He left Paris two days later.

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This sudden retreat in the wake of public disorder raises the issue of how radical Hall really was, and concomitantly, how far Hall's radicalism in France related to his understanding of Scotland.[83] What of Scotland? How did Hall accord his political sympathies with his national identity? While at no point in the diary does he diagnose the condition of Scotland, it is perhaps worth teasing out some of the implications of his varied commitments. First of all, it is clear that Hall did think of himself as a Scot. The entry on 10 July for instance reads: 'Called on M. de la Place … I spoke to him of what we were doing in Scotland about the theory of the earth.'[84] While this observation was in the context of a scientific discussion, it accords with his description, in the debate with Robespierre cited above, of the government being English, and

[81] Pentland, 'Patriotism, Universalism and the Scottish Conventions', 351.

[82] 18 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 159.

[83] It might be worth noting in this context that he was later to sit in parliament, for Mitchell, in Cornwall, from 1807 to 1812. Hall's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* by Jean Jones states that 'he was at first a conscientious and independent-minded member but his activities were curtailed by an illness in December 1810', http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11965?docPos=3, accessed 23 October 2008.

[84] 10 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, facing 92.

with his discomfort in English company. Hall was seemingly conscious of the difference between English and Scottish identity.

Moreover, Hall took the time to visit that epicentre of Scottish exile in Paris, the Scots College, taking with him a number of interested associates. He recorded how he 'Went with Madame de la Rochefoucald, Madame d'Auburgne, and Mr Short to the Scots College to see the picture of Mary Queen of Scots and her letter stained with her tears.'[85] This double interest, in the College and its memorabilia concerning Mary Stuart was furthered when visiting Douai on his way back to Britain. Hall again took the chance 'to see the Scots College. Saw a picture of Mary Queen of Scots done after her death; her rosary, the beads consisting of a set of heads curiously wrought. A little table clock belonging to her. A prayer book said to be used by her on the scaffold.'[86] This romantic passion for such relics may seem unenlightened to modern eyes, but fits with Hall's antiquarian interests, and reinforces the impression that he retained a sense that Scotland was not culturally subsumed within the broader British political identity.

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What then does Hall's case tell us of Scottish radicalism? Were his sympathies anything more than the empty 'posturing' John Brims argues constituted Scottish flirtations with French republicanism?[87] Even after the events of 17 July 1791 Hall seemed to be radicalised and republican in attitude. On 18 July, even as he was preparing to leave, he was still committed to the view that: 'the king had better been away and that a little war would be of service to France in order to unite the parties and that the country would be so strong as to have nothing to fear from without.'[88] And when news of the Church and King riots reached him as he was journeying back to and then through Britain, he recorded his antipathy to the 'terrible riot at Birmingham in which the house of Dr [Joseph] Priestley and other dissenters has been burnt' and dwelled with sorrow on 'the revival of high church mobs'.[89] Nor did he keep his sympathies quiet. He jotted on 29 July 'At dinner. Mr and Mrs Barbould. Disputed much

[85] 7 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 74–5.

[86] 22 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 193–4.

[87] John Brims, 'The Scottish Association', 46–7. C.f. Pentland, 'Patriotism, Universalism and the Scottish Conventions', 353.

[88] 18 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 167.

[89] 23 and 25 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 207 and 216.

about French politics. They view the Assembly in the same romantic light that I did before I saw them.'[90] But this was not the voice of a reformed radical, now appalled by the turn of events in Paris. Rather Hall had radicalised alongside those events, and was now determined to see the project of creating a republic in France – and perhaps Scotland or Britain – through.

So too his travel companions seem to have been shaped by their experience.[91] Lord Selkirk, his father-in-law, was described to him as 'a violent friend of liberty since … he did not approve of the decree of the assembly' in not deposing the king. Hall replied pithily that 'I thought their conduct was not so prudent as it might have been; that though they had got the better of Paris [by declaring martial law] yet that they would not be able to manage the provinces as easily.'[92] Nor did Selkirk relinquish this affiliation upon his return to Britain, instead being 'deserted and avoided by most of his acquaintances and friends' on political grounds.[93]

This same commitment to the republican experiment could also be found in the shadowy figure of Lord Daer, whose return to Britain predated the events on the Champs de Mars. As Hall noted on 8 July, 'Lord Daer set out for England, along with Mr Payne (sic.) and Mr Dumont.'[94] Lord Daer went on to play a key role in the London-based Friends of the People, launching a brief if active radical career. Daer attended meetings of the Society for Constitutional Information, and joined the Friends of the Liberty of the Press. He was one of the Scots canvassed by Thomas Hardy for information on radical opinion in Scotland for the London Corresponding Society in a letter aptly dated 14 July 1792. He had already joined the organisation in May of that year and he went on to attend the first and third National Conventions of the Scottish Friends of the People in Edinburgh.[95]

[90] 29 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6322, 226. Mr and Mrs Barbould had run the academy that Lord Daer and Thomas Douglas had attended as children. See Bumsted (ed.), *Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk*, 7–8.

[91] This point is also made in Bumsted (ed.), *Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk*, 17–8.

[92] 8 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 164–5

[93] Bumstead (ed.), *Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk*, 18, citing James Lord Dunfermline, *Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Abercromby KB 1793–1801* (Edinburgh, 1861), 36.

[94] 8 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 79. This later was Etienne Dumont, a member of what Furet described as Mirabeau's 'workshop', writing speeches for Hall's hero. See Furet, 'Mirabeau', 268. For a full treatment of Dumont's extraordinary career, culminating as an advocate of Jeremy Bentham see Cyprian Blamires, *The French Revolution and the Creation of Benthamism* (Houndsmills, 2008).

[95] The details of Daer's radical affiliations are drawn from Bob Harris, 'Scottish-English Connections in British Radicalism in the 1790s' in T.C. Smout (ed.), *Anglo-Scottish Relations from 1603 to 1900* (Oxford, 2005), 196.

Later connections are equally suggestive. Hall was a friend and colleague of Alexander Nasmyth, who illustrated the *Essay … on Gothic Architecture* for him in 1813. It was for Hall that Nasmyth designed the house at Dunglass, described as 'a vast and splendid Italianate castle which literally cascaded down the hillside'.[96] Nasmyth had been active as a portrait painter in the 1780s but as the 1790s progressed his commissions dried up. As J.B. Cooksey suggests, this was partially because 'His liberal politics and outspokenness on the perceived abuses of the Tory government embarrassed some of his aristocratic patrons; but, despite warnings that commissions would cease, he persisted with his beliefs.'[97] Nasmyth also knew Robert Burns and painted his portrait. Burns in turn wrote a tribute to Daer upon his untimely death in 1794.[98] Another line of enquiry runs between Hall and the founder of the Society of Antiquaries, David Steuart Erskine, the earl of Buchan. Buchan knew Burns and was a signatory to the London Friends of the People. Heavily invested in the Scottish off-shoot, Buchan may thus have known Daer. Buchan corresponded with Christopher Wyvill over franchise reform, as did John Millar who was also a signatory to the London Friends of the People. Buchan also corresponded with Dugald Stewart and Stewart was Hall's teacher. There is also the possibility that Nasmyth designed a monument to Wallace for Buchan in the 1780s. The complex network of enlightened radicalism in 1790s Scotland continues to expand.

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So, finally, we turn back to the most general question raised here, the assumption of a connection between the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. In the case of Hall, it is reasonably clear that he had a strong sense of the intellectual movement, both as a local and as an international phenomenon. That was the import of many of his questions to those who had once met Adam Smith during his own sojourn in Paris. As Hall noted when he met Dr Richard Gem, the physician to the British Embassy:

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[96] J.B. Cooksey, 'Alexander Nasmyth', *Oxford DNB,* http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19797?docPos=3, accessed 23 October 2008.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Robert Burns, 'Extempore Verses on Dining with Lord Daer' in Andrew Noble and Patrick Scott Hogg (eds), *The Canongate Burns* (Edinburgh, 2001), 633.

> Adam Smith was here in the winter 1766–7. The Duke of Buccleugh took the whole of the Palais Royal … Helvetius and Baron d'Holbach … kept open house for all the philosophers. These houses were frequented by Dr Gem and Adam Smith. The conversation in these parties turned very frequently on the freedom of trade … I pressed Dr Gem to tell me whether Mr Smith had these notions before or whether he got them in this place but I could not bring him to say anything positive on the subject. I think it looks as if he got his ideas here since he is right in those parts which were fully discussed and made out in his time and fails when the subject was in a state of obscurity.[99]

The question of Smith's originality was vexing contemporaries, often anxious to assert the Scottish quality to his thought. In particular, Hall chimed with his mentor, Dugald Stewart, who addressed the question at some length in his *Life of Adam Smith* of 1793, albeit concluding that 'the limits of this memoir make it impossible for me to examine particularly the merit of Mr Smith's work in point of originality', while opining that 'the merit of such a work as Mr Smith's is to be estimated less from the novelty of the principles it maintains than from the reasonings employed to support those principles.'[100]

Stewart's presence was also to be felt when Hall fell into conversation with the Abbé Sieyès, in a way that sheds light on Hall's view of the connection between the Enlightenment and the Revolution.

> The conversation happened to fall in the projects that had been conceived of a universal language. He [Sièyes] said that he had thought much on it and could take it up when the Revolution was over. He spoke rather lightly of the Abbé Condillac tho' he allowed that he had begun. He said that a very great perfection might be expected from the lower classes when they got a proper education. That all the people who now make disturbances do it with a good intention – even those who now are disturbing universal toleration are, all but a few, men acting upon sincere and honest motives. When I mentioned what I had from Mr [Dugald] Stewart that since false ideas take such hold of the mind, the reign of truth were it once known, may be expected to be of universal

[99] 9 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 27–8.

[100] Dugald Stewart, 'An Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith' in William Hamilton (ed.), *Collected Works of Dugald Stewart* (11 vols, Bristol, 1991), XI, 65.

> duration, he seemed to feel and approve of the idea highly as coinciding with his views.[101]

The assumption of progress and the sense of democratic politicisation are clear here, expanding the Enlightenment out from a select coterie of thinkers towards a more Kantian ideal of progress and educational liberation. Not that Hall was averse to celebrating the achievements of past luminaries of the movement. He reported on 30 May that he had heard 'there is to be a festival on the 15th of June on the introduction of Voltaire's bones to Paris.'[102] It actually occurred four days earlier, on 11 July, and Hall was unexpectedly drawn into the proceedings:

> Called on Lavoisier … who was just going out to join the procession as an academician. He made us [Hall, Thomas Douglas and the Earl of Selkirk] follow him and he took us into the procession and walked with it from near the Bastille to the Place Louis XV. The show was pretty as we went along the windows of all the houses being full of people and the sides of the streets scaffold &c. all covered with spectators. We grew very tired of the ceremony and left it at the Place de Louis XV. People flocked to the show as they would have done to any other, but it was a matter of doubt whether Voltaire would have been an aristocrat.[103]

Again, here, the democratic edge to the tone of Hall's remarks is clear.

The ambiguity here surrounds the rather uncomfortable quality in Voltaire's personality that made him desire the company of social superiors. His flirtation with Fredrick of Prussia and his overt claims to rank and recognition left Hall slightly wary of connecting the Enlightenment's greatest voice with the Revolution which followed. But the causal relationship was more explicit elsewhere in Hall's text, as in the entry for 9 June:

> General reflections on the French Revolution. Tendency to simplify. Dr Gem said that he observed that many of the steps taken by the National Assembly originated in the writings of Helvetius. That all the actions of a body of men might be traced to books and that there was

[101] 7 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 168–9.
[102] 30 May 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 131.
[103] 11 July 1791, NLS, MS. 6332, 97–8.

> no book of eminence that in time did not find its way to the mind of the public.[104]

Ultimately, Hall agreed that the Enlightenment and the Revolution were a binary formation and sympathy for the one implied support for the other. Hence he could cite with approval an idea mooted by Sieyès, and which Hall encountered in a newspaper. He noted on 1 June how

> a plan was set on foot for drawing up an address from the gens des lettres who before the revolution had written in favour of liberty and who still keep up to their principles to show that they have not recanted like the Abbé Raynal. Abbé Sieyès proposed that as Abbé Raynal is thus dead to liberty, the Assembly should wear a three-day mourning for him.[105]

The Enlightenment was, in other words, a necessary precursor to the Revolution in France. As to whether that same causal connection might emerge in Scotland was, in 1791, unclear. Many reasons can be offered to explain the failure of Scottish reform, but one thing is clear. The Enlightenment was neither as homogenous, nor as politically or socially conservative as the historiography has made out. That Scotland resisted Revolution was not due to a lack of radical sympathy on the part of all the Scottish literati, or at least on the part of Sir James Hall.

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[104] 9 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6331, 29–30.
[105] 1 June 1791, NLS, MS. 6330, 137–8.