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CHRISTOPHER SMART--REVIVER OF ADORATION

by

ROSALIND MALCOLM

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the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to trace the evolution of Christopher Smart's conception of himself as the divinely-selected "Reviver of ADORATION amongst ENGLISH-MEN" and the concurrent development of his distinctive poetic style, from the Seatonian prize poems to its culmination in A Song to David.

The first chapter discusses the Seatonian prize poems, and the Hymn to the Supreme Being, On recovery from a dangerous fit of illness, and considers to what extent these poems are conventional or unusual in regard to contemporary themes and poetic style. It pays particular attention to the beginning of Smart's identification with King David, the psalmist of the Old Testament, and to his personal dedication of his life and talents to the glory of God.

The second chapter considers Jubilate Agno, Smart's "mad" poem, showing the further identification of himself with David, and examines Smart's conception of his psalmistic mission in eighteenth-century England. It discusses his belief that all created phenomena are actually alive with spiritual significance, usually for good, but occasionally for evil; that is, that all phenomena are instinct with God's power, and are not merely symbols for it. It also examines Smart's conception of the role of man, and particularly the poet, in this world-view.

The third chapter deals with the theory of language developed in Jubilate Agno. It discusses Smart's belief in the spiritual power of the phenomenon of language, and examines some of the idiomatic peculiarities of the poem in the light of certain major influences on Smart's

work.

The fourth chapter is an analysis of A Song to David, attempting to demonstrate how Smart uses language to communicate with great immediacy an intensely vivid impression of his particular world-view. This chapter examines themes and images common to the Song and Jubilate Agno, and discusses significant stylistic differences in their presentation. It also discusses Smart's idea of the poet as a positive force for good through his praise of God, and the ultimate identification of himself and David with Christ, the supreme poet.

CHAPTER I

The Seatonian Prize Poems

Five of the six religious poems which Christopher Smart composed before he was confined for insanity were, to an extent, written to order; that is, they were composed as entries to the Seatonian Prize competition at Cambridge University, and their subject, the attributes of the Supreme Being, was prescribed by the donor of the prize, Thomas Seaton.¹ A critical examination of them, therefore, must take into account that they are not entirely spontaneous outpourings of Smart's innermost convictions; nevertheless, these poems, together with the Hymn to the Supreme Being, On recovery from a dangerous fit of illness, which can be considered as a lyric coda² to the others, provide early evidence of concerns that were to obsess Smart in later years, as well as hints of the distinctive poetic style that he was to develop.

Smart won the Seatonian competition for Pembroke College in 1750, the first year it was held, with his poem On the Eternity of the Supreme Being, and repeated this success in 1751, 1752, 1753, and 1755, with poems on the immensity, omniscience, power and goodness of God. The University, and even the general public, became so accustomed to Smart's winning the prize that in 1754, the one year he did not enter the contest, the Gentleman's Magazine felt compelled to explain that "This prize has for many years been constantly assigned to the ingenious Mr. Smart, who was not this year among the competitors."³

These Seatonian Prize Poems proved to be exceedingly popular. The first poem had three editions at Cambridge, and all the others except On the Power of the Supreme Being went through two editions. In 1756, John Newbery, Smart's Grub Street employer and father-in-law, brought out a third edition of On the Immensity of the Supreme Being, and in 1758 a second edition of On the Power of the Supreme Being. One critic, George Dyer, declared that

had Mr. C. S. written nothing but his five Seatonian prize poems, he would have been entitled to be ranked among the poets of this country, beyond some who are admitted into Dr. Johnson's Lives of the English Poets.⁴

Most twentieth-century critics would agree that this is extravagant praise indeed of these rather conventional poems. W. H. Bond judges them to be "uninspired but technically proficient."⁵ J. B. Broadbent criticizes the "archaic and neologising tendencies of diction . . . said to be symptomatic of paranoia" although he admits that this technique is occasionally effective, as in the "coarse ruttling" of the "invoking ravens" and the "surly" roar of lions.⁶ Christopher Devlin objects to the "very slipshod blank verse" although he is impressed by the "intimate ease and genuine fervour with which Smart handles his difficult and abstract subject."⁷ Arthur Sherbo deplores the Miltonic influence which led Smart to write in blank verse which he had insufficiently mastered.⁸ Norman Callan, however, finds that "there are few of Smart's early pieces . . . where the delicacy of ear, which is one of the essential qualities of a true poet, is not evident."⁹

There is certainly little out of the ordinary in the general themes of the Seatonian Poems nor, for the most part, in Smart's treatment of them. Moira Dearnley has shown that the attributes of the Divinity was a very common theme in seventeenth and eighteenth-century poetry, and mentions, among other works, the prose tracts Discourse Concerning the Being and Attributes of God, by Samuel Clarke and Traité de l'Existence et des Attributs de Dieu by Fénelon; and in verse, John Pomfret's Upon the Divine Attributes, Elizabeth Rowe's poem of the same name, Samuel Boyse's Deity and William Hayward Roberts' Poetical Essay on the Existence of God.¹⁰ Robert Saltz claims that the "latinate diction and complex rhetoric" which were stylistic fundamentals of almost all such poetry are attributable largely to the influence of John Dennis' work of 1704, Ground of Criticism in Poetry, which "advocated a sublime poetry of natural philosophy incorporating 'the wonders of the universe' in the lofty numbers of the Miltonic style."¹¹

Smart's talents unfortunately were little suited to the sublime style, particularly to the cadences of blank verse. Ainsworth and Noyes claim that "Smart often counted syllables as painstakingly as a schoolboy practising the heroic couplet,"¹² and one is tempted to accept this judgement in light of the awkwardness of lines such as

She Heav'n-taught voyager, that sails in air,
Courts nor coy West nor East, but instant knows
What Newton, or not sought, or sought in vain,¹³

or the mannered effect of the contractions in the following:

. . . before Light
 Herself 'gan shine, and at th' inspiring word
 Shot to existence in a blaze of day. (Eternity, p. 223)

Nor does Smart's use of inverted syntax always produce happy results, leading sometimes to distinctly unharmonious phrases--"din outrageous," "conflict dreadful," "quakes Appenine" (Power, p. 237). Smart's style at times inadvertently weakens the force of his imagery--for example, in this image intended to convey the awesomeness and might of God's presence:

Albeit He there with Angels, and with Saints
 Hold conference, and to his radiant host
 Ev'n face to face stand visibly confest:
 Yet know that nor in Presence or in Pow'r
 Shines He less perfect here; (Immensity, p. 227)

The impression of power is weakened by the subjunctive mood of the first three lines and the negative construction of the last two. The last line, beginning with the inversion of subject and object--"Shines He"--followed by the negative phrase "less perfect here" accentuates the unfortunate subversion of Smart's purpose. The positive connotation which Smart evidently intended these lines to carry is still discernible, but it is not as clearly and dramatically apparent as it might be. At times the syntax is so complicated that it is difficult to follow the meaning of a sentence, for example:

But yet (if still to more stupendous heights
 The Muse unblam'd her aching sense may strain)
 Perhaps wrapt up in contemplation deep,
 The best of beings on the noblest theme
 Might ruminat at leisure, Scope immense
 Th' eternal Pow'r and Godhead to explore,
 And with itself th' omniscient mind replete. (Eternity, p. 224)

The poems suffer too from the stale poetic diction which Wordsworth deplored--"finny race" and "feathered matron," "illustrious monarch of the day" and "fair queen of night" (Eternity, p. 225) had by this time become merely thought-evading devices and their use adds nothing to the poems. The frequent archaisms--"Nathless," (Immensity, p. 239) "knewst," (Omniscience, p. 231) "avaunt," (Omniscience, p. 235) and the elaborately contrived phrases--"Her pensile house the feather'd Artist builds," (Omniscience, p. 230) "When Zephyr faints upon the lilly's breast," (Power, p. 237) also contribute to a general impression of affectation.

Most of the imagery employed is also extremely conventional--"verdant vallies" in "meek submission," (Eternity, p. 225) the invocation to the muse Urania "with new strains/ To hymn thy God, and thou, immortal Fame,/ Arise, and blow thy everlasting trump" (Omniscience, p. 231), and Philomela preparing her annual flight "e'er the cold domain/ Of crippled winter 'gins t' advance" (Omniscience, p. 233). Not only are the images well-worn, they often suffer from a lack of concreteness. For example, when Smart is describing the destruction of the earth at the day of judgement, he declares,

. . . it shall come,
 When the capacious atmosphere above
 Shall in sulphureous thunders groan, and die,
 And vanish into void; the earth beneath
 Shall sever to the center, and devour
 Th' enormous blaze of the destructive flames. (Eternity, p. 224)

The triteness of "capacious" and "sulphureous," the unlikely personification of the atmosphere, the abstractness of "vanish into void",

all contribute to the general impression of vagueness and the failure to build up tension in this passage. The same tendency to imagistic vagueness is found in On the Immensity of the Supreme Being, where

. . . the mind along the spangled sky
Measures her pathless walk, studious to view
Thy works of vaster fabric . . . (Immensity, p. 228)

and in On the Omniscience of the Supreme Being:

When up the imperceptible ascent
Of growing years, led by thy hand, I rose,
Perception's gradual light, that ever dawns
Insensibly to day, thou didst vouchsafe. (Omniscience, 232)

There are instances, however, when Smart succeeds in creating images of unusual succinctness and brilliance. The characterization of the cock as "the stately night-exploding bird" (Immensity, 227) contrasts favourably with the portrait of Philomela the nightingale, mentioned above. The strange fanciful vision of the "unplanted" under-sea garden "Of vegetable coral, sea-flow'rs gay,/ And shrubs of amber from the pearl-pav'd bottom" in On the Immensity of the Supreme Being, is extremely effective in its concise and pointed use of significant detail. There are also instances of skillful use of alliteration-- "Swift on the winnowing winds they work their way," (Omniscience, p. 232) and "Up the huge hill she hardly heaves it home" (Omniscience, p. 235).

Robert Saltz has pointed out that the Seatonian poems comprise

a comprehensive speculum naturae, each part of which develops one aspect of the dominant physico-theological theme within a unifying survey structure. Establishing first the temporal limits of the world between "the two Prime Pillars of the Universe,/ Creation and Redemption," Smart traces God, the architect or

artificer, in the hierarchy of forms from the bottom of the sea through the plants and animals upward to man, the final act of the creative week and highest proof of his wisdom 13

and that this motif was altogether within the contemporary tradition of sublime poetry. Smart's tone, however, even at this early stage, is exceptionally jubilant in his celebration of God's presence in nature, and he is emphatic about the extreme importance of human gratitude for this evidence of God's benevolence:

Still with ten thousand beauties blooms the Earth,
With pleasures populous, and with riches crown'd,
Still is there scope for wonder and for love
Ev'n to their last exertion--show'rs of blessings
Far more than human virtue can deserve,
Or hope expect, or gratitude return. (Omniscience, p. 236)

Here also are indications of Smart's conviction, made more explicit in Jubilate Agno and A Song to David, that the functioning of nature is in itself a direct and meaningful expression of praise. In On the Immensity of the Supreme Being, he exclaims,

List ye! how Nature with ten thousand tongues
Begins the grand thanksgiving, Hail, all hail. (Immensity, p. 227)

The linnet praises God in her tuneful song, but the ravens' "coarse ruttling," though it hurts the human ear, is praise also, for "They mean it all for music, thanks and praise . . ." (Goodness, p. 242).

For Smart, the single most conclusive proof of God's being is in the soul of man--he claims in On the Omniscience of the Supreme Being that even if no animal, vegetable or mineral phenomena existed on earth, "Yet man at home, within himself, might find/ The Deity immense . . ." (Immensity, pp. 230-231). It is ironic, therefore, that man is

the only creature who ever seems oblivious of God's presence:

. . . 'tis Man's dim eye
That makes th' obscurity. He is the same,
Alike in all his Universe the same. (Immensity, pp. 227-228)

"Thou ideot," exclaims Smart, "that asserts there is no God,/ View and be dumb forever" (Immensity, p. 230). Man, obsessed with the technical and intellectual abilities which raise him above the beasts, too often fails to recognize the divine spirit actuating them, and consequently his praises are less effective than those of the lower orders--the ravens "leave ingratitude to man" (Goodness, p. 242). In Smart's view, the bee, who "from discordant flow'rs/ A perfect harmony of sweets compounds" (Omniscience, p. 235) far surpasses the wonder of the chemist's laborious calculations. The nightingale's inborn sense of direction, which guides her on her yearly migrations, is evidence of a more awesome power than the admittedly "vast genius" of the greatest human scientist, Isaac Newton.

Smart, taking his cue from Pope's Essay on Man, advises man to observe and learn from the natural piety of the animals. Where Pope, however, was more concerned with practical competence--

"Go, from the Creatures thy instructions take:
Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;
Learn from the beasts the physic of the field;¹⁴

--Smart's hope is that man will increase in godliness:

Woful vicissitude! when Man, fall'n Man,
Who first from Heav'n, from gracious God himself,
Learn'd knowledge of the Brutes, must know by Brutes
Instructed and reproach'd, the scale of being;
By slow degrees from lowly steps ascend,
And trace Omniscience upwards to its spring! (Omniscience,
p. 235)

Smart presents himself as one man who has humbled himself this way, and who has learned the joy of unqualified, all-absorbing praise.

In On the Immensity of the Supreme Being, he exclaims:

Ye tenants of the forest and the field!
My fellow subjects of th' eternal King,
I gladly join your Mattins, and with you
Confess his presence, and report his praise. (Immensity, p. 222)

To "confess his presence, and report his praise" was to be Smart's poetic purpose for the rest of his life, being the dominant theme of Jubilate Agno and A Song to David, as well as of the Hymns and Spiritual Songs.

In these early poems, however, he appears to be much less sure of his ability to offer suitable praise than he was to become. In On the Eternity of the Supreme Being, he asks,

May then the youthful, uninspired Bard
Presume to hymn th' Eternal; may he soar
Where seraph, and where Cherubin on high
Resound th' unceasing plaudits, and with them
In the grand Chorus mix his feeble voice? (Eternity, p. 223)

This theme is repeated in On the Goodness of the Supreme Being:

Where shall the tim'rous bard thy praise begin,
Where end the purest sacrifice of song,
And just thanksgiving? (Goodness, p. 241)

and in On the Immensity of the Supreme Being, where he declares:

Vain were th' attempt, and impious to trace
Thro' all his works th' Artificer Divine. (Immensity, p. 230)

This attitude, of course, may be no more than a conventional acknowledgement of the Miltonic tradition, but it is an interesting contrast to Smart's later tone. In Jubilate Agno, for example, he makes an emphatic although implicit assertion of his position as leader of the

"Nations, and languages, and every Creature" which he calls to worship.

It is quite clear, however, that even at this early stage, Smart felt himself called to dedicate his talents to God's praise. He calls himself at one point "th' anointed poet" (Power, p. 236) and at another, "The poet of my God" (Immensity, p. 227). In On the Immensity of the Supreme Being, he pledges,

The knee, that Thou has shap'd, shall bend to Thee,
The tongue, which Thou has tun'd, shall chant thy praise,
And thine own image, the immortal soul,
Shall consecrate herself to Thee for ever. (Immensity, p. 231)

This vow is repeated even more strongly in the next Seatonian poem:

Thou too, my Heart, whom he, and he alone,
Who all things knows, can know, with love replete,
Regenerate, and pure, pour all thyself
A living sacrifice before his throne. (Omniscience, p. 231)

Smart's idea of the sublime poet par excellence was the Old Testament Psalmist, King David. His fascination with this figure is hinted at in the opening lines of On the Goodness of the Supreme Being, where he invokes the mythical poet, Orpheus, and identifies him with David:

Orpheus, for so the Gentiles call'd thy name,
Israel's sweet psalmist (Goodness, p. 240)

This interest in David and the identification of him with Orpheus was not peculiar to Smart. The question of King David's morality was the subject of a contemporary controversy that produced several books and pamphlets. Smart referred to one of these in a note which he appended to the lines quoted above in the original edition of the poem: "See this conjecture strongly supported by Delany in his Life of David."¹⁵

Robert Brittain has explained that Smart is referring to An Historical Account of the Life and Reign of David King of Israel, by Patrick Delany, published in London, 1740-42, and he points out that

. . . in the seventeenth chapter of Book I, there is a great deal of solemn argument to the effect that the Orpheus myth is a degenerate form of the Scriptural story of David.¹⁶

John Block Friedman claims furthermore that "Orpheus and David were frequently identified . . . in the visual arts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."¹⁷

We know, then, that Smart was not eccentric in his conflation of David and Orpheus as types of the sublime poet of praise, but his concern with these figures here is important for the insight it provides into the growing conviction of his own psalmistic mission. For there are indications in the Seatonian poems that Smart is beginning to identify himself with this archetypal figure. The invocation to David-Orpheus, for example, concludes:

. . . so shall the muse
Above the stars aspire, and aim to praise
Her God on earth, as he is praised in heaven. (Goodness, p. 241)

The identification is more implicit in the opening lines of On the Immensity of the Supreme Being, where Smart calls for his lute and harp, the instruments of the psalmist.

The theme of poetic mission is developed more fully in the Hymn to the Supreme Being, on recovery from a dangerous fit of illness, composed around August, 1756.¹⁸ Evidence that Smart intended it as a sort of culmination to the earlier poems is found in the tenth stanza, where he names the

subjects of four of the Seatonian poems in the order of their composition:

All glory to th' ETERNAL, to th' IMMENSE,
All glory to th' OMNISCIENT and GOOD. (Hymn, p. 246)

The opening lines make reference to the thirty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, which tells how King Hezekiah, on his death-bed, prayed to God to restore him to health and was granted another fifteen years of life. Smart obviously felt that his own recovery from illness was a direct answer to prayer, and proof of God's goodness and mercy. Since he felt that he had no particular moral superiority to recommend him, he was convinced that he had been saved for a purpose--to magnify God's name on earth, in effect to take on the role of David the psalmist in eighteenth-century England. Although the identification with David is not made explicitly, it in fact becomes closer "because of their common election and their similar fall and rise. Smart begins to see himself as the penitent who with God's help rises again, as David rose after his fall. By humbling himself in penitence, he may become sublime."¹⁹

Smart does declare explicitly in this poem his intention to devote the rest of his life to God's service and praise. After God has bestowed "a second birth . . . of joy" (p. 247), Smart commands:

Ye strengthen'd feet, forth to his altar move;
Quicken, ye new-strung nerves, th' enraptur'd lyre;
Ye heav'n-directed eyes, o'erflow with love;
Glow, glow, my soul, with pure seraphic fire;
Deeds, thoughts, and words no more his mandates break,
But to his endless glory work, conceive, and speak. (p. 247)

Perhaps because of the intensely personal subject of this Hymn, it reveals a much more direct and effective handling of language than the earlier works. There are still some remnants of stylistic affectation--"The virtuous partner of my nuptial bands," (p. 246) "My little prattlers lifting up their hands," (p. 246) and there are some abrupt transitions--for example, from stanza 14, where Smart extols the virtue of penitence, to stanza 15, where he rejoices in "the creative goodness of God, manifest in the sovereign creatures of each class of being"²⁰--but overall, the style is much more forceful and direct. Freed from the heavy Miltonic rhythms of the Seatonian poems, and writing of an agonizing personal experience, Smart presents a chilling picture of the horrors of mental illness:

When reason left me in the time of need,
And sense was lost in terror or in trance,
My sick'ning soul was with my blood inflam'd,
And the celestial image shrunk, defac'd and maim'd, (p. 245)

and an equally striking impression of health returning:

But soul-rejoicing health again returns,
The blood meanders gentle in each vein,
The lamp of life renew'd with vigour burns,
And exil'd reason takes her seat again. (p. 246)

Through a bitter irony, Smart was to become insane again only a few months after the composition of this poem. On May 6, 1757, he was admitted into St. Luke's Hospital, and although he was released on May 11, 1758, he was confined as a religious maniac, in the homes of friends and in a private madhouse²¹ until January, 1763. While mental illness is unquestionably a personal tragedy, we must confront the aesthetic judgement that it may result in public good.²² In Smart's

case, his period of mental imbalance jolted his poetic style out of the tired post-Augustan conventions, and allowed him the freedom to experiment widely with form and idiom. Most of all, it crystallized his poetic purpose. Jubilate Agno, the record of these madhouse years, confirms Smart's absolute commitment to his role as an eighteenth-century David.

CHAPTER II

Jubilate Agno

Jubilate Agno, published for the first time in 1939, was composed, as nearly as can be determined, between January, 1759 and January, 1763¹ when Christopher Smart was confined in a London madhouse. Critical interpretation of the poem has posed problems partly because only about one-third of the manuscript has survived, but also because the abrupt transitions and illogicalities in many passages vividly reflect the mental imbalance of the author. Even a reader unbiased by the knowledge of Smart's madness is likely to have difficulty finding rational significance in lines like "Let Ross, house of Ross rejoice with the Great Flabber Dabber Flat Clapping Fish with hands. Vide Anson's Voyage & Psalm 98th ix."² Obviously, any understanding of this strange and wonderful work requires a reader receptive to all possible associations of words and ideas, and unusual twists and tricks of language, as has been proved by the several valuable studies of the poem that have been produced, particularly since W. H. Bond's illuminating edition appeared in 1954.

Smart called the poem "a psalm of my own composing" (Bl, 32), and it begins, sanely enough, as a recognizable example of this genre:

Rejoice in God, O ye Tongues; give the glory to the Lord, and the Lamb.

Nations, and languages, and every Creature, in which is the breath of Life.

Let man and beast appear before him, and magnify his name together. (A, 1-3)

These lines are, in fact, an adaptation of the opening of Psalm lxvi:

"Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:/ Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious."

For Smart to write a hymn of praise was not at all unusual; Jubilate Agno is striking, however, in its vast range of characters and the intensely personal nature of its tone. The lines, each one beginning either with "Let" or "For," exhort all manner of men, from Biblical figures to eighteenth-century Englishmen, and all manner of creatures,³ from the ram to the French turnip and even to the inanimate emerald and opal, to join in the hymn, led by Smart--"the Lord's News-Writer--the scribe-evangelist" (B2, 327). Smart himself evidently intended his effort to be unique among hymns of praise, and saw himself divinely selected to compose it for a particular purpose:

For by the grace of God I am the Reviver of ADORATION amongst ENGLISH-MEN. (B2, 332)

An important and generally-accepted theory as to the form of the poem was advanced in 1954 by William H. Bond, who first recognized a thematic correspondence between many of the "Let" and "For" lines, for example:

Let Magdiel rejoice with Ascarides, which is the life of the bowels--the worm hath a part of our frame.

For I rejoice like a worm in the rain in him that cherishes and from him that tramples. (B1, 37)

Bond concluded that the poem had originally been designed as a responsive

reading, with all the lines beginning "Let" to be spoken by the first reader, and all the lines beginning "For" to be spoken by the second reader, who Bond assumed was to have been Smart himself. Bond suggests that Smart was influenced in this design by Bishop Robert Lowth's study of the poetry of the Bible, De sacra poesi Hebraeorum, first published in 1753. Lowth emphasized particularly the antiphonal or responsive nature of Hebrew poetry--"One of the choirs sung a single verse to the other, while the other constantly added a verse in some respect correspondent to the other"⁴--and it is known that Smart knew and admired Lowth's work.

Bond also notes that Smart "had been giving serious thought to a reformation of the Anglican liturgy,"⁵ and that when his version of the Psalms was later published, it was with the express purpose of effecting such a reform. Bond concludes that "it is more than probable that Jubilate was initially conceived as the opening move in this campaign,"⁶ a conjecture which accounts not only for the appropriateness of Lowth's principles but also for the close parallels in parts of the poem to the Anglican Order for Morning Prayer and the Psalter. Smart never directly claims that Jubilate is an attempt to reform the liturgy, but the poem does show evidence of his preoccupation with this subject: he observes, for example, that "it would be better if the LITURGY were musically performed" (B1, 252) and "it were better for the SERVICE, if only select psalms were read" (B2, 511).

A further clue to Smart's conception of his role and the purpose of his poem is found in two figures who, as we have seen, appeared in

the Seatonian poems and the Hymn to the Supreme Being, and who feature prominently in Jubilate's chorus of praise--David, the Psalmist of Israel, and Orpheus, the archetypal poet. The eight references to David, and the passage of several lines dealing with Orpheus, all emphasize the poet-singers' musical skill which is dedicated to the general chorus of praise. As in the earlier poems, Smart presents David and Orpheus as a single poet-figure who unites the pagan and Christian worlds in praise of the one true God:

For the story of Orpheus is of the truth.

For there was such a person a cunning player on the harp.

For he was a believer in the true God and assisted
in the spirit.

For he played upon the harp in the spirit by breathing
upon the strings. (C, 52-55)

Smart's identification of himself with David is continued in Jubilate Agno. He worked out a fanciful genealogy whereby he was actually descended from David, claiming "I am the seed of the WELCH WOMAN" (B1, 91) (his mother was Welsh), and that "the WELCH are the children of Mephibosheth and Ziba with a mixture of David in the Jones's" (B2, 435). Smart is evidently associating the Old Testament King with David, the Patron Saint of Wales, and drawing into this pattern of reference the fact that David and Jones are very common Welsh names. Later, he relates the two Davids more directly, when he exclaims, "Let Bilshan rejoice with the Leek. David for ever! God bless the Welch March 1st 1761. N. S." (C, 18). The first

reference is obviously to the psalmist, while the date, March 1st, is St. David's Day. Moreover, the manner of the poem's opening, already mentioned, indicates that he saw himself as a sort of eighteenth-century David, calling Englishmen everywhere to join with him in praise.

The poem's first reference to David offers an important insight into Smart's peculiar vision of the universe, and of the psalmist's place in it. He commands:

Let David bless with the Bear--The beginning of victory
to the Lord--to the Lord the perfection of excellence--
Hallelujah from the heart of God and from the hand of the
artist inimitable, and from the echo of the heavenly harp
in sweetness magnificent and mighty. (A, 41)

Smart here "connects David's musical skill with the creation of the universe by the 'artist inimitable'"⁷ and seems to envision the cosmos itself as a great Hallelujah proceeding from the heart of God. That is, Smart appears to see God as an all-powerful musician, and the entire universe as the majestic musical harmony which He creates. This view is stated more explicitly later in the poem, where Smart declares:

For GOD the father Almighty plays upon the HARP of Stupendous
magnitude and melody.

For innumerable Angels fly out at every touch and his tune
is a work of creation. (Bl, 246-247)

For this was spiritual musick altogether, as the wind is
a spirit.

For there is nothing but it may be played upon in delight.
(Bl, 254-255)

Paradoxically, while this cosmic harmony is composed of God's

creatures, they make a positive contribution to it through praise of Him:

For the praise of God can give to a mute fish the notes of
a nightingale. (Bl, 24)

Actual music is obviously not only what Smart has in mind; music for him is found in every type of praise, and he sees praise of God in most types of natural activity:

Let Ehud rejoice with Onacrotalus, whose braying is
for the glory of God, because he makes the best musick
in his power. (Bl, 19)

From this perspective, the psalmist, of whom David is the archetype and Smart the conscious imitator, assumes a position of profound significance, for it is he who invites all creatures to praise and who in effect leads that part of the cosmic harmony which is composed of creatures rendering thanks. In other words, Smart sees himself as a vital agent uniting the created orders with the Creator.

Music provides the key also to the particular moral world-view presented in Jubilate Agno. For Smart, harmony represents good, and discord represents evil. He declares, for example,

For all whispers and unmusical sounds in general are of the
Adversary. (Bl, 231)

While the tone of the poem, as its title suggests, is predominantly jubilant, even ecstatic, in its praise of God's goodness, evil is not ignored; it is, in fact, recognized throughout in the character of the Adversary. Although Smart declares that when God plays upon His harp,

. . . malignity ceases and the devils themselves
are at peace (Bl, 248)

the power of evil to disrupt the cosmic harmony is an important theme in the poem.

Jubilate Agno presents a world picture in which all phenomena, material as well as immaterial, are seen as possessing innate spiritual significance for good or evil--all things proclaim themselves through their very natures as "harmony" or "discord" in relation to the grand cosmic hymn. Smart does not simply present objects as symbols for good or evil; he sees them as actually alive with those qualities. For example, when he prays to God to "illuminate us against the powers of darkness," (B1, 90) we find that he intends this literally as well as metaphorically. "For LIGHTNING," he tells us, "is a glance of the glory of God" (B1, 272). And

. . . the SHADOW is of death, which is the Devil,
 who can make false and faint images of the works
 of Almighty God. (B2, 308)

Physical and spiritual enlightenment seem to be one and the same thing, and Smart sees a powerful spiritual reality in actual darkness. When he is released from his dungeon, he thanks God that he is allowed the light of day again, for he is convinced that "the more the light is defective, the more the powers of darkness prevail" (B2, 315). When he declares that ignorance is a sin because illumination is to be obtained by prayer," (B2, 421) he is apparently referring to the physical as well as the spiritual reality, for he says later that "The Lightning before death is God's illumination in the spirit for preparation and for warning" (B2, 467). In this way, Smart continually connects outward reality with the spiritual significance he sees manifest in it.

It is Smart's conviction that the universal chorus of praise has positive power to assert God's goodness and to thwart the Adversary:

For ECHO cannot act but when she can parry the adversary.

For ECHO is greatest in Churches and where she can assist in prayer. (B1, 236-237)

This echo of praise emanates from the non-human as well as the human creatures: they contribute through fulfilling involuntarily but to the greatest degree possible their God-appointed functions. This action is their "voice":

For SOUND is propagated in the spirit and in all directions.

For the VOICE of a figure is compleat in all its parts.

For a man speaks HIMSELF from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet.

For a LION roars HIMSELF compleat from head to tail.
(B1, 226-229)

The vegetable orders of creation show the same characteristic; in Smart's view, "the flower glorifies God and the root parries the adversary" (B2, 499): the natural tendency of the flower to grow upward, toward the sun, is seen as an act of praise, and its root, which points downward, away from heaven, wards off the advance of evil.

There is one creature, however, who does not necessarily and involuntarily form part of the cosmic harmony--man must take part through a voluntary and deliberate act of praise.⁸ Looked at another way, man alone has the unique opportunity to choose whether he will declare himself for God or the Adversary, and Smart maintains that even the smallest activities of everyday life proclaim this choice:

For a man's idleness is the fruit of the adversary's diligence.

For diligence is the gift of God, as well as other good things. (B2, 572-573)

All too often Smart was distressed to see around him men who committed "the sin of ingratitude" against God; men who appeared to be oblivious to the spiritual significance manifest in material objects, and to value them for the wrong reasons. He warns,

For avaricious men are exceeding subtle like the soul seperated from the body.

For their attention is on a sinking object which perishes. (B2, 336-337)

Smart's particular view of the nature and function of the universe extended of course to the realm of science, where he was in sharp disagreement with what he considered were Newton's methods of investigation. Smart was not against science; he claimed that he himself was "inquisitive in the Lord," but he was convinced that Newton saw in science not religious wonders, but only mechanistic ones, and that therefore his scientific experiments could have no real value. He maintained that

. . . Newton is ignorant for if a man consult not the WORD how should he understand the WORK. (B1, 220)

For Newton nevertheless is more of error than of the truth, but I am of the Word of God. (B1, 195)

Newton, for example, had written,

A centripetal force is that by which bodies are drawn or impelled, or anyway tend, towards a point as to a centre.⁹

Smart would not have denied this observation as a principle, but such a statement seemed to be completely missing the real significance of

the phenomenon. For Smart, the only meaningful interpretation is that "the Centripetal and Centrifugal forces are GOD SUSTAINING and DIRECTING" (B1, 163).

Smart was also disturbed by Newton's "notion of colours," calling it "unphilosophical." He was apparently referring to Newton's attempt, inspired by the contemporary vogue for synaesthesia, to "co-ordinate mathematically the colours refracted by a prism with the notes of the octave."¹⁰ Again, Smart insists that Newton's direction is wrong; for Smart, the single most important thing to be noticed about the colours is that they are spiritual, "inasmuch as the blessing of God upon all things descends in colour" (B2, 664):

For WHITE is the first and the best. (B2, 652)

For black blooms and it is PURPLE.

For purple works off to BROWN which is of ten thousand acceptable shades. (B2, 660-661)

God, Smart argues, "communicates through externals," and the true scientist is the man who can interpret these communications to show that all outward reality is instinct with God's power. The wedge, for instance, operates "direct as it's altitude by communication of Almighty God" (B1, 180). Friction is explained by the vast numbers of creatures resulting from the plenitude of God: "For FRICTION is inevitable because the universe is FULL of God's works" (B1, 185). Perhaps the most striking illustration of Smart's interpretation of science as spiritually significant is the passage on the element mercury:

For the rising in the BAROMETER is not effected by pressure but by sympathy.

For it cannot be seperated from the creature with which it is intimately & eternally connected.

For where it is stinted of air there it will adhere together & stretch on the reverse.

For it works by ballancing according to the hold of the spirit.

For QUICK-SILVER is spiritual and so is the AIR to all intents and purposes. (B1, 213)

In actuality, of course, Newton's ideas about science were more similar to Smart's than Smart realized. Newton was a notable theist, and had predicted "not only that the mechanical principles would prove the key to unlock mysteries yet unexplained, but that such further discoveries would lead . . . back towards heaven."¹¹ In fact, this was the view of the majority of educated men of the period, and in 1713 a Plumian Professor at Cambridge, Roger Cotes, could declare:

. . . Newton's distinguished work will be the safest protection against the attacks of atheists, and nowhere more surely than from this quiver can one draw forth missiles against the band of godless men.¹²

Smart was certainly not hostile toward Newton as a person, for in Fragment D of Jubilate Agno he prays God to "be gracious to the immortal Soul of Sr Isaac Newton" (D, 170), but he evidently felt that Newton lacked the proper attitude of adoration necessary for the true scientist.

For ordinary men, Smart implies that the single most important thing they can do to promote the universal harmony of goodness and drown out the discord of evil is to practice benevolence. Speaking

of sickness and death, which he states are "of the Adversary," he argues

For an Ague is the terror of the body, when the blessing of God is withheld for a season.

For benevolence is the best remedy in the first place and the bark in the second.¹³ (B2, 474-475)

He places very great value on benevolence, simply as an abstract quality, claiming:

For Justice is infinitely beneath Mercy in nature and office.

For the Devil himself may be just in accusation and punishment. (B2, 320-321)

Benevolence or charity is one of the fundamental characteristics of God, and Smart urges his contemporaries to offer praise by imitating Him Who never deserts "Fatherless Children and widows" (B1, 170) and whose first object of charity is "the poor gentleman" (B1, 138). He several times exhorts man to be kinder to dumb animals, and twice admonishes that "a man cannot have public spirit, who is void of private benevolence" (B2, 496; B2, 564).

The greatest sin of eighteenth-century England was a denial of this principle of benevolence, worse even, Smart implies, than failure to recognize God's Word in His Work. Apart from his own experience, ("they work me with their harping-irons, which is a barbarous instrument, because I am more unguarded than others" (B1, 124)), Smart saw everywhere in contemporary society evidence of man's cruelty and its disastrous spiritual effects:

For, when the nation is at war, it is better to abstain from the punishment of criminals especially,

every act of human vengeance being a check to the grace of God. (B2, 476)

This insistence on man's need for charity helps to explain the extraordinary range of creatures, animate and inanimate, which Smart pairs with the human figures in his panorama of praise. Throughout the poem he calls forth all creatures according to their position in the traditional Great Chain of Being, from animals, insects and birds in Fragment A, snakes, amphibians and fish in B1, herbs and flowers in C, and gems and minerals in Fragment D before the methodical structure finally disintegrates and the creatures are called forth in no particular order. Robert D. Saltz has speculated that the B2 "Let" verses, which are missing, cover trees and large plants since Fragment C begins with herbs;¹⁴ if so, man's partners in praise are all the lower orders of Creation. It has been shown that these orders offer praise unflinching, simply through the involuntary performing of their natural functions; surely, then, as Friedman has suggested, the creatures are invoked as models for men.¹⁵ This theme, we remember, which is reminiscent of Pope, was touched upon in the Seatonian poem On the Omniscience of the Supreme Being.

In Jubilate Agno, Smart again invites man to contemplate the lower orders of creation, and to learn humility and benevolence from their spontaneous natural piety. He exhorts Huldah, for instance, to "bless with the Silkworm--the ornaments of the Proud are from the bowells of their Betters" (A, 91). Man will benefit also by observing in the lizard "the sweet majesty of good-nature, and the magnanimity

of meekness," (A, 25) and by contemplating the civet "which is pure from benevolence" (A, 77).

Smart's own model is his cat, Jeoffry, "the servant of the Living God duly and daily serving him" (B2, 698). The idea of animal as instructor is confirmed by the peculiar wording of the first reference to Jeoffry in the poem:

For I am possessed of a cat, surpassing in beauty,
from whom I take occasion to bless Almighty God. (B1, 68)

Not "for whom" but "from whom"--Smart learns piety from the cat's example. Friedman has given us, I think, the best critical analysis to date of the well-known Jeoffry passage, showing that as well as worshipping God in his way, the cat serves as "an exemplum . . . of cleanliness, watchfulness, purity of tongue, quickness to his mark, docility, faith ('For he can jump from an eminence into his master's bosom,' p. 118), and patience."¹⁶ One of Jeoffry's most important virtues is thankfulness. Smart claims, in fact, that Jeoffry is "an instrument for the children to learn benevolence upon" (B2, 729).

For Smart, as we have seen, all natural phenomena are alive with supernatural meaning, but Jeoffry's spirituality is manifested particularly vividly in his physical attributes. The electricity of his fur and his luminous eyes proclaim him as God's representative:

For he keeps the Lord's watch in the night against
the adversary.

For he counteracts the powers of darkness by his
electrical skin & glaring eyes. (B2, 720-721)

For the Electrical fire is the spiritual substance,
which God sends from heaven to sustain the bodies
both of man and beast. (B2, 764)

He is especially favoured of God, too, in the extraordinary range of his actions--he can leap and roll, "he has the subtlety and hissing of a serpent," "he is an excellent clamberer," "he can swim for life," and "he can creep"; in short,

For his motions upon the face of the earth are more than any other quadrupede. (B2, 767)

For God has blessed him in the variety of his movements. (B2, 765)

Jeoffry's voice, like that of the Onacrotalus, is not conventionally musical, but it is morally "harmonious" nevertheless, for "it has in purity what it wants in musick" (B2, 745). Jeoffry is different from all other creatures in his potential to teach piety only in a matter of degree, but it is fitting that Smart, who sought to instruct all his contemporaries, should himself receive guidance from the superlative teacher.

This must have been additional evidence for Smart that, even in his madhouse, God had marked him for His own; he claims; "I am enobled by my ascent and the Lord hath raised me above my Peers" (B1, 86). The humiliation and deprivation he was undergoing were, he felt, helping to equip him for his psalmistic mission; he declares at one point that "the life of the Lord is in Humiliation, the Spirit also and the truth" (A, 51), and later that "I am not without authority in my jeopardy" (B1, 1). Moreover, he never loses faith in the eventual success of his mission. Probably having in mind Lowth's contention that, as well as demonstrating the nature and attributes of God, Hebrew poetry was intended to "amend or console present generations by foreshadowing the

future,"¹⁷ Smart asserts that "it is the business of a man gifted in the word to prophecy good" (C, 57). True to this belief, he predicts a day when obsession with material things will vanish, and "men will learn the use of their knees" (C, 108). In this new Age of Faith, "The Lord Jesus prosper you" (C, 64) will be the common greeting and "the name of king in England will be given to Christ alone" (C, 87).

Finally, before the thematic connections in the poem disintegrate almost completely in Fragment D, Smart envisions man's eventual regaining of the horn which served for defense and ornament and "bright-end to the Glory of God" (C, 122) in the days of King David, and which was taken away by God as punishment for "general pusillanimity." Whether we consider Jubilate Agno as an enigmatic combination of private journal and poet's notebook, or as a failed experiment in English verse-forms, the most lasting impression is surely this triumphant affirmation of total harmony. Jubilate Agno is undeniably "a song from Bedlam," but in the midst of much that is chaotic, we are forced to admire this tenacious faith in God and man which has produced a vision of evil vanquished, and men ten feet tall wearing their horns once more in company with God Himself and His hosts of angels, and David and Smart, God's psalmists on earth.

CHAPTER III

Smart's Theory and Use of Language

The opening lines of Jubilate Agno reflect Smart's perception of language as a gift from God and of its function as an instrument of praise:

Rejoice in God, O ye Tongues; give the glory to the Lord,
and the Lamb.

Nations, and languages, and every Creature, in which is the
breath of Life.

Let man and beast appear before him, and magnify his name
together. (A, 1-3)

In these lines we also find a hint of his belief that language is a "creature," alive with spiritual force like all the rest of God's creations. This invocation, which, as was mentioned in the foregoing chapter, echoes Psalm lxvi 1, 2, contains an important variation from its original: Smart has modified "lands" to "tongues." "Tongues" can certainly be used to mean nations, but its literal meaning refers to the agents of praise, and its more usual figurative sense is "languages."¹ In the second line Smart explicitly calls on "languages" to rejoice along with "Nations . . . and every Creature," implying an equal potential for praise in each of these three parts of Creation. In other words, languages, in Smart's view, are as capable of praise as are the nations and creatures who use them.

Smart's concern with the phenomenon of language is explained partly by his concurrence in the Biblical conception of God's power as that of the Word. In Fragment A, for example, we find, "Let Gideon bless with the Panther--the Word of the Lord is invincible by him that lappeth from the brook " (A, 31), and later, "For in the divine Idea this Eternity is compleat and the Word is a making many more" (B2, 329). Human language is a profoundly significant phenomenon in a universe of significant creations for it is a direct reflection of the Word of God. Smart believed, moreover, that every object in Creation, inasmuch as it praises God through the involuntary performing of its function, can be said to have a "language" of praise: "For Action and Speaking are one according to God and the Ancients" (B2, 562). Flowers, for instance, "speak" a "language" that is reasonable as well as spiritual, and above all, delightful:

For the flowers have their angels even the words of God's Creation.

For the warp & woof of flowers are worked by perpetual moving spirits.

.....

For there is a language of flowers.

For there is a sound reasoning upon all flowers.

For elegant phrases are nothing but flowers.

For flowers are peculiarly the poetry of Christ. (B2, 500-506)

This chapter, however, will concern itself primarily with the theories of human language to be found in Jubilate Agno, since it is the medium

of vocal, deliberate praise and Smart meditated at length on its innate power and its proper use. Language for him was fundamentally a revelation of divine patterns of relationships beneath the superficial ones that are readily apparent. Languages show connections not only among themselves--"languages work into one another by their bearings" (B2, 626)--but between different orders of Creation--"the power of some animal is predominant in every language" (B2, 627). Smart finds that "the power and spirit of a CAT is in the Greek" (B2, 628), and that "the Mouse (Mus) prevails in the Latin" (B2, 638). John Block Friedman points out that

the sound of "CAT," the Greek preposition *κατα* is indeed predominant in Greek; it may be joined to nearly every verb, though few people would make much of the fact. The mouse, naturally paired with the cat as Latin is paired with Greek, represents the Latin language in that mus, the Latin word for mouse is also the Latin first person plural verb ending.²

Greek and Latin are of particular importance because they were "the consecrated languages spoken by the Lord on earth" (B1, 6), and their grammatical characteristics alert Smart to certain spiritual relationships, particularly between "Nations, and languages, and every Creature." The functioning of Greek seems to point to a connection with the agility of a cat, for Smart asserts that "the pleasantry of a cat at pranks is in the language ten thousand times over" (B2, 630), and

For Clapperclaw is in the grappling of the words upon one another in all the modes of versification.

For the Greek is thrown from heaven and falls upon its feet.

For the Greek when distracted from the line is sooner restored to rank and rallied into some form than any other. (B2, 630-635)

He sees an important relationship between the mouse's "great personal valour" (B2, 640) and "hospitable disposition" (B2, 643) and the hospitality and bravery of the Romans. Furthermore, mouse, or mus, is an element in Smart's interpretation of the doctrine of Christianity-- "For Edi-mus, bibi-mus, vivi-mus--ore-mus": we eat, we drink, we live-- let us pray.

Smart was most fascinated with the power and subtlety of English. The animals which "prevail in the English" (B2, 645) are the dog and the bull. The most obvious source of this idea is an association with the English bulldog, but Smart may also have had in mind the character "John Bull," who made his first appearance in Arbuthnot's satire, Law is a Bottomless Pit, in 1712, and who seems to have been established as representing a typical Englishman by the 1770's.³ In any case, "Bull" apparently suggests strength, among other virtues, and "Dog" connotes conciseness--"For the English is concise & strong. Dog & Bull again" (B2, 649)--although the reasoning behind this association is obscure. Smart tells us that "can is (canis) is cause & effect a dog" (B2, 648), but this assertion seems to be no more than a play on words, and does not tell us anything about the nature of English. "Bull," for Smart, is "the word of Almighty God./ For he is a creature of infinite magnitude in the height" (B2, 676-677). The exercise on the many words and meanings which he perceives to be "under Bull" contains some traceable mental connections--"For Bullfinch is under Bull" (B2, 685)--and puns-- "For Brook is under Bull. God be gracious to Lord Bolingbroke" (B2, 683)--but remains ultimately mysterious, although Bond tells us that

at least part of this theory derives from Cabbalistic thought.

Smart was convinced that "the ENGLISH TONGUE shall be the language of the WEST," (B1, 127) and one critic has contended that he wanted to "establish English as the consecrated language, as Hebrew and Latin were the sacred tongues of earlier religious movements."⁴ While Smart certainly foresaw the English nation in the vanguard of an eventual religious reformation--"For I prophecy that the English will recover their horns the first" (C, 128)--there is no evidence that he saw himself taking an active role in bringing about this reformation, nor in establishing the supremacy of the English. Spiritual renewal would presumably come from God, and the English language derive its importance from its inherent, God-given power. For him, "every word has its marrow in the English tongue for order and for delight" (B2, 597).

Smart sees spiritual force emanating from words, as well as from more tangible parts of Creation:

For all good words are from GOD, and all others
are cant. (B1, 85)

. . . Good words are of God, the cant from the
Devil. (B1, 237)

Smart's belief in darkness as a power of evil has already been discussed; it appears that the words describing darkness also carry malevolent overtones:

For SHADOW is a fair word from God, which is not
returnable until the furnace comes up. (B2, 311)

He is referring to the account in Genesis of Abraham's vision of a smoking furnace after God had promised judgement upon the oppressors

of the Israelites. The implication of this verse is that all "words" (or spiritual essences) come ultimately from God, and while some have been diverted to evil purposes, all will eventually return to Him.

Names particularly have an inherent mystical quality. Smart derives obvious pleasure from invoking such exotically-titled creatures as the "Red-Crested Black & Blue Bird of Surinam" (D, 146) and the "Buckshorn Plantain Coronopus" (C, 63). He is convinced of the importance, within the scope of human time--"till the furnace comes up"--of giving things their "right" or God-given names. Smart sees with concern, however, that men have disturbed the universal harmony of "good words" by taking it upon themselves to ascribe names and categories to experience, in effect to take over the proper role of God. He asserts, for example, that

. . . Times and Seasons are the Lord's--Man is no Chronologer. (B2, 340)

For there is no knowing of times & seasons, in submitting them to God stands the Christian's Chronology. (B2, 576)

Also, "the Names of the DAYS, as they now stand, are foolish and abominable" (B2, 406). Smart claims, "I attribute to God, what others vainly ascribe to feeble man" (B1, 97); since he perceives all reality solely in the light of its relationship to God, he recognizes that the proper names of the days are "the First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh" (B2, 406)--the names given at the time of Creation. He declares as well that "the right names of flowers are yet in heaven" and prays God to "make gardners better nomenclators" (B2, 509).

Individual words have complex and mysterious relationships with other words:

For the relations of words are in pairs first.

For the relations of words are sometimes in oppositions.

For the relations of words are according to their distances from the pair. (B2, 600-602)

Smart perceives these relationships to be somehow similar to the relationship between a star (planet) and its satellite:

For all the stars have satellites, which are terms under their respective words.

For tiger is a word and his satellites are Griffin, Storgis, Cat and others. (B2, 402-403)

Primarily, what these connections affirm is that all created things are related through their origin in God and their spontaneous praise of Him.

Smart's theory of the importance of language includes the sounds that make up human languages as well as the voices which utter those sounds:

For SOUND is propagated in the spirit and in all directions. (B1, 226)

For the VOICE is from the body and the spirit-- and is a body and a spirit. (B1, 239)

For the voice is always for infinite good which [the Adversary] strives to impede. (B1, 274)

The supreme sound for Smart is always music, but he seems to have considered language to be a function of music. Just as all man-made music is a joyous echo of God's heavenly harp -- Smart insists, for example, that "the feast of TRUMPETS should be kept up, that being the most

direct & acceptable of all instruments" (B1, 244)-- so all language recalls the Word of God. Smart's mystique of rhymes based on musical instruments is an example of this correspondence. Some of the associations seem to derive from onomatopoeia, for instance, the flute rhymes, which are "tooth youth suit mute & the like" (B2, 591) and the pipe rhymes which are "beat heat, weep peep" (B2, 596). It is sometimes difficult, however, to discern the similarity between words which he groups together--for instance, he declares that "sound bound" and "soar more" are both trumpet rhymes.

Not only sounds, but also the letters which represent those sounds, have power. Jubilate Agno contains three fragmentary attempts to spell out "the power of the English letters taken singly" (B2, 517). Bond points out that Smart "was familiar with the profound meanings attached to the Hebrew characters by occult writers" and concludes that he "evidently was trying to establish the significance of his native alphabet."⁵ Sometimes the significance comes from words which begin with the given letter--"For O is open./ For P is power" (B2, 526-527), sometimes from elementary puns--"For B is a creature busy and bustling" (B2, 514); "For A is awe, if pronounced full. Stand in awe and sin not" (B2, 538). Some of the associations are more complex; Smart declares that "H is not a letter, but a spirit--Benedicatur Jesus Christus, sic spirem!" (B2, 520), and later, "For H is a spirit and therefore he is God" (C, 1). He is apparently referring to the fact that in linguistic terms the grapheme "h" represents simply the onset of breath, although the sound is technically classed as a consonant, and he

is presumably punning, in the word "spirit" on the Latin verb spirare. The letter "h" is thus seen to bear the significance of the spirit of God, and the breath of life which He gives to man. Whatever the ultimate source of the mysterious associations, it is clear that the letters of the alphabet were for Smart one more indication of the creative power alive in every element of the universe:

For Christ being A and Ω is all the intermediate letters without doubt. (C, 18)

Not only does Smart see strange significance in the familiar letters of the alphabet, he also has a belief in what he calls "uncommunicated letters," which appear to be a sort of Platonic "ideal" letters. The words of God to St. Paul when he was "caught up into the third heaven," for instance, were "constructed by uncommunicated letters./ For they are signs of speech too precious to be communicated for ever" (C, 42-45). In On the Eternity of the Supreme Being, Smart had touched on the idea of the world being stamped with God's "un-counterfeited seal," and the name of God being written "In undecypher'd characters"⁶ on every atom of the universe. In Jubilate Agno he presents a clearer picture of what he meant by those letters and seals.

Smart saw all around him in natural objects communications from God spelled out in the very letters of the divine language. He saw, in effect, "God revealed . . . in vegetable generation":⁷

For the Lupine professes his Saviour in Grain.

For the very Hebrew letter is fairly graven upon his Seed.

For with diligence the whole Hebrew Alphabet may be found in a parcel of his seed. (C, 77-79)

The watermelon, presumably because of its mottled seeds, is for Smart another of the "manuscripts of Almighty God" (C, 119). One of the most significant of the divine letters is ל --the Hebrew letter Lamed, which is the equivalent of the English letter "l". This association, however, as Bond points out, suggests to Smart the Hebrew word 'el,⁸ which means God, since he sees Lamed, God's sign, on numerous natural objects-- "on the fibre of some leaf in every Tree," "upon every hair both of man and beast," "in the constituent particles of air," and "in the stars the sun and in the Moon" (B2, 477, 480, 486, 490).

Smart's fascination with language is understandable since, as a poet, language was the raw material of his life's work. Just as God is perceived as the Creator Whose power is of the Word, Smart defines himself in terms of language: he is the "man gifted in the word" (C, 57) whose purpose is to "Confess [God's] presence and report his praise." The poet is unique among men because he is privileged to use language not only to further benevolence in the world, as is man's function, but to add directly to the vocal chorus of praise. Smart evidently feels that he has God's help and guidance in this venture, for he tells us that "the word of God is a sword on my side" (B1, 20), and that "the blessing of God hath been on my epistles, which I have written for the benefit of others" (B1, 125).

One of the most intriguing of Smart's beliefs about poetic language is his theory of "impression". He considers that his chief

poetic excellence is the ability to "give an impression upon words by punching, that when the reader casts his eye upon 'em, he takes up the image from the mould wch I have made" (B2, 404). The imagery of this statement, as Bond points out, "derives from the process of type-founding, in which a matrix receives the impression of a punch and is then placed in a mould to cast letters."⁹ Unfortunately, however, Smart does not illustrate his definition with any clear examples in the body of the poem. This theory is re-stated in plainer terms in the introduction to Smart's verse translation of Horace (1767):

Impression . . . is a talent or gift of Almighty God, by which a Genius is empowered to throw an emphasis upon a word or sentence in such wise, that it cannot escape any reader of sheer good sense or true critical sagacity¹⁰

although here again he neglects to specify the means by which this effect is achieved.

Recent critical examinations of the poem have indulged in a good deal of speculation as to the precise meaning of this artistic credo. Robert Saltz, for instance, interprets it to mean primarily the technique of expressing a complex idea in a single word or compact phrase, and notes that this had been advanced as one of the fundamental characteristics of Hebrew poetry by contemporary theorists. Anthony Blackwell had asserted in his Sacred Classics Defended (1725) that the character of Hebrew is such that "one word . . . gives you a satisfactory account of the chief and distinguishing property or quality of the thing or person nam'd."¹¹ And Bishop Lowth had discussed the way the mind adapts the description "to its own sensations," detail-

ing "new and extraordinary forms of expression . . . [which] in some degree imitate or represent the present habit and state of the soul."¹² It is necessary to be familiar with the Hebrew language to know whether these extremely vague statements contain any real critical understanding of ancient Hebrew poetry, but it must be admitted that they are of no help whatever in defining the peculiar merit of Smart's poetic idiom.

Patricia Spacks believes that the theory of "impression" refers to "the deliberate juxtaposition of opposites, the constant insistence on the likeness within opposition, the opposition in likeness,"¹³ while Robert Brittain feels that it must be "the artful grouping of words within the phrase, the use of unfamiliar grammatical constructions, the alteration of normal arrangement"¹⁴ which he finds to be the most distinctive feature of Smart's work. Brittain concludes that Smart had in mind primarily manipulation of syntax when he formed the theory of "impression" because of the wording of Smart's prose translation of one of the rules of the Ars Poetica:

In the interspersing of his words too he must be nice and wary. You will express yourself admirably well, if a clever connection should impress an air of novelty to a common word.¹⁵

Brittain admits that Smart's definition of "impression" is "inconclusive," but claims that "the examples he cites illustrate what he understood by it."¹⁶ The examples that he quotes, however,--"O well is thee, and happy thou shalt be!" "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," and "How great is his goodness; and how

great is his beauty!" from Hebrew poetry--do not seem to illustrate with any clarity a unique or unusual type of poetic expression.

In fact, it is probably a mistake to attempt to find in the doctrine of "impression" the key to Smart's individual style. Very likely, he did not intend it as such. Smart's notion of "impression" is rather a brilliant description of the nature of all poetic process. The ultimate aim of any poet is to convey to his readers a powerful personal understanding of a complex or abstract idea by whatever techniques comprise his particular style-- in effect, to "give an impression upon words by punching, that when the reader casts his eye upon 'em, he takes up the image from the mould."

Although Smart's theorizing about the mystical significance of language appears abstruse and even baffling at times, many of the instances of idiomatic peculiarity can be explained by reference to known influences on his work. Robert Brittain argues that Smart's unusual style in his later poetry

is accounted for principally by a combination of three elements, each perfectly rational in itself but not elsewhere found combined with the others. These elements are derived from the three forms of art which Smart apparently admired above all other; Hebrew poetry, the poetry of Horace, and eighteenth-century music.¹⁷

An understanding of the techniques of Hebrew poetry certainly helps to explain one feature of the poem which seems at first glance to make pure nonsense of many verses; that is, the abrupt transitions in thought, both within a line and from one line to the next. In Fragment B1, for example, we find "Let Nagge rejoice with the Perri-

winkle--'for the rain it raineth every day'" (Bl, 189). There is no readily apparent connection between the two halves of the verse, notwithstanding Stead's rather feeble speculation that "the profusion of wrinkles reminds him of the raindrops without number"¹⁸ --Smart is much more likely here to be referring to the flower than the mollusc. We may never be able to penetrate the precise thought pattern which led Smart to make this observation, but it is interesting to learn that, according to Lowth, Hebrew poetry also employed this sort of "free association" or "stream-of-consciousness" construction. Lowth claimed that Hebrew prophetic poetry "possesses all that genuine enthusiasm, which is the natural attendant on inspiration." This enthusiasm exhibits "the true and express image of a mind violently agitated . . . the secret avenues, the interior recesses of the soul are thrown open; . . . the inmost conceptions are displayed rushing together in one turbid stream without order or connexion," and these passions express themselves "by employing new and extraordinary forms."¹⁹ Francis D. Adams feels that many of the abrupt shifts in the poem reflect Smart's deliberate attempt to catch this feeling of "hasty confusion."²⁰

Once the principle is understood, the thought processes behind many of these associations can be unravelled; for instance, behind "Let Tabbaoth rejoice with Goldy Locks. God be merciful to my wife," (C, 128) or "Let Hoare, house of Hoare rejoice with Crysopis a precious stone of a gold-colour. God be gracious to John Rust" (D, 59). At times, this associationism leads Smart from one line to

the next on the strength of a word. In Fragment B1, there appears to be a connection between "Chimham," "Chinese," and "Toi" in lines 77-78; and in Fragment D Smart moves from "Let Hook, house of Hook . . ." to "Let Crook, house of Crook . . ." (D, 4-5) presumably on the memory of the adage, "By hook or by crook . . .". The association between the two halves of B1, 84--"Let Eliada rejoice with the Gier-eagle who is swift and of great penetration/ For I bless the Lord Jesus for the memory of GAY, POPE, and SWIFT"--is rather more complex, containing elements of punning as well as free association.

Perhaps even some very abrupt shifts in subject matter can be accounted for by this technique. The section on the word "bull" (B2, 676-696) ends with "For Fire is under Bull," and the line immediately following is "For I will consider my Cat Jeoffry," which begins a section of 74 lines on Smart's cat. Presumably, the exercise on "bull" had prepared the way for another section on a member of the animal kingdom, while the "Fire" which is "under Bull," suggested to Smart the "electrical skin & glaring eyes" with which Jeoffry "counteracts the powers of darkness" and "keeps the Lord's watch in the night against the adversary."

Many times the progression from line to line seems to be triggered merely by sound:

Let Zalaph rejoice with Rose-bay.

Let Halohesh rejoice with Ambrosia, that bears a fruit like a club.

Let Malchiah Son of Rechab rejoice with the Rose-colour'd flowring Rush. (C, 111-113)

Some associations seem to be simply a type of play, a delight in the sounds of words and speculation on mystical relationships based on those sounds:

Let Jebus bless with the Camelopard, which is good to carry and to parry and to kneel. (A, 83)

Let Agrippa, which is Agricola, rejoice with Elops, who is a choice fish. (Bl, 137)

Let Jona rejoice with the Wilk--Wilks, Wilkie, and Wilkinson bless the name of the Lord Jesus. (Bl, 173)

Smart appears to sense mystical possibilities even in alphabetical arrangement of objects. There is a fragmentary alphabetical series of fish in Bl, which ranges from "Coracinus who is black and peculiar to Nile," (238) through "Garus, who is a kind of Lobster," (244) to "Holothuria which are prickly fishes" (249). Section D lists series of herbs beginning with "t" and with "h" (149-155; 157-168). The significance of these series must unfortunately remain hidden to Smart's readers, as he failed to distill his speculations into an explicit statement of theory.

Patricia Spacks has demonstrated in detail the complexity of reference in the two parts of verse Bl, 94, superficially connected only by sound:

Let Naharai, Joab's armour-bearer rejoice with Rock who is a bird of stupendous magnitude.

For the Lord is my ROCK and I am the bearer of his CROSS.

In this instance,

the thought of the mythical roc immediately reminds him of its homonym. He spells the bird's name "Rock,"

and asserts the essential identity of words which superficially seem related only by sound Smart . . . stresses the connection between this minor Biblical character [Naharai the armour-bearer of David] . . . and the "stupendous" power of the enormous legendary bird. The relatively insignificant emblem of strength and the vastest rejoice together. In the antiphonal response, the "stupendous magnitude" of the bird merges with a magnitude more stupendous still: that of God. In this way, the literal meaning of roc merges with the metaphorical meaning of rock, and an essential identity emerges where only an accidental verbal similarity appeared to exist. . . . Smart, too, insists on the identity between God, the Rock, and Christ; he also reveals a pattern of logical counterpoint: God or Christ as Rock provides a foundation and shelter for man, yet man can metaphorically bear the burden of Christ's cross. Smart, the speaker of the poem, is thus connected (as "bearer") with the insignificant armor-bearer of the Old Testament, and both simultaneously contrast and unite with images of ultimate might.²¹

The poetry and criticism of Horace was a second profound influence on Smart's idiom. The fullest account of Smart's understanding of Horace is contained in his verse translation and the preface to it which were published in 1767, four years after Smart was released from the madhouse. However, since he must have been contemplating Horatian theories while he was producing the prose version which appeared in 1756, it is justifiable to use the verse translation and preface also as aids to understanding Jubilate Agno. In this preface Smart claimed that

Horace is not so much an original in respect to his matter and sentiments (which are rather too frequently borrowed) as with regard to that unrivalled peculiarity of expression, which has excited the admiration of all succeeding ages,²²

and asserted that he had tried to preserve this stylistic quality in

the translation.

Smart found in Horace's poetic theory sanction for the use of old words, coinage of new ones, and the use of an unusual word or of a word in an unusual sense. This first dictum Smart rendered in his prose version as, "Sundry words shall revive which now have receded."²³ Evidently Smart was attracted by this idea, for, as well as examples cited from the Seatonian poems and many instances in his later works, we find in Jubilate Agno "conceit" used in the obsolete sense of "thought"--"For they will do it in conceit, word, and motion," (C, 115), and instead of "yearn," "earn," (B1, 165, B2, 674); a legitimate eighteenth-century usage, as Bond points out,²⁴ but already old-fashioned.

Horace also advocated inventing new words, in a passage which Smart translated as:

If it happens to be expedient to illustrate some abstruse subjects by new invented terms; it will follow that you must coin words never heard of by the old-fashioned Cethegi: and a dispensation will be granted if used with moderation: and new and lately coined words will have more credit if they descend from a Greek fountain sparingly deduced.²⁵

Brittain notes that "Smart took the warnings about moderation more seriously than the grant of permission, but he did occasionally coin a word."²⁶ Thus we discover that in Jubilate Agno, the invention of the words "existimation," (B1, 3) meaning "the esteem in which I am held," from existimare; "bean," (B1, 145) a verb, perhaps from the noun bene, a prayer; and "INNATATION" (B2, 346) to describe the swimming motion of the blood corpuscles, is justified by Horatian precept.

The use of an unusual word, or of a common word in an unusual sense is the third aspect of Horace's "unrivalled peculiarity of expression," which Smart strove to emulate. Brittain has pointed out a note to the verse translation which seems to indicate beyond doubt that Smart's practise, at least at this stage, and probably earlier, was intentional. Smart placed an asterisk beside the word "convey" in his translation of one of the odes, and explained in a footnote: "A word attempted in the peculiarity of Horace--grant by delegation, make over your right."²⁷

There are many examples of extremely effective use of this technique in Jubilate Agno. He forms an adjective from the word "candy" and uses it to describe the crystallized quality of frost and snow, as well as a substance called "GLADWICK," which may be mica. To Smart, this element is "candied by the sun, and of diverse colours" (B1, 199). He makes greatest use of precise yet curious verbs to communicate his vision of the world as a place of activity and process, all directed toward God. A rain-water fountain will "prank itself into ten thousand agreeable forms" (B1, 210); mercury "where it is stinted of air . . . will adhere together & stretch on the reverse" (B1, 215). The most striking use of peculiar verbs in the poem is contained in the affectionate portrait of Smart's cat, Jeffry. Smart seems to capture the very essence of the cat's motions through his highly individual use of words; Jeffry "brisks about the life" (B2, 722), "camels his back" (B2, 756), can "spraggle upon waggle" (B2, 750), and "tread to all the measures upon the musick" (B2, 768). Robert Saltz

has commented that the phrases "he rolls upon prank" (B2, 702), and "he rolls upon wash" (B2, 710)

almost resist grammatical analysis because "prank" and "wash" have been treated as objects rather than actions. They are removed from their usual contexts, with the result that our sense of what the cat does and of how he does it is opened up.²⁸

The third element which Brittain presents as a peculiar feature of Smart's idiom, and which he presumes has its origin in Smart's interest in contemporary music, he describes as "a sense of arrangement of material which produces an effect like that of a very complicated counterpoint in music."²⁹ He further explains this technique by saying that Smart

carefully selects and arranges his words in such a manner that the extent of their reference is doubled and tripled. . . . a specific word, phrase, or image, is chosen and it is placed in a certain position because only by such selection and such placing can it be made to refer to one or more minor themes without losing any of the force of its statement of the theme which happens at the moment to be dominant.³⁰

Brittain does not, however, distinguish clearly between his idea of contrapuntal arrangement and the "artful grouping of words within the phrase," which he believes Smart derived from Horace, and which, in his opinion, constitutes the technique of "impression."

It seems more useful to class the intricate "patterns of allusion, association, and reference"³¹ in Jubilate Agno as one feature of Smart's style. Whether he was modelling himself on Horace or on eighteenth-century music, we have no way of knowing, but critics other than Brittain have remarked on the similarity of

form with the latter. W. Moelwyn Merchant, for example, comments in his study, "Patterns of Reference in Smart's Jubilate Agno," that "many of the verses in the fragments where the Let and For elements survive in their proper relation have the complexity of intricate musical counterpoint."³² Merchant examines in detail interwoven significances of many lines in the poem, and it is worth quoting here his analysis of what he calls "the finest example in the poem" of "contrapuntal" wit, verse pair 9 in Fragment B1:

Let Chesed rejoice with Strepsiceros, whose weapons
are the ornaments of his peace.

For I preach the very GOSPEL of CHRIST without comment
& with this weapon shall I slay envy.

Merchant observes:

There is not a redundant or unpointed phrase in this verse. We begin with Strepsiceros; this is the Addax, or 'crook-horn,' an African antelope with long twisted horns, 'suitable for lyres.' [Pliny]. Here then is a beast whose 'weapons are the ornaments of his peace,' the 'ornament' (harp or lyre) of particular significance to Smart, both in A Song to David and Jubilate Agno. Chesed is a word of equal significance, meaning in Hebrew 'mercy, loving-kindness,' the qualities complementary to the law. It is then especially appropriate as a correspondence with the 'GOSPEL of CHRIST' in the For verse, since Chesed would be the most appropriate weapon with which to 'slay envy,' as David himself with his harp slew the envy of Saul.³³

Some of the associations which he discovers seem to me rather far-fetched, for example, his interpretation of verse pair 91 in Fragment B1:

Let Ziba rejoice with Glottis whose tongue is
wreathed in his throat.

For I am the seed of the WELCH WOMAN and speak the truth from my heart.

Merchant, referring to Stead's note, quoted by Bond, that Glottis is a quail with a long tongue, suggests that "there is a return to tender playfulness in this oblique reference to Welsh garrulity in his associating 'the WELCH WOMAN' (his mother, Winifred Griffiths) with a long-tongued bird; but there is a further pun crossing the verses: Ziba (2 Samuel ix) means 'plant' (cf. Aramic for 'twig'), which is taken up in the second part, 'the seed of the WELCH WOMAN.'" ³⁴ However, it is impossible to declare that Smart did not intend even such obscure references.

Further, Albert J. Kuhn has commented on the appropriateness of the creatures paired with the New Testament figures in Fragment B1:

Many of these associations are only generally relevant to these 'fishers of men,' but a few are particularly, and wittily, appropriate, as when he has James (writer of the Epistle) rejoicing with the Skuttle-Fish, 'who foils his foe by the effusion of his ink.' ³⁵

Arthur Sherbo has offered an explanation of several passages in the light of Masonic symbols and associations. ³⁶ And even Fragment D, of which Bond says, "The choice of names . . . appears to be almost completely random and unsystematic, and usually they have no real association with the natural objects to which they are linked," ³⁷ has yielded some fascinating relationships. Francis D. Adams argues persuasively that "like the earlier sections, the D fragment is rich in wordplay--usually bilingual Latin and English, or Greek and English puns--and that this wordplay, though idiosyncratic, frequently can

account for the choices Smart makes in linking natural objects and proper names." An example of such word-play can be found in verses 19 and 198:

Let Manly, house of Manly rejoice with the Booby
a tropical bird.

Let Allcock, house of Allcock rejoice with the King
of the Wavows a strange fowl. I pray for the whole
University of Cambridge especially Jesus College
this blessed day.

Adams notes that "the tropical bird, 'Booby,'--also a 'dunce,' or 'stupid fellow'--is related by contrast to the positive masculine attributes suggested by 'Manly, house of Manly.' 'Allcock'--the 'greatest possible cock'--is linked to that 'strange fowl,' the King of the Wavows' (my italics)."³⁸ Adams concludes that, while these relationships are not all immediately apparent, "their existence suggests that within the superficial order which men usually see, Smart envisions another, internal order."³⁹

Many of the patterns of reference in the rest of the poem are based on puns, in English as well as multilingual puns involving Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Both Stead and Bond noted some of these puns in their editions, for example in Bl, 3,--"Let Shelumiel rejoice with Olor, who is of a goodly savour, . . ."--where Smart connects Olor, meaning "swan," with olere, meaning "to savour of" or "to smell of."⁴⁰ Again, he writes, "Let Jubal rejoice with Caecilia, the woman and the slow-worm praise the name of the Lord," (Bl, 43). Bond notes that "Caecilia" means lizard and that the line associates Jubal, the inventor of music, with St. Cecilia its patron."⁴¹ Regarding verse 335 in Fragment B2, "For

envious men have exceeding subtlety quippe qui in-videant," Bond quotes Stead's note that Quippe qui in-videant means "because they see into things; a pun on invidiant, they envy."⁴²

In his note to verse 38, Fragment A, Bond speculates that "the Hebrew for beetle, chargol, may have been suggested by the name Chalcol," and adds "If this is not merely coincidence, it is one of the very few instances in the poem of a possible association of ideas based on a knowledge of Hebrew."⁴³ Charles Parish's examination of the meanings of a great many of the Hebrew names which form part of Smart's chorus of praise, and possible associations within the verses in which they occur has shown, however, that Smart must have had some knowledge of the language, and that more than likely many of the double meanings were intentional. His first example, and, in his own opinion, the best one, concerns verse 97 in Fragment C:

Let Geshem (which is Rain) rejoice with Kneeholm.
Blessed be the name of the Lord Jesus for Rain and
his family and for the plenteous rain this day.
April 9th 1761. N.S.

Whereas Bond has noted, "There is no sanction in the Bible for any association of Geshem with rain," Parish points out that, "as Smart says, Geshem is rain; the name and the word "rain" are identical:

גשם."⁴⁴

A further example, and a more subtle one, is found in Bl, 62:

Let Abiah rejoice with Morphnus who is a bird of
passage to the Heavens.

For Abiah is the father of Joab and Joab of all
Romans and English Men.

Countering Bond's note that "Abiah was not the father of Joab,"

Parish explains that

these quite different names . . . are identical in meaning, a fact that Smart could know only by being able to read Hebrew: אביה ('aviya), "father is Yah-
אבי (yo'av), "Yah is father." The entire verse is heaven oriented. The pun of the names gives a cadence of "God" and "father" with the typically Smartian observation that God the father is the father of "all Romans and English Men" (but definitely not of the French).⁴⁵

Jubilate Agno remains an intriguing and puzzling document, but it is no longer so enigmatic as it once appeared. Critical research has shown that many of the problems caused by Smart's syntactic and semantic peculiarities can be explained, if not finally solved, by known stylistic influences, and has suggested that many of these peculiarities were intentional. The poem certainly reflects a mind that was disordered and obsessed, but it also testifies to the author's consummate skill with words. Smart often succeeds in communicating to the sane and earth-bound majority beyond the madhouse walls a jubilant vision of patterns of spiritual harmony underlying the apparent discord of everyday life. For Smart, "language, in its broadest sense, is an expression of variety in order, as well as a means of formulating that order."⁴⁶ His highly individual idiom is understandable and acceptable when it is viewed as the means to transmute his inner vision into words; in his eyes, at least, "lively subtlety is acceptable to the Lord" (A, 84).

CHAPTER IV

The Unified Vision of A Song to David

The image of Christopher Smart scratching stanzas from A Song to David with a key on the wainscot of his madhouse chamber no longer has the power it apparently once had to prejudice readers against the poem. The Song was published on April 8, 1763, just nine weeks after Smart was released from the mental asylum,¹ and the tone of the early reviews suggests that the vision of Bedlam influenced eighteenth-century critics even more than certain semantic peculiarities in the poem. John Langthorne, who was the first to review the Song, in the Monthly Review of April, 1763, and who began the legend of the key and the wainscot,² assumed that the poem was the product of madness. The review is not completely unfavorable, but it is biased by his knowledge of Smart's condition. He wrote:

From the sufferings of this ingenious gentleman,
we could not but expect the performance before
us to be greatly irregular; but we shall certainly
characterize it more justly, if we call it
irregularly great.³

The Critical Review commented that there was "great rapture and devotion . . . discernible in this ecstatic song. It is a fine piece of ruins, and must at once please and affect a sensible mind,"⁴ again not wholly condemnatory, but carrying the suggestion that the poem was not quite to be taken seriously. There was William Mason's now famous

remark in a letter to Gray: "I have seen his Song to David, and from thence conclude him as mad as ever,"⁵ and Boswell's comment in a letter to Sir David Dalrymple: "I have sent you Smart's Song to David, which is a very curious composition, being a strange mixture of dun obscure and glowing genius at times."⁶ Even twenty years after Smart's death his nephew, Christopher Hunter, excluded A Song to David from his edition of The Poems of the Late Christopher Smart, on the grounds that it showed "melancholy proofs of Smart's estrangement of mind."⁷

It is not known, in fact, whether Smart composed A Song to David while he was in the madhouse. Arthur Sherbo, Smart's most recent biographer, argues that Smart must have been working on the Song at least part of the time he was in confinement, partly because he does not believe the poem could be conceived and completed in nine weeks, and partly because of the many thematic similarities between the Song and Jubilate Agno,⁸ but there is no conclusive evidence on this point. However, it does not seem profitable to debate at length the time of the Song's composition; it is not the function of the literary critic to judge a poem on the basis of the author's supposed mental condition.

In any case, it is very doubtful whether any modern reader, accustomed as he is to strangeness and obscurity in poetry, would see in A Song to David the ravings of a madman, even at a first reading. There are admittedly some difficulties in the poem, but the features which disturbed Smart's contemporaries--the incantatory metre, exotic images, and abrupt shifts in subject--do not suggest insanity to us. Moreover, apart from a more objective critical stance, modern readers

have one invaluable aid in understanding the poem which the eighteenth century lacked--namely, Jubilate Agno.

The exotic images and complex word patterns of Jubilate have in recent years afforded so much scope for critical ingenuity that it is perhaps advisable to emphasize once more that this poem is not a finished work of art, however much temptation there may be to regard it as such. Smart may have begun Jubilate Agno as a contribution to a new Anglican liturgy, modelled on Hebrew antiphonal poetry, but he did not or could not sustain this intention. The composition becomes increasingly disordered and esoteric toward the end until, in Fragment D, the meaning of many lines can only be guessed at. The deeply personal nature of much of the poem, the random appearance of significant themes at various points throughout the manuscript, (for example, the three fragmentary exercises on alphabetical arrangement, and the interspersed references to David and to Isaac Newton), the excessive use of free association, and, most of all, the fact that Smart himself never published or discussed the work, all suggest that Jubilate Agno became, quite early on, primarily a sort of poet's notebook wherein Smart noted his ideas on poetic theory and experimented with stylistic techniques. This poetic journal of Smart's religious mania does, however, provide insights into many of the subjects, and some of the stylistic techniques to be found in A Song to David, and this chapter proposes to examine Smart's masterpiece in the light of this document.

It is immediately evident on studying the two works in conjunction that they have certain fundamental themes in common, notably

Smart's unceasing concern with gratitude and praise, and his pre-occupation with the psalmist David, but there are also several smaller yet still significant indications of the close relationship between them. One of these is found in the second stanza of the Song, where we are told that one of David's duties as "Servant of God's holiest charge" is to "send the year to his account,/ With dances and with songs."⁹ The composition of Jubilate Agno was a similar task for Smart, who was beginning to assume in his own mind the role of an eighteenth-century David. We know that he worked steadily at the manuscript from the beginning of his confinement and composed between one and three pairs of lines a day at various periods.¹⁰ Evidently, an important function of the document was to record the passing of the days of Smart's confinement--to "send the year to his account," with poetry rather than dances and songs.

The puzzling stanzas which associate "the pillars of the Lord" with the days of the week have to this day eluded conclusive critical explication, but it is interesting to know that this idea had been in Smart's mind since the composition of the Seatonian poem, On the Eternity of the Supreme Being, where he wrote of "The two Prime Pillars of the Universe,/ Creation and Redemption . . ." (Eternity, p. 224), and that it surfaced again in a notation of Fragment B1 of Jubilate Agno: "For he hath fixed the earth upon arches & pillars, and the flames of hell flow under it" (B1, 158). These several references to an architectural conception of the universe may have their source in Smart's connection with Masonry, which is mentioned explicitly in

Jubilate Agno--"For I am the Lord's builder and free & accepted MASON in CHRIST JESUS" (B1, 109).

Furthermore, Smart apparently tried, at least intermittently, to put into practise in the Song some of the poetic theories he considered in Jubilate Agno. His still obscure pronouncements on the association of rhymed words with musical instruments, for example--"For the harp rimes are sing ring, string & the like" (B2, 589)--presumably influenced the key rhymes, "kings" and "rings," in the first stanza of the Song, which introduces the psalmist's harp.

In Jubilate Agno, as we have seen, Smart had developed the concept of the cosmos as a chorus of praise in which God's creatures participate as "harmony" (good) or "discord" (evil), usually through the involuntary performing of their natural functions. The same world-view is reflected in A Song to David, but this poem insists much less on the evil in the world. Here again, the principal discordant note is the result of man's denying his God-given instinct for benevolence--Smart tells us that man is ideally "the semblance and effect/ Of God and Love, the Saint elect/ For infinite applause" (115-117)--and becoming "Devouring man" (141) who destroys fish and fowl, and disturbs the gems "Which hid in earth from man's device" (152). In the Song, however, the more subtle treatment of the theme of evil has the effect of emphasizing the positive energy of good. Where Jubilate Agno was at least as much private meditation as conscious art, the Song is intended as an unqualified tribute to God through the praise of His psalmist David, and it accomplishes its purpose by gloriously affirming

the divine power while at the same time recognizing the forces that stand against it.

Finally, it will be noticed that almost invariably, ideas which are little more than rough jottings in Jubilate have been transformed into skillfully polished images in the Song. For example, "Let Eleazar with the Ermine serve the Lord decently and in purity" (A, 17) becomes "And ermine, jealous of a speck/ With fear eludes offence" (368-369); and "For I bless God in all gums & balsams & every thing that ministers relief to the sick," (Bl, 110) becomes

Trees, plants, and flow'rs--of virtuous root;
Gem yielding blossom, yielding fruit,
Choice gums and precious balm. (127-129)

Perhaps the best example is "Let Thomas rejoice with the Sword-Fish, whose aim is perpetual & strength insuperable," (Bl, 129) which Smart condenses into two lines which convey the very essence of swiftness and power:

Strong through the turbulent profound
Shoots xiphias to his aim. (449-450)

A consideration of A Song to David against this background suggests, then, that the disordered ramblings of Smart's madhouse years served as the raw material for the highly ordered and formal poem which is his masterpiece. I believe, in fact, that the Song is the finished form of what Smart had in mind when he prayed, in Jubilate Agno, "the Lord Jesus . . . translate my MAGNIFICAT into verse and represent it" (Bl, 43). In both poems, Smart was concerned to celebrate the marvellously diverse elements of the inner, spiritual world as well as of

the outer, physical world, and to show that they are bound into subtle and complex relationships by their common origin in God and their common purpose--to praise and magnify His name. A Song to David, however, illustrates with brilliant immediacy, through its intricate, highly ordered thematic and structural patterns, and through imagery, the very "order, truth, and beauty" (308) which it glorifies.

Smart delights in the paradox that the almost incomprehensible variety of things in the world is the product of an all-encompassing, perfectly-ordered plan. He asserts this idea of divine plan explicitly several times in the poem, notably in the stanza which introduces the pillars of wisdom:

The pillars of the Lord are seven,
Which stand from earth to topmost heav'n;
His wisdom drew the plan;
His WORD accomplished the design,
From brightest gem to deepest mine,
From CHRIST entron'd to man. (175-180)

Acknowledgement of the Great Chain of Being is implicit in the list of the subjects of David's song. In stanzas 18-26, Smart ranges from God, through the angels, to man, the world, plants, animals, birds, fishes, to inanimate gems. Admittedly, he does not adhere strictly to the accepted scheme; in his list, plants are higher in the scale than animals--here and elsewhere his deep love of gardening is reflected--but he is obviously in the traditional line of thought. As in Jubilate Agno, Smart rejoices in the multiplicity of created things--"man, beast, mute, the small and great" (479), but he continually stresses the fact that God's will informs and directs them all:

. . . to give and to confirm
For each his talent and his term. (241-242)

Smart sees the divine pattern even in non-material things--for example, in the passing of time. The days of the week were not created casually, but each for a specific purpose, of which "OMEGA" is the "GREATEST and the BEST," for it "Stands sacred to the day of rest" (218-219) when God "gave the universe his goal" (221). Seasons change in a predictable order that affirms this goal. Finally, he sees a divine pattern in the whole scope of earthly and heavenly time:

Turn from Old Adam to the New;
By hope futurity pursue;
Look upwards to the past. (280-282)

The poem's tightly-knit structure is itself an implicit assertion of Smart's belief in the divine order underlying the apparent confusion of life. On first reading, the poem may seem to be somewhat rambling, but on closer inspection the stanzas are found to be grouped in intricate patterns of threes and sevens or their multiples--the mystic numbers. Raymond D. Havens, in his illuminating article on "The Structure of Smart's Song to David," has analyzed the formal pattern of the poem as follows:

The "Song" begins with three stanzas of invocation, which are followed by fourteen (twice seven) describing David, by nine (thrice three) which give the subjects of which he sings, and by three recounting the results of his singing; then comes a group of nine consisting of an introductory stanza, seven devoted to the seven "pillars of the Lord," and a concluding stanza; then an introduction, a group of nine stanzas that summarizes the Biblical moral code, and a

conclusion; then a stanza introductory to the three groups that follow, each of seven stanzas dealing with adoration; and finally five groups of three which treat of earthly delights and of the greater delight in each field to be found in God.¹¹

He also observes that these are certainly intentional divisions "since nearly all are indicated by obvious verbal peculiarities or are pointed out in Smart's argument."¹² Admittedly, this argument is rather confusing as a guide to the poem as it does not mention groups of threes and sevens, and does not always recognize these divisions which are clearly marked in the poem. Havens has conjectured that Smart probably "wrote the argument when in haste--perhaps at the request of the printer--and some time after he composed the poem, or when in such a mental state that he overlooked what he had originally emphasized, or when he did not think it worth while to call attention to the elaborate structure he had devised."¹³

Other critics who have commented on the Song's structure have tended to agree with Havens' analysis, with only slight differences of interpretation. For example, whereas Havens takes stanza 51 to be first of a group of seven stanzas which make up the first "Adoration" section, Patricia Meyer Spacks sees it as an introduction to the "Adoration" section, followed by four groups of three dealing with each of the four seasons,¹⁴ and Robert Brittain considers this stanza to be the last of "another group of three, serving as a transitional passage between the portions of the poem that are chiefly devoted to David and the sections devoted primarily to the great central theme of praise."¹⁵

Havens is careful to note that Smart's adherence to this structure is not perfect. For example:

The seventeenth stanza does not have the form of those that precede or those that follow, and its subject, David's "muse," links it with the subsequent rather than the antecedent group; yet it must be joined to the antecedent group if that is to consist of fourteen stanzas.¹⁶

There are other irregularities; in the section which Smart calls in his Argument "an exercise upon the decalogue," we would expect ten stanzas instead of eight. Further, the stanzas do not all refer to the Ten Commandments--the section was obviously inspired by both the Old and New Testaments. Again, in the group of stanzas which Smart calls "an exercise upon the senses, and how to subdue them," the sixth stanza deals with the purification of the senses, but the last, stanza 71, which says that sparrows and swallows find a home in the church does not seem to fit into the scheme.

However, Raymond Havens does not consider such "slight irregularities" more important than "imperfect rimes and distorted accents which are very common in poetry"¹⁷ and I am inclined to agree with him. They seem to indicate failure to hold to a plan rather than the lack of one in the first place. Further evidence that Smart was aware of the poem's structural complexity and the function that it served is found in his ironic response to critics who complained of the confusion of the Song. He retorted:

This Song is allowed by Mr. Smart's judicious Friends and enemies to be the best piece ever made public by him, its chief fault being the exact Regularity and Method with which it is conducted.¹⁸

It is important to observe that the formal structure of A Song to David is not dynamic. The poem is not a progression of ideas, culminating in a logical resolution. Smart does not detail the process by which he arrived at the discovery of the oneness of all things in their relationship to God. That oneness, he makes clear, is a unity of being, not of becoming, and the poem reflects this concept. In the section of the poem which Smart labelled "An Exercise on the Decalogue," he has God command Moses to "Tell them I am" (235), and

At once above, beneath, around,
All Nature, without voice or sound,
Replied, "O Lord, THOU ART." (238-240)

Smart implies here, and throughout the "Adoration" section, that, while songs such as David's are delightful to the Lord, they are not the only method of praise. He insists, as he did in Jubilate Agno, that all natural objects, "without voice or sound," praise God through their mere existence. They cannot help it, for they were created for this purpose, and their very inherent characteristics proclaim the glory of God. Just as all nature adores God not by developing or becoming, but simply by existing as He created it, the Song does not need a development of ideas to fulfill its function. Its "idea" is God, Who does not change or develop, but simply is.

Smart communicates this impression of oneness most vividly, however, through his unconventional but ingenious use of language. Although he does not use the specific poetic techniques which he experimented with in Jubilate Agno as a stylistic blueprint for A Song to David--this poem does not employ the Hebraic antiphonal pattern or

free association of thought, nor does it strive unduly for the Horatian "peculiarity of expression" through unusual use of words, although there are a few archaisms, such as "grutch" (286) and "mead" (149)--the song is, however, a dramatic illustration of Smart's theory that language is praise--that is, that the phenomenon of language forms part of the cosmic harmony of created things which adores God. In A Song to David Smart conveys this idea with powerful directness by using language to invite the reader to look at reality in a new way.

The most immediately striking feature of Smart's style is the exceptional vividness and particularity of his images. In an age which prized the "grandeur of generality," Smart concentrates instead on the individual and the unusual. Vegetable and mineral appear always as particular species or types:

The grass the polyanthus cheques;
And polish'd porphyry reflects,
By the descending rill. (310-312)

He creates images vibrant with life through the use of unexpected modifiers, for example:

The wealthy crops of whit'ning rice,
'Mongst thyrine woods and groves of spice, (355-356)

or

And Ivis, with her gorgeous vest
Builds for her eggs her cunning nest. (316-317)

One of the most notable examples of this technique in the entire poem is the dazzling image in stana 59:

The nectarine his strong tint imbibes,
And apples of ten thousand tribes,
And quick peculiar quince, (352-354)

where the curious adjectives emphasize the exotic nature of the fruit. Smart's extraordinary imagination and accuracy in description has the effect of enhancing the importance of even the minutest physical properties--reminding us always that in his view, physical properties are not only symbols of God's power, but actual manifestations of it.

Another, more direct method Smart uses to make us aware of this power around us is to view reality from the perspective of non-human things. Among the subjects of David's song he lists fowl: ". . . e'en ev'ry beak and wing/ Which cheer the winter, hail the spring," (133-134) implying personification not only of the birds, but also of the seasons, which can be cheered or, by implication, dismayed. It has been mentioned earlier that he often takes the part of lower creatures against man; he also shows himself in sympathy with plant life--in his view, ". . . myrtles stay/ To keep the garden from dismay" (364-365). Even the seasons are capable of active participation in this spiritual life.

To emphasize the idea of nature worshipping God through its existence, he presents inevitable natural occurrences as acts in praise of God:

For ADORATION seasons change,
And order, truth, and beauty range, (307-308)

or

For ADORATION 'mongst the leaves
The gale his peace reports. (335-336)

On occasion he intensifies this impression by using nouns as verbs:

Rich almonds colour to the prime
For ADORATION; . . . (313-314)

or uses a verb in an unusual manner--"The crocus burnishes alive"
(362).

One of the most forceful ways Smart communicates his vision of unity in diversity is by using words to demonstrate how "opposites become identities when perceived in the light of a relationship to God."¹⁹ For instance, in his description of decorative animals--"The pheasant shows his pompous neck;/ . . . The sable, with his glossy pride," (367-370) and decorative plants--""The chearful holly, pensive yew,/ And holy thorn, their trim renew" (373-374), he conveys an impression of objects of nature taking on the characteristics of art, this pointing up, but at the same time diminishing, the differences between the two extremes.

Or again, Smart paints an image which embodies a simultaneous opposition and reconciliation of the concepts of freedom and restraint:

And, marshall'd in the fenced land,
The peaches and pomegranates stand,
Where wild carnations blow. (358-360)

The peaches and pomegranates are "marshalled," and they "stand"--two words which connote rigidity--while the carnations, which are "wild," "blow" freely. However, both are found flourishing together in the "fenced land," forcing us to the realization that the truest freedom is to be found within control. It is the language itself which demonstrates Smart's idea of the unity of all experience.

In a similar manner, he juxtaposes the concepts of work and play in the lines

. . . the beaver plods his task;
While the sleek tigers roll and bask, (145-146)

emphasizing each by associating the familiar beaver with plodding work, and the exotic tiger with play, yet showing that both are necessary in the cycle of nature. The two fundamental activities of man, war and recreation, are compared and contrasted by a very subtle device. Two of David's functions are

To smite the lyre, the dance complete,
To play the sword and spear. (53-54)

Here Smart relates the two unlike activities by altering the usual order of the verbs--we would expect "smite" with "sword," and "play" with "lyre."

Smart achieves his greatest triumphs in this area in his portrayal of the intricate relationships between outward, physical phenomena and inner, spiritual experience. This relationship is sometimes exemplified by the structure of the stanzas, which are often divided into two groups of three lines, one group dealing with spiritual properties, the other with physical. One example of many is stanza 20:

Of man--the semblance and effect
Of God and Love--the Saint elect
For infinite applause--
To rule the land, and briny broad,
To be laborious in his laud,
And heroes in his cause. (115-120)

The first three lines summarize the absolute fulfillment of man's spiritual nature, while the last three describe the ideal application of his physical powers. Thus Smart depicts, in a manner that is the more forceful for being implicit, the contrary yet complementary aspects of human nature.

Sometimes this effect is achieved by associating images or words that would normally be opposed. He conveys the impression of a spiritual unity underlying the fanciful as well as concrete, for example, in the invocation where he declares that David's song will

. . . bless each valley, grove, and coast,
And charm the cherubs to the post
Of gratitude in throngs. (7-9)

Later, he includes a mermaid and her "scaled infant" (324) in a series of images of parents and their young,²⁰ and places a picture of rocks pouring forth pure honey, "for ADORATION," alongside an extremely realistic image of "polished porphyry" (311) beside a bubbling stream.

On occasion a single word serves to accomplish his purpose. The adjective "gallant," for instance, when used to modify the abstract noun "faith" (34) rather than a person, illustrates the connection between the two realms. The same effect is achieved in the lines:

Nor is his greatness less ador'd
In the vile worm that glows. (395-396)

Here Smart graphically demonstrates his belief that all creatures from lowest to highest are equal in their praise of God by reminding us suddenly that it is the "vile" worm who "glows".

Sometimes he uses the device of applying a single adjective to both physical and spiritual entities. The entire concluding section of fifteen stanzas is a variation on this theme. Smart employs the adjectives "sweet," "strong," "beauteous," "precious," and "glorious" to describe first physical objects--"Strong is the horse upon his speed;" (445) then physical objects with spiritual overtones--"Precious

the penitential tear;" (487) and finally, spiritual truths:

Sweeter, with every grace endu'd,
The glory of thy gratitude,
Respir'd unto the Lord. (442-444)

Smart is even able to use language to point up the great disparity between man and God, and at the same time to reassure us of the unbreakable bond between the two. Speaking of God as one of the subjects of David's song, Smart first describes Him in terms of supreme, abstract power--"the mighty source/ Of all things--the stupendous force/ On which all strength depends;" (103-105) and contrasts Him with man's concrete and limited "period, pow'r, and enterprize" which "Commences, reigns, and ends" (107-108). At the same time, however, he is able to include very real human characteristics in his image of God--"From whose right arm, beneath whose eyes" (106)--which remind us of the fundamental connection between human and divine; after all, man was created in God's image.

True poetry, such as David's psalms, encompasses both inward and outward experience:

. . . he such melody divin'd,
And sense and soul detain'd; (164-165)

because, as opposed to the vain "documents of men" (292), it is inspired by the "genuine word" (291) of God. All such poetry ends as it begins; its purpose is praise of God. And Smart is careful to emphasize that such praise is not gratuitous; in his view the poet serves God in a special and important way:

PRAISE above all--for praise prevails;

 The generous soul her Saviour aids,
 But peevish obloquy degrades. (295-299)

The picture of the ideal poet which emerges from A Song to David is the man who in his being as well as in his creations best shows the fusion of inward and outward experience. Smart found in the Hebrew psalmist the embodiment of this ideal and a source of inspiration. In his version, David possessed all twelve virtues, physical and spiritual, which Smart considered paramount--the same virtues which, in Jubilate Agno

are shared among twenty-four different people.
 . . . King David has all the virtues of the
 twelve sons of Jacob and all the virtues of
 twelve illustrious eighteenth-century gentlemen. 21

In actuality, of course, David was not nearly as pure as Smart protests, but it is probable that the very fact of his sins influenced Smart's commitment to the psalmist's defense in the controversy raging over his morality. What mattered to Smart, characteristically, and what made David an especially personal hero, was his repentance--"Wise--in recovery from his fall" (91)--and the power of his poetry to raise him above fleshly weakness:

His muse, bright angel of his verse,

 The more than Michal of his bloom,
 The Abishag of his age. (97-102)

David was not perfect, for there is "But One by passion unimpell'd" (230), but he was blessed with "the Lord's own heart" (494) and was therefore deserving to be called "highest in the list/ Of worthies" (289-290).

Smart's identification with David and his divine role reaches its climax in the Song, and is expressed through a subtle but daring exaltation of the position of the poet-singer which is effected in the course of the poem. In the third stanza, David is named as "Servant of God's holiest charge,/ The minister of praise at large" (13-14), but since Smart is here weaving a wreath of praise for David (and God) to receive, Smart also becomes the type of the poet-singer. Later, this figure, represented by David, is seen to acquire God-like powers through the grace of his music:

Blest was the tenderness he felt
 When to his graceful harp he knelt,

 When satan with his hand he quell'd,
 And in serene suspence he held
 The frantic throes of Saul. (157-162)

Finally, both Smart and David are merged symbolically into the figure of Christ, the "GREAT POET of the UNIVERSE," and embodiment of all extremes of inward and outward reality. "Glorious the song, when God's the theme" (506) Smart declares, but

. . . more glorious, is the crown
 Of Him that brought salvation down
 By meekness, called thy Son. (511-513)

Then, with the use of deliberately vague syntax, Smart proclaims simultaneously God's glory, David's greatness, and his own participation in the divinely creative activity of poetry:

And now the matchless deed's atchiev'd,
 DETERMINED, DARED, and DONE. (515-516)

Smart evidently felt that in A Song to David he had produced a tribute to God which was worthy to rank with the psalmist's, and the poem is in fact a "matchless deed"--it has been called the greatest religious lyric in the English language. Smart's invitation to "the generous soul" to join in praise opens the way for ordinary men to become more familiar with their own inner realities through a keener awareness of the implications of observable natural phenomena, and ultimately to gain a fuller knowledge of God. The once "youthful, uninspired bard" who had presumed timidly "to hymn th' Eternal" here fulfills his mission as an eighteenth-century psalmist and takes his place in the history of religious poetry as a true "Reviver of ADORATION."

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

- ¹ Arthur Sherbo, Christopher Smart: Scholar of the University (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1967), p. 62.
- ² Robert D. Saltz, "Reason in Madness: Christopher Smart's Poetic Development," SHR, 4 (1970), 59.
- ³ Edward G. Ainsworth and Charles E. Noyes, Christopher Smart: A Biographical and Critical Study (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1943), p. 82.
- ⁴ George Dyer, Privileges of the University of Cambridge, II, 183, quoted in Ainsworth and Noyes, p. 82.
- ⁵ William H. Bond, "Christopher Smart's Jubilate Agno," HLB, 4 (1950), 39.
- ⁶ J. B. Broadbent, ed., A Song to David (Cambridge: Rampant Lion's Press, 1960), x.
- ⁷ Christopher Devlin, Poor Kit Smart (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1961), p. 51.
- ⁸ Sherbo, p. 63.
- ⁹ Norman Callan, ed., The Collected Poems of Christopher Smart (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1949), I, xxxiv.
- ¹⁰ Moira Dearnley, The Poetry of Christopher Smart (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1969), pp. 93-112.
- ¹¹ Saltz, p. 58.
- ¹² Ainsworth and Noyes, p. 83.
- ¹³ Christopher Smart, On the Omniscience of the Supreme Being, in The Collected Poems of Christopher Smart, ed. Norman Callan (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949), I, p. 233. All further references to Smart's poems, except Jubilate Agno will be made to this edition. The Seatonian poems will be referred to by short titles, e.g., Omniscience, and by page numbers.

- 14 Alexander Pope, An Essay on Man, in The Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. John Butt (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1963), III, 172-174.
- 15 Robert Brittain, "Christopher Smart and Mr. Delany," TLS, 7 March 1936, p. 204.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 John Block Friedman, "The Cosmology of Praise: Smart's Jubilate Agno," PMLA, 82 (May, 1967), 252.
- 18 Sherbo, p. 108.
- 19 Saltz, p. 59.
- 20 Broadbent, xi.
- 21 Sherbo, pp. 118-125.
- 22 Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Wit and Madness," YR, 57 (Winter, 1968), 286.

Chapter II

¹ Arthur Sherbo, Christopher Smart: Scholar of the University (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1967), p. 128.

² Christopher Smart, Jubilate Agno, ed. W. H. Bond (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), Fragment D, ll. All further references to the text will be to this edition and will be numbered according to Bond's arrangement.

While it is true that this particular verse would surely present difficulties to the first-time reader, two interesting commentaries have been offered. William H. Bond notes William Force Stead's observation that Psalm 98.8 "contains the phrase, 'Let the floods clap their hands,' and Smart seems to have combined this in his mind with an account of 'the flatfish, jumping a considerable height out of the water,' Anson, p. 217." Bond adds that "also in Anson . . . is a curious engraving of sea-lions in which their appearance might be appropriate to the Flabber Dabber; while the description on p. 123 says that the flippers of these animals 'are divided at the ends like fingers . . . and each of these extremities is furnished with a nail' (145). Norman Callan, editor of Smart's collected poems, remarks, "It has always seemed to me that in this line Smart was trying to re-create the visual and aural experience of watching a fisherman (or a fish-monger, for that matter) emptying a catch of fish. In this case, of course, the 'hands' would be human ones, and the syntactical disorder imposed by the need to create a special sound effect" (Callan, I, xxxv).

³ In keeping with Smart's theory, discussed on pp. 6-7, that all phenomena in the world are "creatures," with positive wills and abilities to praise God, I have found it appropriate and useful to use the term "creatures" on occasion throughout this thesis to refer to inanimate objects or even abstract concepts.

⁴ W. H. Bond, Jubilate Agno, p. 20.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ John Block Friedman, "The Cosmology of Praise: Smart's Jubilate Agno," PMLA, 82 (May, 1967), 251.

⁸ Ibid., 250

⁹ Isaac Newton, Principia, quoted in Moira Dearnley, The Poetry of Christopher Smart (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1969), p. 151.

¹⁰ Walter Jackson Bate, From Classic to Romantic: Premises of Taste in Eighteenth-Century England (New York: Harper & Row, 1946), p. 149.

¹¹ Basil Willey, The Eighteenth-Century Background: Studies on the Idea of Nature in the Thought of the Period (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1967), p. 136.

¹² Roger Cotes, quoted by Willey, p. 136.

¹³ Bond conjectures that "the bark" is probably quinine, the Peruvian bark, the subject of an address by Nicholas Munckley before the Royal Society in 1758" (Bond, 104). See B2, 471, where Smart claims that "the Bark was a communication from God and is sovereign."

¹⁴ Robert D. Saltz, "Reason in Madness: Christopher Smart's Poetic Development," SHR, 4 (1970), 62.

¹⁵ Friedman, p. 250.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 256.

¹⁷ Albert J. Kuhn, "Christopher Smart: The Poet as Patriot of the Lord," ELH, 30 (June, 1963), 131.

Chapter III

- ¹ John Block Friedman, "The Cosmology of Praise: Smart's Jubilate Agno, PMLA, 82 (May, 1967), 251.
- ² Ibid., 254.
- ³ OED (1933), "John Bull," definition 1.
- ⁴ Robert D. Saltz, "Reason in Madness: Christopher Smart's Poetic Development," SHR, 4 (1970), 61.
- ⁵ William H. Bond, ed., Jubilate Agno (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), p. 103.
- ⁶ Smart, On the Eternity of the Supreme Being, in The Collected Poems of Christopher Smart, ed. Norman Callan (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1949), I, 223-224.
- ⁷ Allan C. Christensen, "Liturgical Order in Smart's Jubilate Agno: A Study of Fragment C," PLL, 6 (1970), 368.
- ⁸ Bond, Jubilate Agno, p. 104.
- ⁹ Ibid., p. 99.
- ¹⁰ Smart, quoted by Bond, p. 99.
- ¹¹ Blackwell, quoted by Saltz, p. 64.
- ¹² Lowth, De sacra poesi Hebraeorum, quoted by Saltz, p. 64.
- ¹³ Patricia Meyer Spacks, The Poetry of Vision: Five Eighteenth-Century Poets (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 129.
- ¹⁴ Robert Brittain, ed., Poems by Christopher Smart (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 72.
- ¹⁵ Smart, quoted by Brittain, p. 72.
- ¹⁶ Brittain, p. 71.

- 17 Ibid., p. 71.
- 18 William Force Stead, quoted by Bond, p. 72.
- 19 Lowth, quoted by Francis D. Adams, "Jubilate Agno and the 'Theme of Gratitude'," PLL, III (Summer, 1967), 196-197.
- 20 Adams, p. 197.
- 21 Spacks, p. 145.
- 22 Smart, quoted by Brittain, p. 68.
- 23 Ibid., pp. 68-69.
- 24 Bond, p. 69.
- 25 Smart, quoted by Brittain, p. 69.
- 26 Brittain, p. 69.
- 27 Smart, quoted by Brittain, pp. 70-71.
- 28 Saltz, p. 65.
- 29 Brittain, p. 73.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 W. Moelwyn Merchant, "Patterns of Reference in Smart's Jubilate Agno," HLB, 14 (1960), 26.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid., 25-26.
- 34 Ibid., 23.
- 35 Albert J. Kuhn, "Christopher Smart: The Poet as Patriot of the Lord," ELH, 30 (June, 1963), 129.
- 36 Arthur Sherbo, "Christopher Smart, Free and Accepted Mason," JEGP, 54 (1954), 669.
- 37 Bond, Jubilate Agno, p. 144.
- 38 Francis D. Adams, "Wordplay in the D Fragment of Jubilate Agno," PQ, 48, No. 1 (January, 1969), 83.

- 39 Ibid., 87.
- 40 Bond, Jubilate Agno, p. 40.
- 41 Stead, quoted by Bond, p. 46.
- 42 Ibid., p. 94.
- 43 Bond, p. 33.
- 44 Charles Parish, "Christopher Smart's Knowledge of Hebrew," SP,
58 (July, 1961), 519-520.
- 45 Ibid., p. 520.
- 46 Saltz, p. 66.

Chapter IV

¹ Arthur Sherbo, Christopher Smart: Scholar of the University (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1967), p. 169.

² Ibid., p. 169.

³ John Langthorne, quoted by Sherbo, p. 168.

⁴ Quoted by Sherbo, p. 169.

⁵ William Mason, quoted by James Sutherland, A Preface to Eighteenth-Century Poetry (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 164.

⁶ Boswell, quoted by Patricia Meyer Spacks, The Poetry of Vision: Five Eighteenth-Century Poets (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 120.

⁷ Christopher Hunter, quoted by Norman Callan, ed., The Collected Poems of Christopher Smart (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1949), I, xxvii.

⁸ Sherbo, p. 156.

⁹ Christopher Smart, A Song to David, in The Collected Poems of Christopher Smart, ed. Norman Callan (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1949), 11-13

For the sake of convenience, I have added line numbers to the Song in Callan's edition. All further references will be made by line to this edition.

¹⁰ Sherbo, "The Dating and Order of the Fragments of Christopher Smart's Jubilate Agno," HLB, 10 (1956).

¹¹ Raymond D. Havens, "The Structure of Smart's Song to David," RES, 14 (1948), 178.

- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid., p. 179.
- 14 Spacks, p. 129.
- 15 Robert Brittain, ed., Poems by Christopher Smart (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 305.
- 16 Havens, p. 179.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Smart, Advertisement to Poems of 1763, quoted by Edward G. Ainsworth and Charles E. Noyes, Christopher Smart: A Biographical and Critical Study (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1943), pp. 116-117.
- 19 Spacks, p. 119.
- 20 Ibid., p. 128.
- 21 Moira Dearnley, The Poetry of Christopher Smart (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1969), p. 178.

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