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Hall, David D. The Puritans: A Transatlantic History

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that two scenes are exemplary—the penance of the Duchess of Gloucester in *2 Henry VI* and the sleepwalking of Lady Macbeth (122). Moreover, Geng wonders whether communal justice hinges on communal imagination (144).

She maintains that playwrights, like preachers and moralists, were sensitive to the public’s anti-professional feeling and “helped to define magistracy as the collective action of conscientious individuals” (145). Geng finds hope and redemption, then and now, in exemplary representations of communal justice by people in early modern England choosing “to write, stage, and applaud affirming stories of neighbourly love and care” (149). For readers and scholars generally, and for those of us who have written about law and literature or about figures such as Shakespeare and Edward Coke, Geng’s book makes a distinctive, lively, and considered contribution to scholarship.

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Hall, David D.

The Puritans: A Transatlantic History.

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019. Pp. vi, 520. ISBN 978-0-691-15139-7 (hardcover) US\$35.

In the epilogue, David Hall reminds us that “in the early nineteenth century, no one in Britain or the United States remembered the Puritans described in this book” (357). No one who has studied early modern British History since the 1980s could be unaware of them, so dominant have they been in explanations of the English Civil War (perhaps no longer a “war of religion” but certainly still a war in which religion was an issue across the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Wales) and of the cultural effectiveness of the Protestant Reformation. This book is an expert account of why the Puritans have been considered so central to early modern political and socio-cultural history on both sides of the Atlantic, and it shows an understanding of these debates that only a career-long study of the primary sources and decades-worth of scholarship can bring.

Hall gives this book a clear chronological structure, and in doing so he establishes certain themes that help define Puritanism. He is clear that Puritanism is a branch of Reformed Protestantism, and that it came to England and Scotland through the returning exiles who spent time in Geneva in the 1550s. This allows Hall to side-step the question of whether Puritanism is a “movement,” a question that is often given different answers on each side of the Atlantic (so English puritanism is usually lowercase and North American Puritanism is not). Instead, a numbered list features the shared concerns (idolatry, the authority of the Bible, the church’s relationship with secular authorities, and church discipline) that demonstrate the consistency in the views of those described as Puritans (20–28). The narrative begins in Geneva, moves to early Elizabethan England, and then Scotland under Mary of Guise and Mary Stuart, and so on.

Comparison is the other structuring principle of the book, and cross-referencing between the two kingdoms highlights the contrast between the Puritan program in both kingdoms. When New England comes into the story, comparisons emphasize the shared concerns of Puritans in the three nations and we see the impact of different political exigencies on what they could effect. A chapter on “Reformation of Manners” considers “the practical divinity”; the definite article gives Hall’s account of printed catechesis, prayer, and advice on godly living a coherent place within Puritanism that sometimes neglects the extent to which conformist writers were also active in these genres. But placing the discussion of predestination in the context of “the practical divinity” has the advantage of showing why debates between Arminians and Calvinists, and later between Calvinists and the “Antinomians” of New England, mattered so much: those who preached a theology of free grace (predestination) also needed to communicate advice on finding assurance of faith; “the practical divinity” explained the “meanes” (their term) for assuring oneself of the sincerity of one’s faith and therefore of one’s election.

The theme that Hall identifies as critical to the history of Puritanism, and which best demonstrates the continued importance of the Puritans for historians, is the relationship between them and the secular authorities. In England from the start of Elizabeth’s reign, and in Scotland from late in James VI’s reign, Puritans found themselves subject to political authorities who did not accept their understanding of “the two kingdoms” and refused them the independence to organize the ministry and discipline church

members which they considered warranted by scripture. But the Puritans were not separatists: it is central to Hall's argument that Puritans believed in a visible, institutional church rather than independent congregations as the means to re-make their society along godly lines. Hall's admiration for the degree of democratic representation found in early New England is clear, as is his admiration for their separation of secular and religious authority. But the franchise in Massachusetts was restricted to freemen, and freemen had to be church members; church membership depended on giving an account of one's assurance of faith: the practical divinity had political, practical implications, and so the "two kingdoms" were entangled here too. Hall ends his narrative in 1662, with the ejection of non-conforming ministers from the Church of England; the "puritan movement" within the church gave way to separate denominations outside the state church. Unfortunately, this means that the "half-way covenant" controversy in New England falls outside the scope of this study and receives only a few pages of consideration.

Hall's prose is uncluttered, and he relates this history with a clarity of exposition that few scholars could equal. This makes *The Puritans* an invaluable help to any scholar of early modern history. But more importantly, the insights that it offers by drawing the transatlantic strands of Puritanism together will continue to enrich the debate about what Puritanism means.

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Hohti Erichsen, Paula.

Artisans, Objects, and Everyday Life in Renaissance Italy: The Material Culture of the Middling Class.

Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020. Pp. 364. ISBN 978-9-4637-2262-9 (hardcover) €119.

This book is derived from Hohti Erichsen's PhD dissertation; over the twenty years she has been preparing it, the subfield of material cultural studies has blossomed, not only expanding the quantity and variety of sources available for scholars but also introducing depth to economic, cultural, and social