

= Christopher Smart =

Christopher Smart ( 11 April 1722 ? 21 May 1771 ) , also known as " Kit Smart " , " Kitty Smart " , and " Jack Smart " , was an English poet .

He was a major contributor to two popular magazines and a friend to influential cultural icons like Samuel Johnson and Henry Fielding . Smart , a high church Anglican , was widely known throughout London .

Smart was infamous as the pseudonymous midwife " Mrs. Mary Midnight " and widespread accounts of his father @-@ in @-@ law , John Newbery , locking him away in a mental asylum for many years over Smart 's supposed religious " mania " . Even after Smart 's eventual release , a negative reputation continued to pursue him as he was known for incurring more debt than he could repay ; this ultimately led to his confinement in debtors ' prison until his death .

Smart 's two most widely known works are A Song to David and Jubilate Agno , both at least partly written during his confinement in asylum . However , Jubilate Agno was not published until 1939 and A Song to David received mixed reviews until the 19th century . To his contemporaries , Smart was known mainly for his many contributions in the journals The Midwife and The Student , along with his famous Seaton Prize poems and his mock epic The Hilliad . Although he is primarily recognised as a religious poet , his poetry includes various other themes , such as his theories on nature and his promotion of English nationalism .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early life = = =

Christopher Smart was born in Shipbourne in Kent , England on the Fairlawn estate of William , Viscount Vane , younger son of Lord Barnard of Barnard Castle . He was , according to his nephew , " of a delicate constitution having been born earlier than the natural period " . He was baptised in Wrotham parish on 11 May 1722 . Smart 's father was Peter Smart , steward or bailiff of Fairlawne . His mother was Winifred Smart of the Griffiths family of Radnorshire , Wales .

Winifred was born c 1691 , given that when she died in 1766 she was 75 years of age : " 15 May 1766 Forename : Winefred , Widow Surname : Smart Age : 75 Place : St John in Thanet ( Margate ) , St John the Baptist County : Kent Archive Reference : U3 / 140 / 1 / 3 " This was near Margate where she had been living " Dr. John Hawkesworth visited him ( Christopher Smart ) in October 1764 , and found him silently hostile towards his mother , Winifred Smart , and his sister , Margaret Hunter , at Margate " ( The Poetry of Christopher Smart by Moira Dearnley ) .

Winifred 's parentage " Of the Griffiths family of Radnorshire " has not been unequivocally established before . However , she now appears to have been the daughter of a Resse Griffiths and the sister of Jeremiah Griffith c1692 @-@ c1759 ; qv Inner Temple admission records ; " First Name : Jeremiah Last Name : Griffith Occupation Given : gentleman Admission Date : 12 / 02 / 1713 Call Date : 18 / 06 / 1716 Father 's Details Name : Resse Griffith Occupation : gentleman Father / Son Relationship : son and heir apparent Address : Diserth Radnorshire Notes : Referred to as Jeremy Griffith in the Bar Book . Father 's address described as in " Parish of Disserth Wales " .

She was also of the Inner Temple at her marriage , where she presumably had lodged with her brother before he was called to the Bar . " Winifred Griffith of The Inner Temple , London , Spinster , Spouse : Peter Smart of Fair Lawne , Kent , Batchelor ; source Parish Register St Benet Paul 's Wharf City of London Marriage Date : 7 Apr 1716 "

Jeremiah Griffith , Christopher Smart 's uncle , is recorded as having married twice . First Marriage : 19 May 1715 Jeremiah Griffith of the Inner Temple , London , Bach . , and Sarah Twells of St Andrew , Holborn , Midx . , S ( pinster ) . St Benet Pauls Wharf . His second marriage ; Jeremiah Griffith Marriage Date : 17 Jan 1746 Place : St James , Piccadilly , Middlesex Spouse 's Name : Charlotte Walker ( widow and executrix of John Walker DD deceased , she was natural daughter of Sheffield Duke of Buckingham and Francis Lambert , wife of Hon Oliver Lambert ( 2nd son of

Charles [ Lambert ] , 3rd Earl of Cavan ) . Jeremy died c1759 Copy of the will of Jeremiah Griffiths of Downton , New Radnor Esq . , 12 Sep 1747 probate 17 May 1759 is held at Powys archives. ref RX / 11 / 400 .

Before giving birth to Christopher , Winifred had two daughters , Margaret and Mary Anne .

During Smart 's younger years , Fairlawne was the residence of Christopher Vane , 1st Baron Barnard and Lady Barnard , who bequeathed £ 200 to Smart . He is supposed to have received so much money due to his father 's closeness to the Vane family , his being named after Christopher Vane , and the young boy was considered " the pride of Fairlawn " . However , there is some controversy over the exact nature of this inheritance ; while some cynically disagree with the reasons for his inheritance , no other explanation has been specified . In 1726 , three years after Christopher Vane died , Peter Smart purchased Hall @-@ Place in East Barming , which included a mansion house , fields , orchards , gardens , and woodland , a property that was influential throughout Smart 's later life . From the age of four until eleven , he spent much time around the farms , but did not participate , leading to speculations that he suffered from asthma attacks . However , not all scholars agree that he was a " sickly youth " . The only written record of events during his childhood comes from his writing of a short poem , at the age of four , in which he challenges a rival to the affections of a twelve @-@ year @-@ old girl .

While at Hall @-@ Place , Smart was sent to the local Maidstone Grammar School where he was taught by Charles Walwyn , a scholar from Eton College who had received an MA from King 's College , Cambridge in 1696 . It was here that Smart received an intensive education in Latin and Greek . He did not complete his education at Maidstone however , as his father died on 3 February 1733 , and his mother took Smart and his siblings to live near relatives in Durham after selling off a large portion of the estate to pay off Peter Smart 's debts .

Smart then attended Durham School , where the Reverend Mr. Richard Dongworth was headmaster ; it is not known whether he lived with his uncle , John Smart , or with a school master . He spent vacations at Raby Castle , which was owned by Henry Vane , 1st Earl of Darlington , the grandson of Christopher Vane . Henry Vane and his wife Grace , sister to William and Henrietta Fitzroy the Duke and Duchess of Cleveland , had four children , Henry , Frederick , Anne , and Mary . They were only a few years younger than Smart and became playmates , with Anne and Henry " pairing off " with Christopher and his sister Margaret respectively . Although nothing resulted from the match , Anne has been traditionally described as being his " first love " . During his time with the Vane family , Smart dedicated many poems to Henrietta , the Duchess of Cleveland . It was his closeness with the Vane family along with his skill for learning that encouraged Henrietta to allow him a pension of 40 pounds yearly , continued by her husband after her death in 1742 . This allowed Smart to attend Pembroke College , Cambridge .

= = = College = = =

Smart was admitted to Pembroke College on 20 October 1739 as a sizar under Leonard Addison . Although it is unclear why he chose Pembroke College , Addison was named in Peter Smart 's trust deed ( 1729 ) . As a sizar , he occasionally had to wait on the " Fellows ' table " and perform other menial tasks . On 12 July 1740 , he was awarded the " Dr. Watt 's Foundation scholarship " , which granted him six pounds a year until he gained a Bachelor of Arts degree . In addition to this income , he was also granted four pounds a year for scholarship . Although he was successful academically , he began to run up debt in order to pay for his extravagant lifestyle while at the college .

During his time at Pembroke , Smart borrowed numerous books spanning the fields of literature , religion , and science . These works helped when he wrote the three " Tripos Verse " at the end of each year . These poems were written in Latin and they , along with his other Latin poems like his translation of Alexander Pope 's Ode on St. Cecilia 's Day , led to him being awarded the " Craven scholarship for classics " on 10 June 1742 , which paid ? 25 a year for 14 years . These scholarships , combined with his becoming a fellow in 1743 , justified Smart calling himself " Scholar of the University " .

In 1743 , Smart pushed his translation of Pope 's Ode on St. Cecilia 's Day as Carmen Cl .

Alexandri Pope in S. Caeciliam Latine Redditum and paid for the publication himself . With this translation , he wanted to win Pope 's favour and translate Pope 's Essay on Man , but Pope rejected the idea and , after a lettered response and a possible meeting between the two , Smart translated Pope 's An Essay on Criticism ( De Arte Critica ) instead . The initial letter sent from Pope recommending the future translation was prized by Smart . In response to this letter and his budding relationship with Pope , the Pembroke Fellows honoured him with a portrait showing him holding the letter from Pope and allowed him to write a poem in celebration of Jubilee of Pembroke 's 400th year in 1744 .

In October 1745 , Smart was elected Praelector of Philosophy , which paid one pound a year , and made one of three Keepers of the Common Chest . The next year , on 11 February 1746 , he became a Master of Arts and was later elected on 10 October 1746 , to Praelector of Philosophy , Praelector of Rhetoric , and Keeper of the Common Chest . However , he had run up more debt of over twice his annual income , and he was not re @-@ elected in 1747 to the Praelectorship and was denied his control over the Common Chest accounts . However , he was made a " Preacher before the Mayor of Cambridge " at the college under the title " Concionatori Coram Praetore oppidano " , and his modest living during this year allowed him to regain Praelectorship in Philosophy along with being made a catechist , which suggests that he was ordained in the Anglican church .

In 1746 , Smart became tutor to John Blake Delaval , but this was abruptly cancelled and Delaval eventually removed from Pembroke over various broken rules and mischief . After recovering from this , Smart returned to studying . In April 1747 , a comedy he wrote just months before , A Trip to Cambridge , or The Grateful Fair , was performed in Pembroke College Hall , with many parts , including female roles , played by Smart himself . The prologue was printed in The Cambridge Journal Weekly Flying @-@ Post , which claimed that the play received " Universal Applause " .

During his final years at Pembroke , Smart was writing and publishing many poems . On 9 January 1748 , there were three proposals for " A Collection of Original Poems , By Christopher Smart , M.A. , Fellow of Pembroke Hall , in the University of Cambridge " that would include " The Hop Garden " , " The Judgment of Midas , a Masque " , his odes , his translations into Latin , and some original Latin poems . Thomas Gray , on 17 March 1747 , referred to this work as Smart 's " Collection of Odes " . This collection was not printed in 1748 but was delayed until 1752 , and was re @-@ titled Poems on Several Occasions .

Between 1740 and 1746 , he was introduced to Harriot Pratt , and he began to write poetry about her . By 1749 , he was in love with her and wrote to his friend Charles Burney ( father of Fanny Burney ) , " I am situated within a mile of my Harriote & Love has robd Friendship of her just dues ... There was a great musical crash at Cambridge , which was greatly admired , but I was not there , being much better pleased with hearing my Harriote on her spinnet & organ at her ancient mansion " , suggesting that he was living permanently in Market Downham , London . Although he wrote many poems dedicated to Harriot , his poem " The Lass with the Golden Locks " ( 1752 ) claims that he was done with both Harriot , Polly , and other women . The " lass with the golden locks " who replaced Smart 's previous fancies was Anna Maria Carnan . Anna would be Smart 's future wife and she was the stepdaughter of John Newbery , Smart 's future publisher .

= = = London = = =

Although Smart seemed to turn his life around at Pembroke , he slowly abandoned the college for London . During 1749 , Smart listed himself on Pembroke 's " Liber Absentiae " and would occasionally return to Pembroke throughout 1749 and 1750 . Because of his relationship with those at Pembroke , he was allowed to keep his name in the college 's records , which allowed him to participate and be charged as a member of the college . By 1750 he was living near St. James 's Park and was busy familiarising himself with Grub Street . It was this year that Smart developed a business relationship with John Newbery . It is unknown how Smart and Newbery met , but Smart 's daughter claimed Charles Burney introduced the two . Newbery was looking for a contributory to his The Midwife and The Student magazines , and it is possible that Smart 's winning of Cambridge 's "

Seatonian Prize " on 25 March 1750 brought his poetic abilities to Newbery 's attention .

The " Seatonian Prize " was a contest for one English poem each year on the topic of " the Perfections or Attributes of the Supreme Being " and the prize would be the " Rent of the [ Kislingbury , Northamptonshire ] estate " It was established by the will of Thomas Seaton , an " Anglican divine and hymn writer " . Smart wrote in the " poetical essay " tradition using Miltonic blank verse . In 1750 , the poem he won the prize with was On the Eternity of the Supreme Being . The prize was only worth 17 pounds each year before 7 pounds were deducted for the publication of the poem . However , after the publication of the poem , Smart became a regular contributor in The Student .

The Student , before Smart 's work , was a serious magazine that included a few poems and critical essays . However , once he joined and began writing under many pseudonyms , the magazine became filled with satire , parody , and humorous essays and poems . Along with him composing 15 of the essays and the majority of the poems published in the two volumes of the magazine , he decided to append three of The Inspector , a " humorous news report " , to the second of the volumes . These reports included many " puff pieces " promoting Smart 's works along with various stories written by his friends and associates , including the famous writers / poets Henry Fielding , Samuel Johnson , William Collins , and Tobias Smollett . However , this was not the only important publication produced by him during this time .

= = = The Midwife = = =

The Midwife , first published on 16 October 1751 and lasting until April 1753 , was produced primarily by Smart while he worked on The Student . This magazine was popular enough to be published in four editions . To hide his identity for practical and humorous reasons , he adopted the persona of a midwife , also known as a " Mrs. Midwife " in slang , and called this persona " Mrs. Mary Midnight " .

When his poem " Night Piece " was attacked by William Kenrick in Kapelion , or Poetical Ordinary , possibly out of a prearranged publicity stunt , Smart used The Midwife in December , 1750 , to attack back at Kenrick and promised an Old Woman 's Dunciad to be written against the other poet . However , Kenrick beat Smart to the use of the title and printed his own in January , 1751 . This feud lasted as attacks published in a few issues of The Midwife , but it soon died out when Smart focused his attention to writing a prologue and epilogue for a production of Othello and using the magazine to promote it .

His attention slowly shifted away from The Midwife when he wrote for , and won , the " Seatonian Prize " for his On the Immensity of the Supreme Being and when he began working with Newbery 's children 's magazine , The Lilliputian Magazine . However , Smart returned to this character full force when he established The Old Woman 's Oratory ; or Henley in Petticoats in December 1751 . The Oratory included Smart playing as Mrs. Midnight , various songs and dances , animal acts , and " miscellany " acts . The Oratory was successful , and was completely redone on 21 January 1752 . However , not everyone enjoyed the show , and Horace Walpole described the performance as " the lowest buffoonery in the world even to me who am used to my uncle Horace . " Late in 1752 , Smart finished and published a collection of his works as Poems on Several Occasions , which resulted in the end of the Oratory and The Midwife .

= = = Later career = = =

In 1752 , Christopher Smart was slowly dragged into a large " paper war " that involved many of London 's writers . After the publication of Poems on Several Occasions , including The Hop @-@ Garden , in June 1752 , John Hill launched a major attack upon Smart 's poetry . Smart responded with his mock @-@ epic , The Hilliad . Before the release of Smart 's poem , Hill was engaged in a large literary battle between various members of Grub Street 's and London 's writing community , especially Henry Fielding . This battle may have been for publicity only and lasted over many months before Smart involved himself . However , even with such a late entry , his Hilliad was the "

loudest broadside " of the war .

Smart was incurring many debts , and started publishing as much as possible during this time to support his family ; he was married to Anna Maria Carnan around mid @-@ 1752 , and in 1754 already had two daughters , Marianne ( 3 May 1753 ) and Elizabeth Anne ( 27 October 1754 ) . As a married man , he could no longer stay enrolled at Pembroke and collect his scholarship money when his marriage and children were made apparent to the heads of the college . Newbery allowed Smart , along with his wife and their children , to live at Canonbury House , Islington . Although Newbery had a strong reputation for charity , he was determined to have complete control over his writers . It is likely that such an attitude combined with monetary problems led to a rift forming between the two in 1753 .

Between 1753 and 1755 , Smart published or republished at least 79 works . However , even if he received money from each of these publications , these publications were unable to provide enough of an income to support a family , especially to his standard of living . While he was producing a poem each year for the Seatonian Prize , this amounted to very little of his writing ; he was forced into a life of " hack work " , which was described by his contemporary , Arthur Murphy , as " a bookseller is his only friend , but for that bookseller , however liberal , he must toil and drudge . " In December of 1755 , he finished *The Works of Horace , Translated Literally into English Prose* , a translation of Horace , which was widely used but brought him little profit .

He signed a 99 @-@ year contract in November 1755 to produce a weekly paper entitled *The Universal Visitor or Monthly Memorialist* for Thomas Gardner and Edmund Allen . However , the strain of publishing caused Smart to suffer from a fit , and he was unable to keep up with the publishing of the paper . Allen was a friend of Samuel Johnson , and it was Samuel Johnson , along with many other friends of Smart , who contributed to the magazine in order to help Smart keep up with his contract . In March 1756 , Newbery published without Smart 's authority Smart 's final " Seatonian Prize " poem , *On the Goodness of the Supreme Being* , and later , on 5 June , Newbery published without Smart 's authority Smart 's *Hymn to the Supreme Being* , a poem which thanked God for recovery over an illness of some kind , possibly a " disturbed mental state " . The *Hymn to the Supreme Being* marks the time in Smart 's life after the mysterious " fit " was resolved and the beginning of Smart 's obsession with religion and his praying " without ceasing " .

= = = Asylum confinement = = =

A " Commission of Lunacy " was taken out against Smart , and he was admitted to St Luke 's Hospital for Lunatics on 6 May 1757 as a " Curable Patient " . It is possible that Smart was confined by Newbery over old debts and a poor relationship between the two ; Newbery had previously mocked Smart and his immorality in his *A Collection of Pretty Poems for the Amusement of Children six Foot High* . Regardless of the exact reasons , there is evidence suggesting that Newbery 's admittance of Smart into the mental asylum was not based on " madness " . However , there is also evidence that an incident of some kind took place in St. James 's Park in which Smart started to pray loudly in public until he had " routed all the company " ( *Jubilate Agno* B89 ) .

It is not known what exactly happened during his confinement , but Smart did work on two of his most famous poems , *Jubilate Agno* and *A Song to David* . What is known is that he may have been in a private madhouse before St Luke 's and that he was later moved from St Luke 's to Mr. Potter 's asylum until his release . At St Luke 's , he transitioned from being " curable " to " incurable " , and was moved to Mr. Potter 's asylum for monetary reasons . During this time , Anna left and took the children with her to Ireland . His isolation led him into writing religious poetry , although he abandoned the traditional genres of the 18th century that marked his earlier poetry when he wrote *Jubilate Agno* . Although it is debated as to whether his turning inward to examine himself in his poetry represents an evangelical type of Christianity , his poetry during his isolation does show a desire for " unmediated revelation " . There is an " inner light " that serves as a focal point for Smart and his poems written during this time , and that inner light connects him to the Christian God .

Smart was left alone , except for his cat Geoffrey and the occasional gawker . It is very possible that he felt " homeless " during this time and surely felt that he was in a " limbo ... between public and

private space " . In London , only a few of his works were still being published . However , not everyone viewed Smart 's " madness " as problematic , and Johnson defended him , sometimes seriously and sometimes comically , many times . A century later , Robert Browning later remarked that A Song to David was great because Smart was mad , and that the poem allowed him to rank alongside of Milton and Keats . It is no wonder that a few of his loyal friends did come to Mr. Potter 's and free him .

Little is known as to how and why Smart was released from asylum , but Elizabeth , his daughter , claimed : " He grew better , and some misjudging friends who misconstrued Mr Newbery 's great kindness in placing him under necessary & salutary restriction which might possibly have eventually wrought a cure , invited him to dinner and he returned to his confinement no more . " Although this may be a misstatement of the events , Smart did leave the asylum on 30 January 1763 .

= = = Final years = = =

A Song to David was printed on 6 April 1763 along with a proposal for a new translation of the Psalms . The poem was received harshly , which was possibly just thinly veiled personal attacks over Smart being freed from the asylum just weeks before . However , Kenrick , Smart 's former rival , praised the poem in one of his own printed on 25 May 1763 . Also , John Lockman followed on 21 June 1763 , with his own poem in praise of Smart 's and Samuel Boyce followed this on 15 July 1763 with another . Along with this support , Smart responded to his critics at the Critical Review ; in regards to Smart 's response , the Critical Review claimed that they would " say no more of Mr. Smart " .

After A Song to David , he tried to publish a collection of his Psalms translations , and Newbery sought to ruin him by hiring James Merrick to produce his own translations . Newbery then hired Smart 's new publisher , James Fletcher , which in turn forced Smart to find a new publisher , delaying the printing of his Psalms . Finally , on 12 August 1765 , he printed A Translation of the Psalms of David , which included Hymns and Spiritual Songs and a second edition of A Song to David . This work was criticised by Tobias Smollett who was working with Newbery at the time , and Newbery 's edition by Merrick was constantly compared with Smart 's . However , modern criticism has received Smart 's version in a more favourable light . While working on this project , he was also working on a translation of the Phaedrus and a verse translation of Horace . His verse Horace was published in July 1767 including a preface in which he attacked Newbery , but the attack was in vain because Newbery died soon after .

On 20 April 1770 , Smart was arrested for debt . On 11 January 1771 , he was tried by Lord Mansfield , the gentleman who originally introduced Smart to Alexander Pope , and he was soon recommended to the King 's Bench Prison . Although he was in prison , Charles Burney purchased the " Rules " ( allowing him some freedom ) , and Smart 's final weeks may have been peaceful although pathetic . In his final letter , Smart begged for money from Rev. Mr. Jackson , saying : " Being upon recovery from a fit of illness , and having nothing to eat , I beg you to send me two or three shillings which ( God willing ) I will return , with many thanks , in two or three days . " On 20 May 1771 , Smart died from either liver failure or pneumonia shortly after completing his final work , Hymns , for the Amusement of Children .

= = = Death = = =

In response to his uncle 's death , Christopher Hunter wrote , " I trust he is now at peace ; it was not his portion here . " Fanny Burney , in her journal , wrote :

But now I speak of authors , let me pay the small tribute of regret and concern due to the memory of poor Mr. Smart , who died lately in the King 's Bench Prison ; a man by nature endowed with talents , wit , and vivacity , in an eminent degree ; and whose unhappy loss of his sense was a public as well as private misfortune . I never knew him in his glory , but ever respected him in his decline , from the fine proofs he had left of his better day , and from the account I have heard of his youth from my father , who was then his intimate companion ; as , of late years , he has been his

most active and generous friend , having raised a kind of fund for his relief , though he was ever in distress . His intellects , so cruelly impaired , I doubt not , affected his whole conduct .

On 22 May 1771 , a jury of twelve fellow inmates of the King 's Bench Prison declared that Smart " upon the Twentieth day of May Instant died a Natural Death within the Rules of the Prison . " He was buried on 26 May in St Paul 's Covent Garden .

= = Literary themes and styles = =

Christopher Smart received occasional mentions by critics and scholars after his death , especially by Robert Browning , but analysis and commentary on his works increased dramatically with the " discovery " of *Jubilate Agno* in 1939 . Many recent critics approach Smart from a religious perspective ( Neil Curry , Harriet Guest , Clement Hawes , Chris Mounsey ) . However , some also favour a psychology / sexual analysis of his works ( Lance Bertelsen , Clemet Hawes , Alan Liu ) .

= = Religion = =

Although Smart wrote the " *Seatonian Prize* " poems early on , there is a contrast between the mimicked Miltonic blank verse and the intense exploration of religion found in his later works . His first " *Seatonian Prize* " poem , *On the Eternity of the Supreme Being* is part of two traditional types of religious writing : " authoritative discourse of religious poetry " and " tentative and self @-@ critical discourse of an apparently more personal devotion " In connecting the two , he redefines " the role of the religious poet . " By establishing a debate between these two forms , Harriet Guest claims that Smart creates " a poetic space which allows the poet to make provisional , even questionable statements " , which are important to his later works . To Guest , Smart , in his religious poems , " is not concerned to offer instruction in Christian conduct . " Besides the greater theological debate , the poems also are the origins of Smart 's belief that all of creation is constantly praising God , and that a poet must " give voice to mute nature 's praise of God . "

*Jubilate Agno* reflects an abandonment of traditional poetic structures in order to explore complex religious thought . His " *Let* " verses join creation together as he seemingly writes his own version of Biblical poetry . Smart , in *Jubilate Agno* , plays on words and the meaning behind words in order to participate with the divine that exists within language . Although the original manuscript divided the " *Let* " and " *For* " verses onto opposing sides of the manuscript , Karina Williams claims that " Dr W. H. Bond then discovered that some of the LET and FOR folios were numbered and dated concurrently , and that these chronologically parallel texts were further connected by verbal links . " This justified her combing the two sides to follow each other . Using this as a model , Guest claims that the " *For* " verses explore religion with a " personal tone " and the " *Let* " are " unambiguous " and deal with public matters . Jeanne Walker goes further than Guest and claims that the " *Let* " and " *For* " sections are united with the Hebrew tradition and " iterate both present and future simultaneously , that is , they redeem time . "

Words and language connect the poet to divine revelation , and God is the " great poet " who used language in order to create the universe . Through words and language , Smart attempted to capture the creative power of those words . By relying on the power of words , Smart is , according to Clement Hawes , subverting " Anglican control over religious functions and services . " In essence , Smart 's approach to religion in *Jubilate Agno* is comparable to John Wesley 's theological dictum and to the writings of John Perro and William Bowling . He also creates his own natural philosophy and criticises science , like that established by Isaac Newton , for their ignoring " the glory of Almighty God . "

To Smart , each piece of matter is alive because it is connected to God , and matter cannot be described in a cold manner that disconnects it from this reality . However , Smart accomplished his new science by relying on Newtonian empiricism . As part of his desire to bring back the divine language to poetry and science , he creates an " *Ark of Salvation* " in order to describe a prophetic and apocalyptic future which emphasises the importance of Christ and England . Along with being prophetic , the poem itself is modelled after the canticles and follows the form of the *Benedicite* .

The Benedicite is not the only model however , and there is a strong link between Jubilate Agno and the psalm tradition .

Smart 's A Song to David is an attempt to bridge poetry written by humans and Biblical poetry . The Biblical David plays an important role in this poem just as he played an important role in Jubilate Agno . However , David in Jubilate Agno is an image of the creative power of poetry whereas he becomes a fully realised model of the religious poet . By focusing on David , Smart is able to tap into the " heavenly language . " Many critics have focused on the role of David as planner of Solomon 's Temple and his possible role with the Freemasons . However , the true life of the poem comes later when Christ is introduced as the major subject . After Christ is introduced , Smart attempts to " reach to heaven " and the final passages , to Neil Curry , represent a " final rush for glory . "

According to Mounsey , A Song to David and Smart 's Psalms is an attempt to " Christianize " the Old Testament through writing an 18th @-@ century psalter . However , the Psalms perform a secondary function : they allow Smart to relate to the suffering of David and to reinforce his own religious convictions by following his Biblical model . As part of Smart 's " Christianizing " of the Psalms , Jesus becomes a divine form of suffering , and Smart becomes further juxtaposed with his Biblical model as both praise God for Jesus 's ultimate sacrifice and for the beauty of all creation . The Hymns and Psalms form their own sort of liturgy and attempt to reform Anglican liturgy by emphasising God 's place in nature .

Smart 's Hymns are modelled after a tradition exemplified by Robert Nelson . They are steeped in Anglican tradition and also emphasise English patriotism and England 's divine favour . The Hymns , according to Guest , " [ express ] a delight in creation that is largely absent from the work of other hymn @-@ writers of the century , unless they are paraphrasing the words of David . " To Hawes , the Hymns exemplify an evangelical spirit that separates Smart from the traditional Anglican church . Although he wrote his second set of hymns , Hymns for the Amusement of Children , for a younger audience , Smart cares more about emphasising the need for children to be moral instead of " innocent " . These works have been seen as possibly too complicated for " amusement " because they employ ambiguities and complicated theological concepts . In essence , the Hymns for the Amusement of Children is intended to teach children the specific virtues that make up the subject matter of the work . Like the Hymns for the Amusement of Children , Smart 's The Parables of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ were designed to teach morals . However , these Parables alter the original Biblical parables in order to simplify them and help them " make sense " . As such , Todd Parker claims that the Parables , and the other religious works of Smart , are part of his final push for the " evangelization of London 's reading public . "

= = = Language = = =

The language and commentary on language is of particular emphasis in Jubilate Agno . To Alan Jacobs , Smart 's use of language represents his attempt to connect to the " Ur language " , allowing Smart to connect to " the Word calling forth the world . " This is similar to David and Orpheus 's ability as poets to create through their song . In his constant emphasis on the force of poetry , Jubilate Agno takes on the qualities of the Ars Poetica tradition . As such , Smart is attempting to develop a poetic language that will connect him to the " one true , eternal poem . " The poetic language that he creates is related to Adam 's " onomathetic " tradition , or the idea that names hold significant weight in the universe and that Adam was able to join in with creation by naming objects .

In Jubilate Agno , he describes his writing as creating " impressions " . To accomplish this task , he incorporated puns and onomopoeia in order to emphasise the theological significance of his poetic language . In addition to these techniques , he relied on repeated language and allusions to traditional works and to scripture for a source of authority in various works , especially in his Hymns . Along with scriptural authority , he relies on prophetic rhetoric to gain his audience 's sympathy .

During the 18th century , there was a debate over poetic language and the translations of Smart , especially of Horace , positioned him as one who sought to redeem traditional forms and understanding of language . However , some critics , like Alan Liu , believe that translations are



effectively forced to compete against the original works , and that Smart 's language , at least in his translations , must constantly seek to undermine the original authors , like Horace . Not all critics agree with Liu , and those like Donald Davie believe that the Smart 's translations cannot be compared to the original works , but are part of a system of Smart competing against the language of his contemporaries . Thomas Keymer further verified this point about Smart 's translations by revealing that the poet claims , in William Toldervy 's *The History of Two Orphans* , " But what heaven @-@ exciting harmony might we not expect from that exalted genius , who can produce such lines as these following ! " in anticipation of replacing the previous flawed translations of the Psalms .

Regardless of where he stood on the specific issue of translation Smart believed that there was an importance to language , which carried over to his constant revising of his poems to slowly correct them . Many of Smart 's poems served a dual purpose , and when put to music were altered to meet various standards . By constantly revising , he ensured that his poems were always the " authentic " version .

= = = Gender = = =

Smart 's role as Mrs. Midnight along with his gendered comments in *Jubilate Agno* form the focal point for analysing his understanding of sexuality and gender . With Mrs. Midnight , Smart challenges the traditional social order found in 18th @-@ century England . However , some , like Lance Bertelsen , claim that the Mrs. Midnight persona reveals Smart 's schizophrenia in which he is torn between masculine and feminine roles . Fraser Easton claims that the existence of Mrs. Midnight proves that Smart identified a female connection to poetry and her character was used to defy popular 18th @-@ century notions of who is able to attain knowledge . This role allowed Smart to focus on " social and sexual dimensions " in his satire . However , there is a potentially darker side to Mrs. Midnight , and she could represent his feelings that he was " emasculated by economic pressures . "

The image of " horns " in *Jubilate Agno* is commonly viewed as a sexual image . Easton puts particular emphasis on the image of horns as a phallic image and contends that there are masculine and feminine horns throughout Smart 's poem . Hawes picks up this theme and goes on to claims that the poem shows " that [ Smart ] had been ' feminized ' as a cuckold . " In response to this possible cuckolding , *Jubilate Agno* predicts a misogynistic future while simultaneously undermining this effort with his constant associations to female creation .

= = = Environmental = = =

Smart had a reputation for being a " dedicated gardener " . His poem the Hop @-@ Garden helped to further this reputation , and even during his stay in a mental asylum he convinced others of his bond with nature . Johnson witnessed Smart 's time in asylum and stated , " he has partly as much exercise as he used to have , for he digs in the garden . " Gardening , to Smart , was a way in which humans could interact with nature and actually " improve " on the natural landscape .

However , Smart did not only write about gardens and vegetation , and his focus on his cat Jeoffry is widely known and his focus on nature connects him to those mistreated and neglected by 18th @-@ century society . The first fragment of *Jubilate Agno* is a poetic " Ark " that pairs humans with animals in order to purify all of creation . The whole work relies on his extensive background in botany and his knowledge of taxonomy . Smart actively participated in the 18th @-@ century taxonomy systems established by Carl Linnaeus ; however , Smart is mythologising his view of nature and creation when he adds information from Pliny the Elder into his work .

By using this knowledge , Smart was able to give a " voice " to nature ; he believed that nature , like his cat Jeoffry , is always praising God but needs a poet in order to bring out that voice . As such , the themes of animals and language are merged in *Jubilate Agno* , and Jeoffry is transformed into a manifestation of the *Ars Poetica* tradition .

= = = Freemasonry = = =

Many critics have focused on the role of David as planner of Solomon 's Temple and his possible role with the Freemasons . Although it is not known for sure whether Christopher was a Freemason or not , there is evidence suggesting that he was either part of the organisation or had a strong knowledge of its belief system . Based on personal admittance to contributing to A Defence of Freemasonry , contemporary verification of his participation in the volume and with Masonic meetings , there is enough to confirm " his participation in Masonic affairs . " Furthermore , there are accounts of Smart attending meetings at the Bell Tavern in Westminster . The information available has led Marie Roberts to declare in her 1986 book British Poets and Secret Societies , " It has been universally accepted by scholars that Christopher Smart ... was a Freemason yet no record of his membership has been traced . " However , in the notes to Chris Mounsey 's 2001 book Christopher Smart : Clown of God , Marie Roberts ' 1986 book is referred to as " an account of Smart 's work which accepts his association with the Freemasons , " but in Mounsey 's view , " Since neither Smart 's name nor his pseudonyms appear in the records of the Freemasons , it is highly unlikely he was ever one of their number . "

Smart 's involvement with Masonry can be traced through his poems , including Jubilate Agno and A Song to David , with his constant references to Masonic ideas and his praise of Free Masonry in general . In Jubilate Agno , Smart declares " I am the Lord 's builder and free and accepted MASON in CHRIST JESUS " ( B 109 ) . This declaration of being a " free and accepted MASON " has been interpreted to define his connection to speculative Masonry . The " in Christ Jesus " declaration places Smart within a Christian version of Masonry . He also declares himself as " the Lord 's builder " and this connects his life with the building of King Solomon 's Temple , an important Masonic idea . In A Song to David , Smart returns to the building of Solomon 's Temple and incorporates many of the Masonic images that he uses in Jubilate Agno .

It was this detail that encouraged many critics to try and decode the " seven pillar " section of A Song of David along the lines of Masonic imagery . The poem follows two traditional sets of motions common to Freemason writing that mimic the image of Jacob 's Ladder : movement from earth to heaven and movement from heaven to earth . This image further connects Freemason belief surrounding the relationship of David to Solomon 's Temple . While these images , and further images in A Song to David are related also to depictions of the Temple in Isaac Newton 's Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms Amended ( 1728 ) , the John Bunyan 's Solomon 's Temple Spiritualiz 'd ( 1688 ) , and to the Geneva Bible , these works were relied on by the Freemasons .

Based on this theory , the first pillar , the Greek alpha , represents the mason 's compass and " God as the Architect of the Universe . " The second , the Greek gamma , represents the mason 's square . In addition , the square represents the " vault of heaven . " The third , the Greek eta , represents Jacob 's ladder itself and is connected to the complete idea of seven pillars . The fourth , the Greek theta , is either " the all @-@ seeing eye or the point within a circle . " The fifth letter , the Greek iota , represents a pillar and the temple . The sixth letter , the Greek sigma , is an incomplete hexagram , otherwise known as " the blazing star or hexalpha " to the Freemasons . The last , the Greek omega , represents a lyre and David as a poet .

= = Works = =

Smart , throughout his career , published many known works . Although his works are far too many to list , a few of his most famous and important publications during his life include :

A Song to David

Poems on Several Occasions ( including the Hop @-@ Garden )

The Hilliad

The Hop @-@ Garden

Hymns and Spiritual Songs

Hymns for the Amusement of Children

The Oratorios Hannah and Abimelech

The Parables of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

A Poetical Translation of the Fables of Phaedrus

The " Seatonian Prize " poems

A Translation of the Psalms of David

The Works of Horace Prose and Verse

One of his most famous poems , Jubilate Agno , was not published until 1939 , by William Force Stead . In 1943 , lines from this poem were set to music by Benjamin Britten with the translated title Rejoice in the Lamb .

He is also credited with the writing of A Defence of Freemasonry ( 1765 ) , also known as A Defence of Freemasonry as practised in the regular lodges , both foreign and domestic , under the Constitution of the English Grand Master , in which is contained a refutation of Mr. Dermott 's absurd and ridiculous account of Freemasonry , in his book entitled ' Ahiman Rezon ' and the several queries therein reflecting on the regular Masons , briefly considered and answered , that response to Laurence Dermott 's Ahiman Rezon . Although there is no direct attribution on the text 's titlepage , it was established as his work since its publication , and it includes a poem directly attributed to him .

A two @-@ volume edition of the Complete Poems of Christopher Smart was published in 1949 by Norman Callan , Professor of English at Queen Mary College , London ( now University ) . There have been numerous reprints .