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The Origin and Significance of the Let:For Couplet in Smart's *Jubilate Agno* C. P. Macgregor

THE LET:FOR COUPLET is a verse-form unique, so far as is known, to Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno*. Though complete couplets survive only in Fragments B₁ and C of the poem, scholars agree that it was originally written in this verse-form throughout.¹ The reasons prompting Smart's choice of this form have not been convincingly explained. This article will argue that Smart owed it to Hobbes's description of the kinds of knowledge.

The typical structure of the Let:For couplet can be seen in the following example:

Let Shuah rejoice with Boa, which is the vocal serpent.
For there are still serpents that can speak —
God bless my head, my heart & my heel.²

Here, as in all the "Let" lines, a man or woman³ is urged to rejoice with a member of the natural creation.⁴ Here too, as is typical, the "For" line contains a reflection which bears on the predicament of the prophetic poet or convinced Protestant as he awaits the Millen-

¹ The poem's opening lines, A.1-2, do not begin with the word "Let."

² B₁.18. All references are to *Jubilate Agno: Re-edited from the Original Manuscript with an Introduction and Notes*, ed. W. H. Bond, London, 1954.

³ Smart takes names from the Old Testament in A.4-113 and B₁.1-122, from the New Testament in B₁.123-295, from *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* in C.1-162, and from Englishmen in D.1-237. There are exceptions to this pattern. Figures from the Apocrypha occur in A.56-57, 80 and 92; a New Testament figure occurs among those from the Old in A.63; cities are named in B₁.32 and 81; Campanus of B₁.166 is not Biblical; figures not from *Ezra* or *Nehemiah* occur in C.35, 39 and 80.

⁴ Creatures of all kinds are named, animals, birds, reptiles, insects, fishes, trees, herbs, plants, and minerals. There is no strict pattern to their selection, but animals predominate in Fragment A, birds in B₁.1-122, fishes in B₁.123-295, plants in Fragment C, and herbs and minerals in Fragment D.

nium.⁵ The "Let" and "For" lines of each couplet are most explicitly related in the first part of Fragment B1, from which my example is taken.⁶ Later in that Fragment, and throughout Fragment C, the relationships are obscure or seem absent altogether. Explication with the aid of the Bible, the natural histories, and the dictionaries,⁷ has occasionally disclosed a connection between the person, animal, and reflection in *Jubilate Agno's* later couplets. But such connections as have been shown are usually tenuous and tangential to the couplet's explicit meaning. Since the interrelations between "Let" and "For" lines seem trivial or absent later in the poem, it is surprising that

⁵ Smart's Millenarianism is evident in B2.382: "For [it] is the twelfth day of the MILLENNIUM of the MILLENNIUM foretold by the prophets give the glory to God ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY —." Since B2.353 is dated "NATIVITY of our LORD N.S. 1759," and B2.367 reads: "For the old account of time is the true — Decr. 28th 1759-60 —," Smart is here writing a line a day and has made proper allowance for the Calendar (New Style) Act. Counting forward from B2.367 brings us fifteen lines and days later to B2.382, and so dates it to 12 January 1760, Old Style. Smart plainly thought 1 January 1760, Old Style, the Millennial day. Smart's Millennial convictions have been noticed by A. D. Hope ("The Apocalypse of Christopher Smart: A Preliminary Sketch," in *Studies in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. R. F. Brissenden [Canberra, 1968], pp. 269-284); Albert J. Kuhn has shown that such convictions were not extraordinary among respected religious thinkers in England in the 1750s and 1760s ("Christopher Smart: The Poet as Patriot of the Lord," *ELH*, XXX [1963], 122-124).

⁶ The explicit link between "Let" and "For" lines in B1.18 is the idea of "the vocal serpent." Shuah is apt for three reasons. Of the various people named Shuah in the Bible, Smart seems to have in mind either Heber's daughter (*1 Chronicles* 7.32) or Judah's mother-in-law (*Genesis* 38.2 and 12; *1 Chronicles* 2.3); the naming of either woman sets a background for linking her with Boa in the relationship between Eve and Satan. The Hebrew word *shua* is translated "riches" at *Job* 36.19 and "crying" at *Isaiah* 22.5 in the Authorized Version; "riches" suggests the temporal rewards which Smart complained of being denied in B1.15, three couplets earlier, and "crying" suggests Boa "the vocal serpent" (my italics). W. F. Stead pointed out that the name "boa" may be derived from the Greek βόη meaning "a cry" (Christopher Smart, *Rejoice in the Lamb: A Song from Bedlam*, ed. William Force Stead [London, 1939], p. 192). There may also be an onomatopoeic relation between Shuah and the serpent. Shuah sounds like a serpent's hiss; the hiss is strongly linked with Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (X.504-521, and cf. *Jubilate Agno*, B1.231-232), and Satan is peculiarly "the vocal serpent."

⁷ Pliny's *Natural History* and Latin, Greek, and Hebrew dictionaries are particularly helpful. The explicative method which considers Biblical allusions and multilingual puns in Smart's text is particularly indebted to W. M. Merchant ("Patterns of Reference in Smart's *Jubilate Agno*," *HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN*, XIV [1960], 20-26) and Charles Parish ("Christopher Smart's Knowledge of Hebrew," *Studies in Philology*, LVIII [1961], 516-532).

Smart never abandoned his verse-form. The couplets are invariably like Br.18, which I have given above, in their use of the words "Let" and "For" and in their naming of a person and an animal.

Three invariable features of each couplet are here to be explained: the presence in the "Let" line of, first, a man or woman, and, second, a member of the natural creation; and third, the logical relationship between the two lines of each couplet which is implied by the words "Let" and "For."⁸ An acceptable explanation will bring us close to the creative center of *Jubilate Agno* since the poem is supposed to have been written in this unique verse-form throughout. The absence of "For" lines to accompany the "Let" lines of Fragments A and D, and the absence of "Let" lines to accompany the "For" lines of Fragment B₂, are generally attributed to the loss of the relevant pages of Smart's manuscript and not to his abandonment of the verse-form he had created.⁹ We need to understand the origin and significance of this form if we are to appreciate what Smart undertook in his long and cryptic *Magnificat*.

Although several critics have remarked on the verse-form of *Jubilate Agno*, none has explained the features noticed in the previous paragraph. The most important and influential remarks were made by W. H. Bond, to whom our knowledge of the Let:For couplet is due. Bond perceived that W. F. Stead, who discovered Smart's manuscript, had overlooked the relation between its "Let" and "For" sections. Stead's edition¹⁰ had printed Smart's text as though the manuscript pages of "Let" and "For" lines were independent. Thus Stead's observations on *Jubilate Agno's* verse-form¹¹ were not offered in explanation of the Let:For couplet, since he had not noticed its existence. Stead's argument for the influence of Robert Lowth's *De*

"I do not claim that the logical possibilities of the verse-form are usually exploited in the poem. But by choosing the words "Let" and "For" to introduce the two lines of his couplets, Smart created a logical implication which is invariably present, even if it is rarely incorporated in a couplet's explicit meaning after the first part of Fragment Br.

⁸ There is a full description of the manuscript in *Jubilate Agno*, ed. W. H. Bond, pp. 16-19. Arthur Sherbo's remarks are typical: "only about one third of [the poem] survives. From what remains . . . it appears that Smart had intended throughout to write matching pairs of verses" (*Christopher Smart: Scholar of the University* [East Lansing, Michigan, 1967], p. 128).

¹⁰ Christopher Smart, *Rejoice in the Lamb: A Song from Bedlam*, ed. William Force Stead, London, 1939.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Appendix IV: "On the Verse-Form," pp. 296-300.

Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum,¹² by which he aimed to show that Smart "was trying to introduce various characteristics of Hebrew poetry"¹³ into *Jubilate Agno*, saw the devices which Lowth had thought typical of Hebrew versification, such as parallelism and antithesis, in the relations of various "For" lines from Smart's manuscript.¹⁴

It was W. H. Bond who proposed Lowth's influence on Smart's couplet form. When Bond first announced his discovery of the antiphonal relationship between "Let" and "For" lines,¹⁵ he suggested that Smart owed this verse-form to the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. "The interplay and alternation of phrases beginning with these words [Let and For] run all through the liturgy,"¹⁶ Bond wrote, and cited in illustration Psalm 95, the *Venite Exultemus* of The Order for Morning Prayer. He argued that Smart had written with "the idea of an antiphonal composition"¹⁷ in mind, and, in the introduction to his later edition of *Jubilate Agno*, he pointed out that Lowth had commented on the "antiphonal or responsive character"¹⁸ of Hebrew verse. Thus Lowth's description of Hebrew poetry, "much of [which] was designed to be spoken or chanted by two groups,"¹⁹ became a source for Smart's couplet form. But Bond was thinking of the couplet in a limited sense. His prime concern was to explain why "Let" and "For" lines should have been written on different manuscript pages. He argued that *Jubilate Agno* "was intended as a responsive reading; and that is why the *Let* and *For* sections are physically distinct while corresponding verse for verse. . . . If [Smart] visualized an actual performance of *Jubilate Agno*, it was apparently with himself as the second reader or responder."²⁰

The essential features of Bond's view are now widely accepted. In choosing the words "Let" and "For" to introduce his lines, Smart

¹² First published in Latin in 1753, Lowth's lectures were translated by G. Gregory as *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, 2 vols., London, 1787.

¹³ *Rejoice in the Lamb*, ed. W. F. Stead, p. 296.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 296-297.

¹⁵ "Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno*," *HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN*, IV (1950), 39-52.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁸ *Jubilate Agno*, ed. W. H. Bond, p. 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20. Christopher Devlin thinks that Smart soon abandoned the idea of public performance and that none of the extant "For" lines is a product of this first intention (*Poor Kit Smart* [London, 1961], p. 100).

is agreed to have been influenced by the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. The antiphonal or responsive character of the Let:For couplet is agreed to be an imitation of Hebrew poetics, and the influence of Lowth is generally allowed.²¹ But the couplet in *Jubilate Agno* is a more complex phenomenon than these explanations suppose. Although the Psalter can provide models for the interplay of phrases beginning with the words "Let" and "For,"²² neither the Bible nor the Book of Common Prayer nor Robert Lowth's lectures can show a precedent for urging a person and an animal to rejoice together. This integral feature of the verse-form has been ignored in the explanations criticism has so far offered, and we therefore lack a thorough understanding of the purpose of Smart's experimentation in *Jubilate Agno*.²³

My suggestion is that Smart owed the basic elements of the Let:For couplet to Thomas Hobbes's remarks "Of the Several Subjects of Knowledge" in *Leviathan*:

There are of KNOWLEDGE two kinds; whereof one is *knowledge of fact*: the other *knowledge of the consequence of one affirmation to another*. The former is nothing else, but sense and memory, and is *absolute knowledge*; as when we see a fact doing, or remember it done: and this is the knowledge required in a witness. The latter is called *science*; and is *conditional*; as when we know, that, *if the figure shown be a circle, then any line through the centre shall divide it into two equal parts*. And this is the knowledge required in a philosopher; that is to say, of him that pretends to reasoning.

The register of *knowledge of fact* is called *history*. Whereof there be two sorts: one called *natural history*; which is the history of such facts, or effects of nature, as have no dependence on man's will; such as are the histories of *metals, plants, animals, regions*, and the like. The other, is *civil history*; which is the history of the voluntary actions of men in commonwealths.

The registers of science, are such *books* as contain the *demonstrations* of consequences of one affirmation, to another; and are commonly called *books of philosophy*; whereof the sorts are many, according to the diversity of the matter; and may be divided in such manner as I have divided them in the following table.²⁴

²¹ Moira Dearnley has argued that Smart could have taken his form and rhythm directly from the Bible without resort to Lowth's lectures (*The Poetry of Christopher Smart* [London, 1968], p. 140).

²² See especially Psalm 95.1-3 and 6-7, 96.11-13, and 98.8-9, in the Psalter.

²³ The view that *Jubilate Agno* is a conscious experiment is due to W. H. Bond, *op. cit.* (note 15), 52.

²⁴ *Leviathan or, the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiasticall*

In view of Hobbes's remarks, the couplet structure of *Jubilate Agno* demonstrates that Smart is both "witness" and "philosopher"; he has mastery of the kinds of knowledge. "Knowledge of fact" in both its sorts is represented in the "Let" lines: "natural history" by the creatures, and "civil history" by the named figures. "Knowledge of the consequence of one affirmation to another" is represented by the relation between "Let" and "For" lines.

There is disagreement over the originality of Hobbes's classification of the kinds of knowledge. Richard Peters has argued that since "Hobbes' philosophical inspiration dated from his discovery of geometry, it is not surprising that he adopted fundamentally the same position as Plato and Descartes" ²⁵ in distinguishing "between experience, on the one hand, which gives rise to historical knowledge and prudence, and reason which gives rise to scientific (or philosophical) knowledge and wisdom." ²⁶ But Michael Oakeshott has written that "Hobbes is near the beginning of a new view of the structure and parts of knowledge, a change of view which became clearer in the generation of Locke and was completed by Kant." ²⁷ The novelty of Hobbes's position, according to Oakeshott, arises "from an attempted but imperfectly achieved distinction between science and philosophy. The distinction, well known to us now, is that between knowledge of things as they appear and enquiry into the fact of their appearing, between a knowledge (with all the necessary assumptions) of the phenomenal world and a theory of knowledge itself. Hobbes appreciated this distinction, and his appreciation of it allies him with Locke and with Kant and separates him from Bacon and even Descartes." ²⁸ Thus Peters holds that Hobbes's distinction between fact and reasoning is of the same kind as Plato's and Descartes', whereas Oakeshott holds that it is novel in its implication of a distinction between science and philosophy.

The disagreement between Peters and Oakeshott, which turns on the exact meaning of Hobbes's discrimination between fact and reasoning, should not distract us from the originality of Hobbes's gen-

and Civil, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford, 1946), p. 53. Hobbes gives a table showing the relationships between the various parts of philosophy.

²⁵ *Hobbes* (Harmondsworth, 1967), p. 48.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²⁷ *Leviathan*, ed. M. Oakeshott, Introduction, p. xxi.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xxii.

eral formulation. It represents a departure from the traditional divisions of knowledge which run from Aristotle to Bacon. According to Father Copleston, it was Aristotle's "considered view"²⁹ that philosophy had three parts: (i) Theoretical, divided into Physics, Mathematics, and Metaphysics, (ii) Practical, dealing with Political Science, Strategy, Economics, and Rhetoric, and (iii) Poetical, dealing with the Theory of Art. Bacon's classification in *Of the Advancement of Learning* is essentially similar to Aristotle's. Bacon held that "The parts of human learning have reference to the three parts of Man's Understanding, which is the seat of learning: History to his Memory, Poesy to his Imagination, and Philosophy to his Reason."³⁰ He repeated this classification in the first chapter of his *Descriptio Globi Intellectualis*.³¹ In *Of the Advancement of Learning* Bacon divided history into four kinds, natural, civil, ecclesiastical, and literary;³² in *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, however, he reduced ecclesiastical and literary history to subsections of civil history.³³ Thus one might move from Bacon's view to Hobbes's by rejecting the independent claim of "Poesy" and adopting the divisions of history from *De Augmentis Scientiarum* rather than from *Of the Advancement of Learning*. But this break from the tradition of Aristotle could not be made without redefining what Bacon called the "parts of Man's Understanding." A new psychology, such as Hobbes provided, would thus be required.

Smart's recantation about Hobbes makes it likely that the couplet form of *Jubilate Agno* is indebted rather to the clear and forceful statement in *Leviathan* than to the work of any other philosopher. In the *Tripes Versus Materies Gaudet vi Inertiae*,³⁴ written while he was an undergraduate at Pembroke College, Cambridge, in the early 1740s, Smart grouped Hobbes with Spinoza, Pyrrho, Epicurus, and others; he condemned them all as atheistic materialists:

²⁹ Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy*, I: *Greece and Rome* (London, 1946), p. 277.

³⁰ Bk. II, chap. I, para. i; in *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. John M. Robertson (London, 1905), p. 79.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 677.

³² Bk. II, chap. I, para. ii; in *ibid.*, p. 79.

³³ Bk. II, chap. II, para. i; in *ibid.*, p. 427.

³⁴ The Verses appear in Smart's *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1752) and in *The Poems of the late Christopher Smart, M.A.*, ed. Christopher Hunter, 2 vols., Reading, 1791.

Hic ea monstra habitant, quae olim sub luminis auras
Materies peperit somno patre, lividas iste
Zoilus, & Bavio non impar Maeuius; audax
Spinoza, & Pyrrho, cumque Hobbesio Epicurus.³⁵

Late in 1759 Smart recanted.³⁶ In B1.227 of *Jubilate Agno* Smart wrote:

Let Crispus rejoice with Leviathan — God be gracious to
the soul of HOBBS, who was no atheist, but a servant
of Christ, and died in the Lord — I wronged him God
forgive me.

For the VOICE [is] of a figure compleat in all its parts.³⁷

According to *Acts* 18.8, Crispus was “the chief ruler of the synagogue” at Corinth and was converted and baptized by St. Paul. The conversion of an eminent Jew may have suggested to Smart the general conversion of the Jewish people which, in Christian eschatology, will be one of the final events of world history. If so, the association of Crispus with Leviathan is comprehensible, for Isaiah had prophesied that on the Day of Judgment “the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea” (*Isaiah* 27.1). Leviathan suggests Hobbes at once. Crispus is apt since Smart has changed his judgment of Hobbes as Crispus had changed his of the true religion.

The relevance of B1.227 to the verse-form of *Jubilate Agno* derives from its “For” line. In preceding couplets Smart has argued that “AIR is purified by prayer which is made aloud” (B1.224) because “SOUND is propagated in the spirit” (B1.226). Then in B1.227 we

³⁵ *Poems*, ed. C. Hunter, II, 142. Hunter also prints a translation of the Verses, entitled *The Temple of Dulness*, by the Rev. Mr. Fawkes. Fawkes renders the lines quoted as follows: “Their habitation here those monsters keep, / Whom Matter father’d on the God of Sleep: / Here Zoilus, with cank’ring envy pale, / Here Maeuius bids his brother Bavio, hail; / Spinoza, Epicure, and all those mobs / Of wicked wits, from Pyrrho down to Hobbes” (*Poems*, ed. C. Hunter, II, 143).

³⁶ B1.227, which contains Smart’s recantation, was written between 5 November 1759 (B1.188) and 25 December 1759 (B2.353). The recantation has been noticed by W. H. Bond (note to B1.227 in his edition of *Jubilate Agno*) and Arthur Sherbo (*Christopher Smart: Scholar of the University*, p. 27) among others.

³⁷ My restoration of this “For” line differs from that of W. F. Stead and W. H. Bond. My argument is not affected by the textual problem. Smart’s idea that Hobbes “died in the Lord” finds support from John Aubrey (see *Aubrey’s Brief Lives*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick [London, 1949], p. 156).

read that "the VOICE [is] of a figure compleat in all its parts." The obvious sense of this line is that the voice issues from the whole man. We know Smart thought the voice to arise "from the body and the spirit" (B1.239) in conjunction; he made a similar point in the "For" line of the couplet immediately following the one we are discussing:

For a man speaks HIMSELF from the crown of his head
to the sole of his feet. (B1.228)

If we take "figure" in B1.227 to mean "man," then its "For" line is consonant with Smart's opinion of the voice elsewhere in *Jubilate Agno*. But we may also take "figure" to mean "figure of speech." As the voice with which "a man speaks HIMSELF" issues from a proper combination of body and spirit, so an authentic poetic voice issues from a figure of speech which is "compleat in all its parts." The reference to Hobbes and Leviathan in the "Let" line of B1.227 suggests that Smart thought his poetry (his "VOICE") to issue from a figure which was "compleat" because it incorporated both fact and reasoning, which is to say that it represented the whole range of human knowledge as Hobbes had defined it.

Smart's debt to Hobbes's description of knowledge would allow us to suggest explanations of the three features common to all the Let:For couplets.

First, Smart names men and women in his "Let" lines because he is writing a "civil history" which chronicles and celebrates those who have made a significant contribution to the progress of the world from the Flood to the Millennium.³⁸ If we look at the names in detail, we will find that their order is broadly historical.³⁹ In Fragments A and B1 Smart progresses from Noah (A.4) to Antipas (B1.295), from *Genesis* to *Revelation*.⁴⁰ There are not four hundred and seventy

* The first person named in *Jubilate Agno* is Noah (A.4). Adam and man's disobedience would have struck a wrong note in a poem whose opening line invites us to celebrate our Redemption. The Flood is traditionally a type of the Last Judgment, so "Noah and his company" of A.4 suggest the Saved. Smart used this typology in *On the Eternity of the Supreme Being*, 1750 (see *The Collected Poems of Christopher Smart*, ed. Norman Callan, 2 vols. [London, 1949], I, 226).

³⁸ There are many exceptions to a regular chronology among the earlier names. For a discussion of the problems involved, see the unpublished dissertation (Cambridge, 1975) by C. P. Macgregor, "The Poetry of Christ: Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno*," pp. 31-60 and 90-149.

⁴⁰ The story of Noah is recorded in *Genesis* chs. 6-9; Antipas is mentioned in *Revelation* 2.13.

five names between *Revelation* 2.13, where Antipas is mentioned, and the Bible's final verse; but Smart may have continued an historical scheme in the lost "Let" lines of Fragment B₂ (B₂.296-770) by naming, for example, the saints, martyrs, and fathers of the Church. Fragment B₂ breaks off on 26 August 1760,⁴¹ half way through Smart's Millennial year. The historical pattern underlying the first three Fragments of *Jubilate Agno* seems designed to have been consummated simultaneously on paper and in reality by the Second Coming of Christ.

The Millennium did not of course occur in the year Smart had chosen. The frustration of his first intention for *Jubilate Agno* obliged Smart to abandon or reform his work.⁴² Fragment C, which breaks the forward historical movement by naming men from the Books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, shows Smart reforming *Jubilate Agno* into a prophecy. Thus the historical progress is transferred into the "For" lines, which in Fragment C predict the world's advance from 1761 through the Millennium to the New Jerusalem. The names from *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* can be argued to be analogically apt, for they trace the development of Israel from the scattered groups which were released from Captivity in Babylon to the purified religious community with a new city, a new temple, and a new covenant in a rebuilt Jerusalem.⁴³ In Fragment D Smart names Englishmen. But here he invariably assigns each person named to a "house." Thus a typical line in this Fragment begins: "Let Dew, house of Dew rejoice" (D.1). Smart continues: "Let Round, house of Round rejoice" (D.2), and "Let New, house of New rejoice" (D.3). May we argue that Smart here advances his historical scheme by celebrating not only a particular man, but a whole line of men so named, from the remote ancestors to the remote descendants?

Second, Smart names members of the natural creation in his "Let" lines because he is writing a "*natural history*" which celebrates the

⁴¹ According to Arthur Sherbo, "The Dating and Order of the Fragments of Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno*," *HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN*, X (1956), 203-204.

⁴² Smart had ample time to consider his own predicament and that of his poem before embarking on the prophecy in Fragment C. Fragment B₂ was finished on 26 August 1760 (see note 41 above), and the eighteenth couplet of Fragment C is dated "March 1st 1761. N.S." (C.18). Thus the manuscript as it has survived leaves a six-month interval between the two Fragments.

⁴³ See note 39 above for reference to a discussion of the names.

praise offered by God's creatures to their Creator. Because this praise is spontaneous, Smart's "Let" lines command men to join creatures in acts of rejoicing.⁴⁴ Only men need be urged to praise God since only men can choose not to; it would be superfluous to command nature to rejoice. Smart is not, however, cataloguing the contents of the Chain of Being. Since the variety of creatures is infinite, in Smart's view,⁴⁵ no such methodical survey of nature could be compiled. The structure of *Jubilate Agno* is therefore determined by "civil history" rather than "natural history," for the process of history is limited, its beginning and end disclosed by the Christian revelation. Each "Let" line of Smart's poem selects a creature from the infinite Chain of Being and links it with a figure from the definite process of history, and not *vice versa*.

Since its order depends on that of the historical figures,⁴⁶ Smart's "natural history" has no formal structure of its own.⁴⁷ Although the creatures in *Jubilate Agno* are broadly grouped into kinds,⁴⁸ these groupings are determined by the groupings of the men with whom the creatures are linked and do not obey any scheme found independently in nature. Fish are obviously apt for the New Testament figures, and plants suit those from *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*.⁴⁹ Smart is primarily interested in the exemplary value of each creature rather

⁴⁴ The spontaneity of nature's praise is a common topic in Smart's religious verse. A typical statement may be found in the second paragraph of *On the Immensity of the Supreme Being*, 1751 (see *Collected Poems*, ed. N. Callan, I, 227).

⁴⁵ See, for example, *Jubilate Agno*, B1.53, 133 and 185.

⁴⁶ A.5-8 make this point clear. Smart names, in order, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Esau. The genealogical progression is obvious. The animals in these same "Let" lines are, in order, a Ram, Camels, the speckled Drove, and a scape Goat. There is no logic inherent in this order, but the relation between each animal and the appropriate Biblical figure is easy to see. The order of the animals is parasitic on the order of the men.

⁴⁷ An exception might be made of such a passage as B1.221-295 where Smart names fishes in more or less alphabetical order.

⁴⁸ See note 4 above.

⁴⁹ Fish suit the New Testament figures because of Christ's words: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (*Matthew* 4.19). Plants suit those from *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* since the angel who taught Ezra the names of those who would and would not be saved also instructed him to eat only herbs and flowers (see the Apocryphal 2 *Esdras* 9.23-26). Christopher Devlin has remarked that "Esdras, or Ezra, was one of Smart's greatest Old Testament heroes, second only perhaps to David" (*Poor Kit Smart*, p. 126).

than in an abstract order which may govern them collectively.⁵⁰ Indeed, only when Smart considers the creatures individually, looking for evidence of the hand of God at work in each, can he learn from them without feeling that to be taught by the natural world is degrading.⁵¹ Smart's insistence on the infinity of the Chain of Being is part of his rejection of all abstract orders in nature,⁵² which he felt made man a spectator on nature and not a participant with it in the universal drama of redemption.⁵³ The best of the "Let" lines relate the signs of God's immanence in both history and nature; men and animals are linked because they exemplify related facets of the struggle to overcome Satan and advance both mankind and the world towards the Terrestrial Paradise.⁵⁴

Third, Smart constructs the logical relationship between the two lines of each couplet which is implied by the words "Let" and "For" in order to demonstrate his mastery of the deductive logic required in a philosopher.⁵⁵ But the logic is interestingly ambiguous. Had Smart used a Let:Then structure, we should take the "Let" line to have both temporal and logical priority. But the Let:For structure makes it clear that the reflection in the "For" line is logically prior to the linking of man and animal in the "Let" line. Thus the "For" line offers a reason in justification of the pairing of man and animal. The reflection is not deduced from the link. Thus the coherence of the empirical worlds of nature and history is shown to be Christo-

⁵⁰ See *Jubilate Agno*, A.54, B2.494, 729, 757, and C.76-80.

⁵¹ This feeling of degradation is fully articulated in the final paragraph of *On the Omniscience of the Supreme Being*, 1752 (see *Collected Poems*, ed. N. Callan, I, 235).

⁵² Smart's changing attitude to Newton, for example, can be seen by comparing *On the Omniscience of the Supreme Being* (*Collected Poems*, ed. N. Callan, I, 233) with *Jubilate Agno*, B1.219-220. In the first Newton is "irrefragable proof / Of man's vast genius," and in the second he is "ignorant."

⁵³ The idea that nature combats Satan occurs throughout *Jubilate Agno*, but see especially B1.221-222. Man's duty to help nature recover from the Fall is clear from C.155-160. Smart's sense of participation with the natural creation is perhaps most tellingly expressed in stanzas 6-8 of *Hymn XXXII: The Nativity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* from Smart's *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, 1765 (see *Collected Poems*, ed. N. Callan, II, 847).

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the subtlety with which Smart can exhibit such relations, see the unpublished dissertation (Cambridge, 1975) by C. P. Macgregor, "The Poetry of Christ," pp. 150-219.

⁵⁵ Smart's interest in logic emerges in *Jubilate Agno*, B2.359-362. This is hardly surprising in one who had been Praelector in Philosophy and Rhetoric at Cambridge.

centric; their order follows from the Christian apperceptions recorded in the "For" lines.

By presenting the logic in reverse order, Smart's Let:For couplets exploit the difference between temporal and logical consequence. The moral Christian reflection seems to follow from the empirical observation in the "Let" line. But closer attention reveals both that the observation is not strictly empirical (Smart commands it to exist; it is not a "given") and that it is logically dependent on the moral truth of the "For" line. Smart is trying to do justice both to perception and to apperception. By making it difficult to be sure which should claim priority, Smart makes both seem simultaneous. They are manifestations to different human faculties of the same creative principle, for God is the source of both.

It would be foolish to underestimate the importance of the antiphonal pattern in *Jubilate Agno*. Smart is plainly indebted to the Psalter, and very probably to Robert Lowth, for the idea of beginning corresponding lines with the words "Let" and "For." W. H. Bond was surely correct when he wrote that the Let:For couplet showed *Jubilate Agno* to be "a conscious experiment in a form new to English poetry."¹⁶ But an appreciation of Smart's debt to Hobbes shows the experiment to have been more than a technical one. Smart's verse-form embodies his desire to communicate the dependence of the whole range of human knowledge upon Christ. Although the richness with which he makes use of the possibilities of his verse-form degenerates as the poem progresses, we should not lose sight of Smart's intellectual experiment. His verse-form implies his conviction that "the method of philosophizing is in a posture of Adoration" (B1.268).

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¹⁶ Bond, *op. cit.* (note 15), 52.

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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

RODNEY G. DENNIS, Curator of Manuscripts in the Harvard College Library, is the author of several articles, including "Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock and John Flaxman" in the January 1968 HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN.

MARY HYDE is an author and collector. *Playwriting for Elizabethans, 1600-1605*, published by the Columbia University Press in 1949, grew out of her dissertation; *The Impossible Friendship: Boswell and Mrs. Thrale* was published by the Harvard University Press in 1972 following its serialization in the BULLETIN. She is a member of the Editorial Committee for the Yale Edition of Samuel Johnson's *Works* and of the Overseers' Committee to Visit the Harvard University Library.

C. P. MACGREGOR has written a Cambridge University dissertation, "The Poetry of Christ: Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno*, its structure, logic, and place in the development of his work."

DONALD STONE, JR., Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard, has contributed articles to the January 1969 and April 1972 issues of the HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN and is the author of several books, including *Ronsard's Sonnet Cycles* (1966), *France in the Sixteenth Century* (1969), and *From Tales to Truth: Essays on French Fiction in the Sixteenth Century* (1973).

DAVID M. VIETH is Professor of English at Southern Illinois University; the Yale University Press published his *Attribution in Restoration Poetry* (1963) and his edition of *The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester* (1968), and his articles include a number of contributions to the *Papers* of the Bibliographical Society of America.