

société vénitienne. Il est évident que Pantalon ou ses incarnations suivantes qui vivent dans la société se heurtent aux problèmes différents, sont entourés des caractères diversifiés et pour cela doivent modifier leur comportement. C'est la raison pour laquelle on a prêté attention à l'analyse du milieu de Pantalon.

Pour conclure, il faut constater que tous ces changements et toute la diversité de la création de Goldoni constitue la conséquence de sa réforme dont on a essayé de décrire certains aspects, en se concentrant sur les éléments significatifs pour expliquer les changements du personnage de Pantalon.

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The Presentation of the Animal Sphere in Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno*

The arrangement of Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno*, however convoluted¹, communicates its main idea very clearly: the basic task of all creatures is the praise and adoration of their Maker. Not surprisingly, the subjects touched upon include the connections between the human and animal spheres. Both worlds are presented and the points where some common aspects appear – highlighted. Needless to say, like the majority of the *Jubilate*, these are concerned largely with its author's religious beliefs, which surface as particular meanings read into apparently commonplace objects or situations. At some points, as the extraordinary is breathed into the ordinary, the

¹ The poem consists of four parts, referred to – for the sake of clarity – as Fragments A, B1, B2, C and D. Because the manuscript comprises a number of loose sheets, covered with unnumbered verses, each starting either with *Let* or *For*, sometimes it is more convenient to speak of the *Let* or *For* sections, as there are thematic restrictions imposed on these. The *Let* fragments enumerate Old Testament figures, beasts and incidents, or names of Smart's contemporaries accompanied by corresponding names of herbs and animals. The *For* sections display a more varied choice of themes, ranging from descriptions of the poet's personal affairs and emotions, through investigations into different aspects of the eighteenth-century reality, to prophesying better days to come.

Due to the text's bizarre structure, which at first glance may appear somewhat inconsistent – a closely woven web of associations and a kaleidoscope of dovetailing ideas, the *Jubilate* has been a difficult work for critics to concentrate upon, and therefore not many critical studies exist on the subject. Yet the poem, confusing as it may seem, is pervaded by a central idea which constitutes its very core. It is the vision of all members of the human race and all species of animal and vegetable kingdoms, united in the act of praising the Lord. Hence the title, given to the manuscript several centuries after its production, as an expression of the jubilant mood resulting from the constant repetition of the word *Rejoice*.

borderline between the human and the animal kingdoms becomes obliterated so that some intermingling of these two is to be noted. This is markedly so in the case of the presentation of the poet's views on the integrity of the creation as well as his holistic vision of the entire universe. The latter proves so conspicuous that it is feasible to speak of the Chain of Being² becoming somehow flattened here. In the remainder of eighteenth-century poetry, if the ordering was altered, animals were placed above humans, which served satirical or didactic purposes. In the work at issue, animals and humans alike are placed at the same level, being almost equalled – as two corresponding elements of God's creation.

To begin with, let us state that, in very general terms, the bigger part of the *Jubilate* derives its topics from the fauna. Occasionally, the animals are reduced (when juxtaposed against the backbone of the poet's convictions) to merely physical beings, whose more admirable organs are painstakingly described; but, at times, they are attached to most unusual biblical figures, or unthinkable associations. Most frequently, they are assigned Christian values or religious connotations which, in most cases, do not have much in common with the animals listed, but refer primarily to the poet's own experiences and observations. These can be exemplified on the basis of the following lines:

Let Othiel praise God with the Rhinoceros, who put on his armour for the reward of beauty in the Lord (A:28);

Let Joseph (...) praise with the Crocodile, which is pleasant and pure, when he is interpreted, tho' his look is of terror and offence (A:46);

² The Chain of Being, or the Great Chain of Being, is a Neoplatonic metaphor for the hierarchical nature, function, and organization of the universe. This concept, created by Plotinus (205?-270), was applied to literature, science, and philosophy, and comprised a series of linked stages from God, to Angel, to Man, to Animal, to Plant, to Dust. Popular from the Renaissance to the 19th century, it influenced the literature of Pope, Shakespeare, and Wordsworth, the philosophy of Leibniz and Spinoza, and the scientific views of Newton. The application of this notion to eighteenth-century literature was discussed by Arthur O. Lovejoy in his book *The Great Chain of Being*.

Let Zadok worship with the Mole – before honour is humility, and he that looketh low shall learn (A: 54); or

Let Cornelius with the Swine bless God, which purifyeth all things for the poor (A: 63).

The above lines seem to be unified not only by the omnipresent idea of the magnifying of the Lord and praising the magnitude of His creation, but also by the pervasive message concerning deceptive appearances. This is clearly visible in all of the above-quoted verses, with the exception of the third one. The rhinoceros may not be an embodiment of terrestrial beauty but is compensated for that in the form of its thick skin which acts as a protective layer against the perils of the real world. The crocodile, alike, is far from what its image presents; yet the most astounding, perhaps, is the vision of the pig, commonly associated with mud and filth, extolled by the poetic persona to the rank of a paragon of purity by the grace of God, of course. Is the poet being didactic? Is he trying to convey his message of not trusting the imperfect human vision? Or is he trying to persuade his readers to direct their eyes to the more spiritual values which may not always be straightforward and easy to discern? It might be deduced that the poet's moralising didacticism can also come in disguise, like his animal protagonists and their merits. After all, the explicit meaning of these lines is deeply religious, but – underneath that – a true human concern for more universal values is to be found. Yet, in some animals at least, a reflection of the creation's arresting beauty comes to the fore: 'Let Jacob rejoice with the Goldfish, who is an eye-trap' (B1:152), thus providing one more reason to celebrate God's masterpieces.

What is more, animal images are used to represent biblical truths, and exemplify Christian teachings, as is the case with the camel or the squirrel:

Let Hezekiah praise with the Dromedary – the zeal from the glory of God is excellence, and to bear his burden is grace (A: 53);

Let Arannah bless with the Squirrel, which is a gift of homage from the poor man to the wealthy and increaseth good will (A: 64).

The camel's burden is referred to not only literally, but also metaphorically: a timeless interpretation of human life and its vicissitudes as yokes which are to be borne patiently, the Bible adding extra meaning to this by means of its own rationale founded on the principle of the earthly toil and the heavenly reward. The squirrel, in turn, is linked to the benevolence and kind-heartedness as professed by Jesus, who – in most general terms – promoted mutual exchange of good will between representatives of various social strata. What matters most at this point is not, perhaps, the list of individual animals and their associations, but the holistic vision of nature unified in praise and thanksgiving, as well all aspects of the real world and the biblical history coming together in this act. What the reader witnesses is a joyful procession of all creation – people coupled with animals and more or less obscure explanations of the links between them. Of course, it is possible to take a closer look at the participants in the procession and, on the basis of that, to draw certain conclusions, but one cannot help feeling that – logical as they may be – all of them are, at best, fragmentary, and that there is not much point in dwelling upon the specific instead of grasping their entirety. In any case, the underlying idea seems to be one which was thus expressed by the speaker himself: 'Let Mishael bless with the Stoat – the praise of the Lord gives propriety to all things' (A:79). 'All things,' the speaker says, and it becomes clear that – to him – God's plan and all-encompassing love do not concern humans solely, but also anything else that has ever been subject to creation, whether animate or inanimate. If one chances to come across a line like 'the Lord is the Lion's provider' (A:85), the implication is that the Lord is in fact everybody – and everything – else's provider as well, which is one more piece of evidence to support the statement that these lines are not meant to be taken singly, but collectively. Some of the animals, however, have their function in the poem restricted to illustrating particular aspects of God's munificence. A few examples are:

Let A Little Child with a Serpent bless Him, who ordained strength in babes to the confusion of the Adversary (A: 90);

Let Susanna bless with the Butterfly – beauty hath wings, but chastity is the Cherub (A: 92); or

Let Pedaiah bless with the Humble-Bee, who loves himself in solitude and makes his honey alone (A: 97).

The above verses, quite typically, mention Christian virtues, namely strength (whether bodily or spiritual), chastity and solitary conscientious labour. The most representative, however, seem to be lines like: 'Let Dan rejoice with the Blackbird, who praises God with all his heart, and biddeth to be of good cheer' (A:113), where the wish to praise God is ascribed to animals, especially those capable of sound production. Surprisingly, also the lowest species in the animal hierarchy are assigned the function of glorifying the Lord, their existence being in this way fully justified: 'Let Magdel rejoice with Ascarides, which is the life of the bowels – the worm hath a part in our frame' (B1:37). The vindication of the inclusion of the worm in this catalogue also comprises the correlation of unsophisticated lowly life forms and humility, i.e. yet another virtue: 'For I rejoice like a worm in the rain in him that cherishes and in him that tramples' (B1:37), thus pointing to the Christian dimension of human suffering and attitude to adversities. Similarly, animals are endowed with certain qualities that are characteristic of human beings, such as the power of reasoning and justifying their judgements: 'Let Shuni rejoice with the Gull, who is happy in not being good for food' (B1:51). Some animals are associated with particular activities which can add pleasure to human life:

Let Ruth rejoice with the Tumbler – it is a pleasant thing to feed him and be thankful (B1: 56);

Let Hur rejoice with the Water-wag-tail, who is a neighbour, and loves to be looked at (B1: 63); or

Let Joram rejoice with the Water Rail, who takes his delight in the river (B1: 66).

The above verses testify to a number of facts simultaneously. First of all, they express the notion of the physicality of all the animals, which are generally presented in the *Jubilate* in very spiritual terms. Next, they draw the reader's attention to the aspect of their pleasurable, which is occasionally disregarded by the speaker. Finally, in keeping with the overall design of the poem, they accentuate the purpose of creation, self-evident in its perfection, as well as the awareness of it, and – in the quality of deriving enjoyment from being observed – its ultimate confirmation. How much of these fundamental truths is comprehended by humans, the poet finds hard to assess, as his message is not quite clear even when talking about the Cambridge professors, which is intelligibly expressed in the following lines:

Let Ithream rejoice with the great Owl, who understandeth that which he professes.

For I pray God for the professors of the University of Cambridge to attend & to amend (B1: 69).

The distinguished professors themselves are entreated to give thought to the speaker's ideas. Despite the scholars' link with the Owl – a symbol of wisdom, the speaker clearly regards their understanding of what they lecture on to be markedly limited, and wishes they paid more attention to his own teachings. What they might see in the latter is incomparable to their own scientific notions, so imperfect in contrast to God's creation, and it is in this respect that their attitudes stand in need of improvement, which is suggested by the poet. His stance could be best summarised in the statement: 'For I rejoice that I attribute to God, what others vainly ascribe to feeble man' (B1: 97). For that reason, animals could be situated higher than humans in the Chain of Being just because they seem to be free from such impudent pretension. Could the Cambridge professors grasp the idea that 'a LION roars HIMSELF compleat from head to tail' (B1:229)? That remains open to doubt.

In view of that, the speaker ventures to compare himself to a member of the animal kingdom rather than the human race. 'For I am

like a frog in the brambles, but the Lord hath put his whole armour upon me' (B1:95), confesses Smart, alluding to his need for spiritual strength amongst life's vicissitudes. Furthermore, individuals whose surnames happen to be related to various beasts necessarily reflect God's kindness and blessings embodied in His creation. They are the ones worthy of praising God for, and the very fact of a certain amount of intimacy with them assumes the significance of a benefit in itself:

For I have a providential acquaintance with men who bear the names of animals.

For I bless God to M' Lion M' Cock M' Cat M' Talbot M' Hart M' Fysh M' Grub, and Miss Lamb. (...)

For I bless God for the immortal soul of M' Pigg of DOWNHAM in NORFOLK (B1: 113-116).

These are all honourable people, to be sure, but what matters here most is perhaps the intriguing concept of interrelationships and interpenetration of the human and animal spheres. They both appear not only to co-exist peacefully side by side, but also become fused together. The message seems to be not only one of equality but also a sense of spiritual kinship between people and beasts is revealed. Therefore, quite expectedly, it ceases to make any difference whether animals assume human characteristics, or humans – animal names, i.e. means of some identification with the presumably more perfect animal world. This ubiquitous combination of personification and animalisation becomes an argument in the poet's debate on why everything ought to give praise to its Maker. In the light of the above, verses such as 'Let Matthew rejoice with Uranoscopus, whose eyes are lifted up to God' (B1:130) seem no longer surprising. To learn that animals can feel melancholy and serenity, or are pure and clever in self-defence, is none the more extraordinary. Moreover, another seemingly sacrilegious aspect is that of praying for animals ('For I pray God for the ostriches of Salisbury Plain, the beavers of the Medway & silver fish of Thames' – B1:153), but that again can be justified against the background of the overall concept: they are, in

their God-intended ways, equal to humans, thus enabling those capable of perceiving this fact to provide them with appropriate respect. And this seems to be one more feature of the extraordinary and extravagant poem, which renders it so unique, and mesmerising.

A very special example of the intermingling of both spheres is the well-known passage about the poet's cat. Even if one bears in mind Smart's eccentricity both as a poet and as an eighteenth-century man, it is remarkable that a non-human being should serve as the figure of a model Christian in the *Jubilate*. Surprisingly, this saintly figure is represented by Jeoffry, the writer's pet cat. The celebrated passage on its daily routines needs to be analysed in greater detail. In the first place, with the passage beginning: 'For I will consider my Cat Jeoffry' (B2:697), the association brought to mind is that of Saints' lives, depicting the holy people's daily routines, permeated with piety even in their most down-to-earth manifestations. Plainly, such saintly lives for centuries have constituted a model of Christian behaviour as well as an object of pious meditation for thousands of worshippers world-wide, their subjects being naturally fit for pious contemplation. Also, they would be considered, in a special mode, during a time purposefully set off for this devout meditation. Here, Saints are replaced with a figure of an exemplary cat, surpassing in its noble qualities many humans. This becomes even more explicit – and less extraordinary at the same time – on reading the speaker's own elaboration on the topic, where the cat is referred to as 'the servant of the Living God duly and daily serving him' (B2:698). Whatever is performed by this cat every day, unexpectedly aspires to a universal dimension when most natural activities are endowed with spiritual meanings. One good example is the cat's act of blessing God, read into its morning ablutions and exercise.

Evidently, the ideology is superimposed onto very simple acts, but there is a logical structure to it, which precludes any case of an overinterpretation, strongly supporting the overall outlook of Smart's. The cat 'worships in his way' (B2:699), just like its master, through every single one of its daily routines. Cat Jeoffry exercises its body, plays with a fragrant herbal twig, and embarks upon the consideration of itself, which includes a thorough examination of the fore and hind

paws, sharpening claws, washing and delousing. The preoccupation with the notion of cleanliness is highly indicative of a metaphorical meaning: one which is quite easy to decode – one which signifies spiritual rather than bodily purity. The cat pays an equal amount of its undivided attention to all the parts of its body, which is heavily reminiscent of Puritan notions of self-examination and soul-searching. In like manner, it aims to arrive at a certainty that no questionable aspects appear anywhere, and the general condition is far removed from that of sinfulness, traditionally coupled with dirt or filth. An additional procedure, applied by Cat Jeoffry, is the removal of fleas from its fur. A very ordinary activity in itself, it is used in the text to accentuate the need for meticulous checking of the soul in order to obliterate any traces of impurity and thus be safely delivered from Satan's temptations later on: 'For (...) he fleas himself, that he may not be interrupted upon the beat' (B2:711). Similarly, the ideal Christian's obedience is stressed in one of the cat's postures: 'For (...) he looks up for his instructions' (B2:713), and is not directed by its own ideas but complies with God's decrees.

Also, Jeoffry's general kindness and magnanimity are a case in point as, following the cat's consideration of its Maker and itself, the time comes to consider its neighbour – not only of the feline species, but even of the rodent type. The former will be kissed, and the latter given a chance for escape. Like an ideal Christian, Cat Jeoffry is also aware of the insidious power of the Adversary and the need to watch out at all times: 'For he keeps the Lord's watch in the night against the adversary' (B2:720), and what is more is able to fight evil by a number of certain qualities that it possesses. One of them is the newly-discovered electricity of its fur; another – the energetic enthusiasm visible in the performance of its daily activities, able to counteract 'the Devil, who is death' (B2:721). Similarly, the cat is called a sun-worshipper, which probably refers to nothing more than its partiality to resting on sun-warmed surfaces, but it also points to the ancient source of energy and light as the source of Jeoffry's divine origin and connections. Consequently, as an image of goodness, Jeoffry controls its wild instincts, compared to those of a snake (B2:726), and

expectedly 'God tells him he's a good Cat and an instrument for children to learn benevolence upon' (B2:727-729). Moreover, Cat Jeoffry is characterised by a knowledge of the Christian doctrine and 'he knows that God is his Saviour' (B2:739), which – if taken literally – might sound blasphemous, and again the only possible justification for this is that, under the guise of a cat, the speaker ventures to present his own vision of a model worshipper of the Almighty. All of its most ordinary acts similarly aspire to perfection in that the superlatives are used throughout to describe Jeoffry's qualities:

For there is nothing sweeter than his peace when at rest.

For there is nothing brisker than his life when in motion (B2:740-741).

The fact that Jeoffry is perfect, and unblemished in its peculiarity, is also due to God's power, and not nature alone. The cat is seen as inspired by the Holy Ghost, with the sole purpose of its perfection to be maintained: 'For the divine spirit comes about his body to sustain it in compleat cat' (B2:744), the only flaw being, significantly, not the fact that it remains incapable of speech, but – of singing which Smart, throughout his writings, deemed extremely suitable for the expression of the pious devotion to the Supreme. In total, the cat is possessed of a number of cardinal virtues, for instance patience, obedience, purity and – last but not least – thankfulness. Therefore, if the poet, towards the end of this fragment, concentrates only on the gracefulness with which the cat moves about, swims and creeps, the reader can sense an abrupt, and disappointing, change in the attitude, which suddenly abandons all spiritual aspects, and focuses solely upon the tangible. And that, however set off by a declaration expressing the belief in the divine origin of all this idealised commotion, seems to lead directly to another important subject scrutinised in the *Jubilate*: it is constituted by a discussion of the position of the animal kingdom in the entire plan of creation.

To sum up, suffice it to say that at the very least, half of the poem (and definitely half of the longest Fragment B1) is devoted to both contemporary and legendary fauna, and this is what best represents the

proportion of significance attached to the animal sphere. Evidently, as the reader is given to understand, human as well as non-human beings are to be perceived on the basis of a certain equality: the latter are not to be dismissed or discarded by traditional human notions of superiority over other species, similarly worthy of God's attention and care as long as they can serve as models of Christian virtues. The Neoplatonic idea of the Chain of Being thus seems not to have been preserved.

All quotations come from:

Smart, C. (1954): *Jubilate Agno*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, re-edited from the manuscript with an introduction and notes by W. H. Bond.