

HERACLITUS

POEM BY OLIVER SOMERVILLE

From ARNA 1944

Ballad of Bums of Times Jaded:

For N.R. and J.S., in fiendship

I sing the whisky-palace'
ascetic debauchee,
a cigarette for phallus
and love for fallacy;

a paradox besotted
who's far too little had,
who's overripe and rotted
but still cannot go bad;

a trinity of triflers
in bondage to the old
moon, the evil mother
who thickens men's blood with cold

and on their tides of liquor
exerts her secret drag
(insidiously slicker
for sublimation's lag).

Phantasy tricks perverted
our efforts to escape
out of their feeble meaning
our other feats to ape,

and comprehending little
the pubwit we discussed,
we bound ourselves to brittle
supports that fall to dust.

Oh days of noisy poses,
preposterously free!
still adolescent noses,
wrinkled at gravity;

quips and cranks and dreary pranks,
stiff and strained bonmots,
dogmatic tilts at Left and Right,
mock-Freudian tally-hos!

At multitudes we girded
in glib garrulity,
feigning not to be herded
stereotypically.

I lost my love for taking
 the title anarchist,
 her solid alms forsaking
 for moonshine, myth and mist.

The prince of indecorum
 from learning loosed his grip,
 by-passing both the forum
 and tedious scholarship.

The parodist of parsons,
 belying his body's law;
 repressed with flash assertions
 all souls that body wore.

We stank of wondrous odours
 and knew not we were dead;
 lost chances' long-drawn oedas
 live-burial service read.

—PADEUIC.

MUSICAL AESTHETICS

An Approach to a Positive Theory

When we approach the problem of what we mean by *good* music, we are immediately presented with the question of musical "taste" or special ability or skill to judge pieces of music. And, of course it is obvious that people who have had a great deal to do with music, composers and performers, people who are well acquainted with a wide field of music, will be more likely to recognise a good piece of music when they hear it, and indeed will be more likely to know what they mean by a "good" piece of music, than people less familiar with music. Thus it is not surprising that musicians as a whole mostly seem to agree in their verdicts on various compositions; and this seems to be the case whether they actually formulate what they mean by "good" music or not.

But it simply amounts to avoiding investigation of aesthetics if we are going to allow the existence of a competent body of critics to take the place of a theory of what good music is. Indeed, it is possible, and doubtless frequently occurs, that musicians do not agree in their verdicts. But even if we admit that they could always agree, what are those who are not musicians to do when they hear a piece of music and have no competent musician present to guide their judgment? If they are to do nothing but sit back in perplexity and say, "I wonder whether that was good or not", then that is an admission of mental and aesthetic bankruptcy.

The fact is that, if a piece of music is good, then it is good whether there is a critic present to say so or not; and it is with what is good about the music that aesthetics is concerned, and not with the finding of a competent judge or the recognition of a body of competent critics.

Now, I pointed out in a previous article that only confusion can result if we are going to base our theory on the emotional effects that are aroused in the hearer, or on the view that music represents something else, and I showed that the only way in which it is possible to have a consistent and positive theory of musical aesthetics is by realising that musical beauty is a feature of the music itself and has nothing to do with the relations of effect or representation that the music may have with other things. Of course, the beauty of a piece of music, or rather a beautiful piece of music, may quite well appeal to us or have some

other relation that is not had by a piece of music that is not beautiful. But the beautiful music is beautiful whether it has the relation or not; and it may quite well not have the relation. And our problem is the discovery of what constitutes musical beauty or musical goodness, and of how we can know whether a piece of music has this quality or not.

The fact that very little in the way of positive theory has developed in musical aesthetics does not mean that such theory cannot be worked out, although it may mean that the working out is associated with more difficulties than the working out of a positive theory in some other spheres, say, literature. And it may also be the case that not all people are capable of appreciating musical beauty and that a considerable amount of training or specialised ability is required before musical criticism can be intelligently carried out. This, however, does not affect my contention that such a theory can be worked out, and indeed needs to be developed before sound musical criticism can be expected.

Now, the investigation of the nature of beauty in music may be made easier if we realise that it is connected with the investigation of beauty in other spheres. In other words, it is natural to expect that the conditions under which beauty is found will be the same in all the

arts. If this were not so, then we should have no one field of aesthetics (i.e., beauty) at all, but simply different fields, such as literary aesthetics (literary beauty), architectural aesthetics (architectural beauty) and so on, and there would be no reason at all for the common term "aesthetics". I will maintain at the outset, then, that there is a field of aesthetics and that musical aesthetics is simply a particular sphere in this general field; and also that beauty will be found under the same kinds of conditions in the various spheres of the aesthetic field.

Now it is generally recognised that for any work of art to be good it must have *unity*, it must be all about the same thing. In other words, it must have a *theme* and present the working out of that theme as a whole, without interruptions from other things that are unconnected with the theme. By "unity", of course, I do not mean anything of the nature of the "dramatic unities"; I mean simply a wholeness or "oneness" in the presentation of a theme.

The question, of course, arises of what we mean by the theme of a piece of music, and here I would say that, in the sense in which I am using the term, it cannot mean simply a few notes, a musical phrase. It means something more than that - it approaches what is more usually called "structure", or the whole plan of a piece of music. The so-called "theme" of the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (the "knock of fate") is really only a phrase. Certainly, it is repeated and worked out in a marvellous manner, but the theme of that movement is really, I should say, the whole scheme of the work, the plan, the structure, with its rises and falls, the various passages working with and after one another to form a complete whole.

It is this necessity for the various parts of a work of art to form a whole, to have unity, that is the sine qua non of a good work of art, and I should say that a piece of music in which we have the juxtaposition of passages of a widely differing character, and so a disconnection between the parts, is not good music. I should pass this judgment, for example, on "The Rio Grande", in which the various parts, in some places at least, do not "fit".

That a piece of music is divided up into parts does not, of ^ocourse, mean that it has not unity. What is essential is that the various parts have *balance*; in other words, they must, taken together make up a structure, pattern or theme which we can call a whole.

The character of a movement of a large work is to some extent given by its title, e.g. *Andante Maestoso*, *Allegro appassionata*, *Presto con fuoco*, and so on. Now the fact that a work contained movements of a character differing in tempo and so-called "mood" would not mean that these movements did not fit together in a structural whole. In fact, there is something peculiarly fitting in certain combinations of differing movements. Just as we get the "plot outline" of a novel, so we get something similar, working up to climaxes and balancing out to form a whole outline, in a series of movements of the type, say,

Allegro	Lento	Allegro
Andante	Allegro	Presto

or:

Allegretto	Andante	Scherzo	Presto
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Whether, then, in shorter pieces or in larger works made up of a number of movements, a definite structure or theme, and a balanced working out of that theme, are essential for a good musical composition. Now, although this is only a general way of putting things, I think there will be few who will not agree with me that scrappy, disconnected parts do not form a good musical whole, and that a definite structure with parts clearly balancing in a unified whole is essential to any good piece of music.

Now, it is necessary, if a positive theory of this type is to be developed, to be able to present it in greater detail than this. Granted unity of the parts is a complete whole, we have still to consider the parts themselves, and we have also to take account of more detailed matters connected with harmony and melody.

In the first place, we may say that, in a large work, the various movements would naturally have a complete structure of their own, apart from their relation to the whole structure, and the complete structure or theme of a movement would require unity in the same sense as the whole work.

This, of course, is scarcely adding anything to the general notion of unity in a work of art which I have presented above. The more important and the more difficult part of the detailed working out is the second, namely, the question of what is good harmony and what is good melody.

In the matter of harmony, we are presented at the outset with a complete theory, worked out and worked over long ago. I will assert, however, that the "fixed rules" of harmony and of harmonic progression are really not "fixed" at all; that there has been a continuous development of harmony over the past few centuries, a development which is still going on and which, in the hands of competent musicians, is likely to continue in its progress. It is idle to say that "modern" harmony is bad. We can say that it differs from classical harmony in certain respects, and that those differences are the results of new investigation and discoveries on the part of musicians. "Newly-discovered" is very different from "bad".

It is in the way in which modern harmony is used that we might discover aesthetic weaknesses. For example, the attempts of certain modern Russian composers to reproduce the noises of mechanical construction (cf. *Mossovlev's "Symphony of Machines"* and *Meytuss's "Dneipostroi" Suite*, representing the sounds involved in the construction of the *Dneipostroi dam*) and *Honneger's* imitation of an express train in "*Pacific 231*" (apart from the expressionism in it) are really weak in that they are not unified structures. They do not develop in a balanced manner; the parts do not fit. They are simply examples of the prostitution of modern harmony to imitation. As imitations, of course, they are far inferior

to the things they attempt to represent; as music, they are aesthetically weak and disconnected.

On the other hand, there are composers who have created excellent works of art developed wholly in terms of modern harmony, such as Stravinsky (pianoforte works – etudes, nocturnes, the “Bronze Chevalier”, etc., - the “Firebird” and some of the Chinese music), Bartok (Quartettes in A minor, so well rendered for us by the Budapest String Quartette), Smetana (Quartette in E minor, opus 116) and many others. Indeed, there is no doubt that beautiful chords and progressions of chords are being made out of “classical” dissonances.

Then there is the question of melody. And here I would simply say that, while it is impossible to lay down any rules for the construction of melodies or any rules by which they may be judged for aesthetic qualities, it certainly is possible to assert that *melodic invention* is essential to good music. Of course, it is really presumptuous to attempt to single out melody from other characteristics of music, and say that it requires variety and movement and is weakened by unchanged repetitions, for it is actually not separated in this way; it is an essential feature of a piece of music in the sense that an alteration in it amounts to an alteration in the whole piece. But it will readily be seen that music with unchanged repetition of melody is bad.

In this, I maintain, lies much of the aesthetic weakness of jazz music and many popular songs. Most of these pieces of music have a structural scheme of “a b a” or “a b a” with “a” totally unchanged in its repetition. Now repetition is not an aesthetic fault in itself, but to state a thing twice with *no change* whatever is definitely a fault. Much good music has frequent repetition of phrases or whole passages, but with a change that amounts to a development of the whole structure of the piece. This is seen, for example, in Chopin’s Nocturne in F sharp major, where the opening phrase is developed with frequent repetitions, each one different; in the changed settings of the opening phrase in the Fifth Symphony, or of the key phrase in Schumann’s Piano Concerto – a whole volume of examples could easily be quoted.

If we admit, then, that unchanged repetition of a melody is bad, it will be necessary to condemn the method of setting songs of two or three stanzas to the same melody. Whatever views we may hold on the fitness of music to words, we should at least expect some development of the music to “go with” new words.

The demand for variety of melodic invention, then, which would be better called the demand for “development” in melody, goes hand in hand with, and is inseparable from, the demand for structural development in the whole composition. Music lacking melodic invention will also lack structural development; in other words it will not have a worked out theme in the sense in which I have discussed this notion in the early part of this paper.

Structure or unity of theme, then, balance between the parts, harmony as an integral part of the structure instead of imitation of unmusical sounds, and melodic invention – these, broadly speaking, are the requirements of good music. This is still fairly general, but it at least gives a basis on which criticism can be worked out without being liable to the confusion necessarily involved in the relativist attitudes discussed in the first paper, and is a beginning for what we can call a *positive*, as opposed to a relativist, theory of musical aesthetics.

F.W. Fowler
Sydney Teachers College
1938

LOGIC AND HYPOTHETICALS (continued)

What I have just said conflicts with a further distinction made by Professor Ryle, that between arguments and explanations. ¹ We can ask, he maintains, whether "q because p" is true or false, but with "p therefore q" (or "p so q") we cannot ask this, we can only ask: Is it valid or invalid? In support of this, he points out that if we preface each with the phrase "Is it true that" only the first, "Is it true that q because p" makes sense.

Now the fact that we can ask the question "Is it true that..." in only the one case depends, of course, on a fact of grammar, namely that the "because" clause is a subordinate clause whereas the "therefore" clause is a coordinate clause. But I do not think we can derive a logical distinction from this difference. As a parallel case take these two sentences with a similar meaning: "It looked like rain, nevertheless, he did not take his umbrella"; "Although it looked like rain he did not take his umbrella. Here there is the same difference in grammar and the first sentence does not make sense if prefaced by "Is it true that" (though it does if "and this" is also placed before "nevertheless"). But it seems to me that this shows simply that in the first, but not in the second case, the speaker wants to give separate and equal emphasis to each clause. The position is similar with the two sentences (a) "It rained, therefore the match was cancelled" and (b) "The match was cancelled because it rained". We can ask whether (a) is true, only we have to do so in this form: "Is it true that it rained and that therefore the match was cancelled?" In asking this and in asking whether (b) is true we are concerned with precisely the same argument, for each conveys an enthymeme. We are asking whether the understood major premise and the asserted minor premise are true and whether these entail the conclusion. All that the grammatical difference reflects is a difference of emphasis. With (a) the two clauses are presented independently and what they say invites questioning in the same way. But with (b) the clause "The match was cancelled" is taken more for granted, and while it is open to question the grammatical form shows that the speaker does not expect it to be questioned; it may surprise him if anything in what he has said is questioned, but it will surprise him more if this clause is questioned.

In addition to this grammatical difference there is a further difference between "therefore" sentences and explanations (whether these are conveyed as above by (b) or by sentences grammatically closer to (a) e.g. "The match was cancelled; the reason was the rain"). Each conveys an argument, but with the explanation we take the conclusion to be true and are interested in premises which explain it, i.e., entail it; whereas with "therefore" sentences we usually feel sure about the premises and are interested in what they entail. (A further feature of "because" explanations, of course, is that they are commonly causal and so differ from non-causal explanations for which we more often use the word "since"). But this again is simply a difference in our interests.

Universal & Singular Propositions

I have pointed out that the substantial issue raised by saying that hypotheticals do not "state facts" is whether universal and singular propositions are logically different. Accordingly, in arguing that universal propositions are not inference licences but, like singular propositions, are premises in arguments, I have rejected one important account of the non-fact-stating function they are supposed to have. As a corollary of this I should also reject the view that universal and singular propositions have a different kind of truth or falsity.

If we follow ordinary usage it is, of course, plausible to speak of singular but not of universal sentences being used to "state facts" or "report occurrences". We like to reserve these expressions for what occurs at a specific place and time. But when some philosophers speak as if it is absurd to say that universal sentences are used to state facts they are misled by usage into greatly exaggerating the difference between universal and singular propositions. For the difference in usage for the most part reflects differences of social interest and importance, to make a contrast between "facts" and "theories" or between "data" and "interpretations". In the one case guarding against error is relatively easy, someone else can easily "check the facts"; in the other case there is the more important and more difficult question

¹ op. cit. "If', 'So' and 'Because'".

of confirming universal propositions. But these are relative differences. The genuine difference suggested by the contrast in terms of fact-stating is this: when we use singular sentences we are referring to a single person or thing, i.e., to something found only in one place at a given time; whereas, when we use universal sentences, if what we say is true we describe a situation spread over different places and times. We may, if we wish, call this a logical difference; but it does not follow that the two sorts of proposition also differ in the kind of truth or falsity they have. The view that they do differ in this way implies that universal propositions are in some way explicable in terms of singular propositions. But it seems to me clear that any attempt to account for them as collections of singular or "elementary" propositions is mistaken in principle. Attempts to do so have failed because the collection (of "pure particulars", "sense-data", "basic statements" etc.) could not be completed, and because the same problem broke out with each proposition in the collection: none was really elementary or certain in the required way. What this reveals is that universal and singular propositions are equally general and equally "irreducible". Each has to be considered as an independent proposition, and the sort of truth one has cannot be regarded as superior or inferior to or otherwise different in status from that of the other. So, as a counter-assertion to bring out these resemblances, we can say that universal as much as singular sentences are used to state facts or to refer to situations in space and time.

A further contrast sometimes made, in terms of "existential import", will not serve to distinguish universal from singular propositions. Briefly, in line with what has been pointed out in recent articles, I should argue that when we assert a universal proposition we do not assert as an extra piece of information that its subject exists. Nor is its existence something which may, or alternatively, may not be conveyed. With universal as much as with singular and particular sentences, when we do use a sentence to raise a real issue, the existence of its subject (and predicate) is something we assume not something we assert. In any given use of the sentence the assumption of this is a condition of its being intelligible. And in cases where the subject does not exist, to say that this is so does not falsify the proposition asserted; no proposition is asserted and the sentence has simply to be withdrawn.

"Contrary To Fact" Hypotheticals

Now this account applies also to the propositions conveyed by hypotheticals, including "contrary to fact" hypotheticals. Because hypotheticals may have unfulfilled antecedents it does not follow that they are sometimes genuinely used to speak about what does not exist; the propositions they convey also concern spatio-temporal situations and so have "existential import". As I have argued, variable hypotheticals like "If anything is a man it is mortal" convey universal propositions, the subjects of which exist. With hypotheticals which convey arguments there are first those which leave open the question whether their antecedents are fulfilled or unfulfilled, e.g., "If the weather (this year) is dry the crops will be poor". But here each of the propositions in the argument conveyed has a genuine subject, namely "All years in which the weather is dry" and "This year". In cases where this is not so, e.g., "If this figure is a round square it has a complicated geometry", we have what Mr Strawson has called a "spurious use", and so the apparent argument conveyed has no genuine major premise.

The position is similar when the antecedent is taken to be unfulfilled, as in "If the weather had been dry the crops would have been poor". This conveys the same argument as the earlier example, but with this difference in the attitude of the speaker: what he supposes as a premise in the argument, namely "This is a year with dry weather", is a proposition which he in fact knows to be false. In other words, use is made of the procedure of drawing consequences from premises known to be false; a procedure which in this case has the special role of drawing attention in an emphatic way to the universal proposition which is regarded as true. But this does not affect the logic of the case; we have an argument conveyed, and each proposition in it has a genuine subject. What are here clearly taken to be true, "The weather this year was not dry" and "The crops this year were not poor" are not part

1 P.F. Strawson, "On Referring", Mind, July 1950; H.L.A. Hart, "A Logician's Fairy Tale", Philosophical Review, April 1951.

of the argument, nor part of what is asserted. (Only as an answer to a question does a "had not" sentence seem to convey an argument with both premises definitely asserted. For example, if to "Why do you say someone has been in the room recently?" the reply is made, "If someone had not been in the room recently a cigarette would not still be burning", the latter may be taken as conveying an argument with the conclusion "Someone has been in the room recently".) A comparison with "because" sentences may bring this out. We tend to say (a) "The crops were poor because the weather was dry" and in a parallel way (b) "If the weather had been dry the crops would have been poor", depending on whether the antecedent was in fact fulfilled or unfulfilled. But the important difference is that in (a) "The weather was dry" is definitely asserted, whereas in (b) the parallel "The weather was not dry" is not asserted, nor understood to be asserted in the way in which a missing premise is understood; it is assumed in the way in which the existence of a universal subject is assumed, i.e., this assumption is a condition of the intelligible use of "had not" sentences. This is shown by the difference in denial. To say "But the weather was not dry" would falsify (a), whereas "But the weather was dry" would not count against (b) in the same way. The denial if true would lead the speaker to withdraw his statement because it was a misuse or absurd, in the way in which "He must have missed the ten o'clock train" is a misuse if there is no train at that time.

To be concluded

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A.J. Baker

Below is a copy of a photograph of Glasgow University in a British tourist journal in 1949 that was sent to us by one of our readers.



Glasgow University on Gilmore Hill

CAPITALISM

WE RULE YOU



WE FOOL YOU



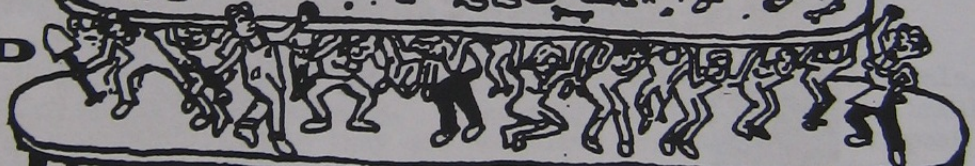
WE SHOOT YOU



WE CONSUME FOR YOU



WE FEED ALL



WE COP THE SHIT



WE GET

EXTINCT



From some Melbourne anarchists

The Tail of Aldis the Cat

(continued)

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EPILOGUE

CHAPTER 1

I first meet Aldis

Some time in early 1964, Vic and Diana had taken up residence in a most handsome villa at Whale Beach, in Sydney's salubrious northern suburbs. This villa was situated partly down a cliff, overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

They only had tenure of the villa for some 12 weeks, either because they were looking after it for somebody, or they only had enough rent for 12 weeks, or some other situation, but for whatever reason the tenure was limited. One Sunday, however, they threw a party, and although not everybody in the Push made the long journey to Whale Beach, some did, including me. I remember thinking what a great place it was. As well as the scenery, I was also introduced to this handsome orange kitten, Aldis, who was reputed to be genetically amazing; male orange cats were supposed to be somewhat rare. But I understand this was mistaken; it is female orange cats that are rare. Aldis was not a really small kitten, I estimated he was almost 10 or 12 weeks old then, almost a juvenile cat. I admired him, along with the view and thought no more about it.

I did not know his antecedents, but learned only much later that Vic and Diana were reputed to have acquired Aldis from Mrs Laws, mother of the radio announcer John, when they were hitchhiking in the high class northern suburbs and acquired both a lift and a cat.

Alas, the 12 weeks' tenure of the villa came to an end and Vic and Diana decided to go and live on Scotland Island in Pittwater, which in those days was still a place in pristine and virgin bush condition. But who knows what beasties, such as ticks and likewise, may have lurked in the bushes, and they deemed it unsuitable for Aldis and so made plans which led to the next chapter in Aldis's life.

CHAPTER 2

Aldis comes to Mosman

In the early part of May 1964, a time when the runways ran east west, and the planes took off generally over The Lakes Golf Course, and the populace wasn't quite aware of what was causing these roaring noises in the sky, I made plans to traverse the globe. I had the assistance of a small fund that had matured (it had been originally for my education, but after years of wrestling with technical colleges and night schools, I decided that what better way to further my education than a world trip). The International Air Travel Association had also decreed that slaves of any aeroplane works should be given a discount. As well as popularizing air travel, if the aeroplane workers are periodically sent aloft, they generally pay maximum attention to detail and workmanship, minimizing the number of aeroplanes that wrap themselves around mountains or trees. These days it is probably covered by the fringe benefit tax, but in those it was beyond the fringe.

At this time I lived at a residence at Mosman. This was a typical Federation house, and somewhat decaying. As in many places throughout the war and immediate post war era of housing shortages, various areas intended for gracious living, such as the breakfast room and veranda, had been converted to sleeping quarters. A number of persons were in residence, and two or three had cats. One cat had had kittens, and the total number of cats was six or seven.

One day Aldis was dumped upon us; with six or seven cats we'd hardly notice another. To be truthful, that was my outlook. With a world trip coming up, I was not paying much attention to cats, I had other things on my mind. As I recall, the animals were fed on a generic tinned pet food that was available at the time, it wasn't even called cat food, just pet food or something like that. It appeared to be a rubberized form of reject spam, and didn't look very appetizing, but with seven or eight cats the peer pressure ensured it was eaten up. I do recall that Aldis would muscle in and ensure he got his share.

And so it was, a couple of weeks later in late May I departed Australia.

CHAPTER 3

Aldis, the Indomitable, shows his fortitude

The happenings of my world trip are outside the scope of these chapters except to say (as narrated in *Heraclitus* 86) that Gunt had accompanied me to Hong Kong, where it could be said that a certain liberation of the mind set *vis a vis* Australian culture had occurred. Gunt was returning to Sydney, and I asked him to keep an eye on Parker, who was nominally in charge.

I do not know what happened during the weeks I was away, because obviously I was not there, but when I arrived back from traversing the planet, well, the circumstantial evidence was that weeks of partying, wassail and debauchery must have been the order of the day, and of the night too!

The house, which normally was a mess, had a mess upon a mess, and by this time, June and July being the wintry months in Australia, a substantial portion of the veranda had been demolished to keep the home fire burning, and the partying masses warm!

Parker had virtually locked himself in his room, and it took some shouting to get him out. He seemed more shakily than normal. He mumbled greetings.

I had arrived back with suitcases of clothing, samples, souvenirs, trinkets, etc to the maximum the wallet and allowance would allow. Dumping these in my room, I set about to restore a minimum order, i.e. clean things out of the way so you could move from room to room. When I decided to cease my labours, dusk was falling and I became aware of an unusual situation. Not a cat was to be seen! Before I had left, by late afternoon there would be various cats hooning around, waiting for tea time, but now there was not a single cat! Presumably the riotous behaviour had scared them all off and they had gone and found greener pastures elsewhere.

I was preparing to go to sleep later that night, and just after I turned off the lights I heard a plaintive miaow. I got up, looked out the window, and there was Aldis! Of all the cats, only Aldis had the fortitude to stick it out! My heart warmed to him, and I went and found a few titbits to feed him. I resolved to get him a really good feed the next day as a reward for his indomitable spirit.

The next day I duly went to the nearest pet food shop and bought the best kangaroo steak they had, and gave Aldis a hearty feed. This became Aldis's staple diet for the next couple of years and Aldis grew up to become a big strong robust ginger cat. Recently, a French made documentary movie on television on Kakadu National Park pointed out that in the past (horrors) kangaroos had been killed and fed as pet meat to dogs.

Well, I can assure you Aldis was no dog, but he certainly did his best to keep the macropod population at a manageable level in those days.

CHAPTER 4 Aldis gets imprisoned

Aldis continued to grow, and as he got bigger and stronger he also got somewhat bolder. On occasions I would leave the house and walk down the street to the first major cross street that led to the city and Aldis would follow along. I have said that he was no dog, but he was almost like a dog following me along.

"Go back Aldis!" I would say; Aldis would look at me and say "Miaow" and keep following me along. "Go back!" I would say, waving my hands, but Aldis would keep following me along. It wasn't till I reached the cross street that Aldis would turn around and trot back, a distance of almost five hundred yards or metres. I thought such boldness may eventually get him into trouble and indeed it did.

At this point I must recount an incident that happened some years earlier. At that time, the house had an artist in residence. I believe that the artist at that time made the fateful decision not to be an artist but to become a world famous art critic and writer, and he still is. This is not relevant to Aldis, though, for the story is that the artist, after sloshing the paint on canvases (actually as I recall they were mainly various flat shapes of masonite) went down to Balmoral beach to sunbake.

He stayed far too long in the sun, and being a fair skinned person got a touch of sunstroke. He staggered back to the house, and on entering the front gate collapsed on the lawn. (Actually the correct term would be 'grass', thick spongy unkempt kikuyu grass; it wasn't a finely manicured lawn.) While lying delirious on the grass he heard this voice, and he thought the person had come to assist him. Now next door was a block of four flats, separated from the house by a small fence and low shrubbery. A severe, balding fellow from one of the flats used to do most of the gardening. It was he who had come to the fence, looked upon the unfortunate artist lying helpless on the grass, but instead of offering assistance, shouted in the loudest voice for all the street to hear:

"HUH!! ONE OF THE BRATS IS DRUNK AGAIN!"

After hearing this story I had resolved to keep out of the way of this person. And so we return to Aldis.

One night Aldis did not turn up for his tea. He did not turn up the next day so I started to search the neighbourhood. Around the side of the house I shouted "Aldis yoo-hoo!" and heard a faint, plaintive miaow. I kept yelling and followed the returning cry. I climbed over the fence separating the house from the flats next door. Under the flats was an alcove in which the severe fellow kept his gardening implements and this alcove was enclosed by a wooden lattice door, locked with a big padlock. From behind the wooden lattice came the pitiful miaows, and a little paw poked through. It was Aldis. He had gotten himself trapped!

My first thought was how to relieve the suffering of Aldis's imprisonment. I went up to the shops and bought some prawns, these being the most tasty titbits I could think of that could be easily poked through the lattice. Later on I cut up meat into small pieces and kept feeding Aldis. All the while I kept thinking how to effect Aldis's release. I didn't know what flat the severe fellow lived in, and even if I did I had visions of him shouting at me

"HUH! ONE OF THE BRATS HAS LOST HIS CAT!"

I kept watch, and after a couple of days the fellow appeared in the front yard. Touching my forelock and in a most deferential manner I said "Excuse me sir, I think there is a cat trapped in your gardening store". "Oh", he said, "I guess we'd better let puss out". And so, Aldis was released from his imprisonment.

CHAPTER 5

Aldis moves to Paddington, and gets hissed at

After a couple of years Aldis had become like part of the furniture at Mosman, and for reasons that I won't go into, such as being closer to my place of employment, I took up an offer to share a residence in Paddington. I thus took whatever furniture would fit, and Aldis of course, and we moved to the inner Eastern Suburbs. The gentrification of the old working class suburb of Paddington had already begun, and the house, located appropriately enough in Paddington Street, was a three storey terrace refurbished with all mod cons. Due to the steep nature of the terrain, the second floor was on a level with the main street, while what appeared to be the lower floor basement area was level with the rear lane.

One feature of the old inner city residential environment is worth noting. In the days before flushing sewerage, and when people literally shat in buckets and tins, even though the colony was pretty rough the powers that were, the authorities, decreed that it was poor manners to remove the shit through the living and dining room. Accordingly it was beholden on the developers and councils of those days to provide rear lane access, or if it was not possible due to the lie of the land, at least a separate side alley, through which the shit could be carted. Thus we find in the inner suburbs a network of lanes and alleys, where now mainly the garbage resides, much to the comfort of the local cat population. Every cat has territory, and back alleys and lanes are much better definers of territory for cats than property fences.

Paddington Street had a very small backyard, with a carport type roof over a parking space, and the original tank was parked there; for a while it was used, even though it was out of rego, late at night to retrieve other tanks when they temporarily deceased themselves. Later tanks, if they went into a fully terminal stop mode, were left where they stood. These days this sort of behaviour is considered a bit irresponsible, but at that time it hadn't caught on that an old car was not a prized possession, but just a piece of junk.

Now I had recently purchased a modern household appliance, a juice extractor: a device that would grind any fruit or vegetable up, and extract the juice. One of the co-tenants, Nico, opined that as Paddington Street had been refurbished with tiled bathroom and epoxy surface on the floors, it would be an excellent place to experiment with home made beverages. Nico explained, with his vast chemical knowledge gained in the workplace, that in dank, dusty, dirty environments, miscellaneous beasties can sour the wine, but in the pristine refurbishment of Paddington Street it would not be as likely. Thus with the juice extractor grinding away for dear life, numerous interesting brews were started, from conventional beers to things like parsnip and carrot wine. I cannot remember the full range of experiments, but they were numerous. We did not make catnip wine, but there was one germane to our story.

This was "Old Blewy Uppy", so named because it had a tendency to blow up! A form of cider, for whatever reason, it was much more vigorous than other brews. All the brews would be fomented in a plastic garbage bin, then transferred to bottles, but only Old Blewy Uppy would maintain the foment. The bottles were generally stored under the kitchen sink.

Aldis would come in for his breakfast or dinner into the kitchen, and if Nico was there he would occasionally go "hsss" at Aldis, and Aldis would jump. Aldis became a bit wary of Nico but even when Nico wasn't there he would come into the kitchen and every so often a bottle of Old Blewy Uppy, where the bottle was stronger or the seal weaker, would not blow up but emit a loud "HSSS". Poor Aldis would jump, look mystified, and as soon as he'd eaten, would whiz outside. He took to living in the first tank in the yard.

Such was life in the early days of Paddington Street.

It was to this environment we moved, and the manner of moving becomes part of the story. Gunt and I had gone into partnership to purchase a vehicle from a workplace associate. We had both previously owned different varieties of *voitures*, European automobiles of immediate post war era, and although admired by the *cognoscenti* for their technical features, they nevertheless were a pain in the *derriere*, requiring constant attention, time and money to keep them mobile. The vehicle we purchased in partnership was an old pre-war American car, which we called the tank as in Yank tank (a Chevrolet, if I recall). To our delight we found it to be commodious, relatively comfortable, and it required virtually no attention except to put

petrol in it. Apart from tending to attract the police by its somewhat dilapidated appearance, which made us prefer to use the side streets rather than the main roads, we just chugged along in it. We had learnt from the prior owner where he had purchased it, out near the airport where a number of junkyards were piled high with old cars. The prosperity period had started and people were getting rid of their ancient autos to buy the gleaming monstrosities of the late fifties and early sixties. When the registration ran out there was no thought of fixing up the tank, we just went to the junkyard and bought another. Sometimes the newer tank was a bit cantankerous from the battery being a bit flat, and we would use the older tank to push start the newer tank until the battery became operational. We had a variety of amazing pre-war vehicles. They were used to ferry large numbers of people to parties and to places like the racecourse.

(I believe that after one trip to Rosehill racecourse, on the return journey a wrong turn was made and the tank did a circuit of the racecourse proper, with a load of screaming, shouting Push types, until they found an exit that took them back to the direction of Paddo.)

CHAPTER 6

Aldis loses!

I have mentioned that Paddington was being gentrified, but originally it had been a tough suburb, and at the time of the story, there were still some pretty tough cats around. Aldis would come in every now and then with the odd scratch or bite marks or even a tiny piece of ear missing, as he battled to establish his piece of territory. Apart from getting a feed, these are the main problems cats face in life. As Aldis was big and strong, there was little concern.

After about eighteen months at Paddo, it was noticeable he had a rather nasty wound on one front paw. The wound was dressed, and a bandage applied. However Aldis just tore it off, went out and continued fighting.

The wound kept getting nastier, so something had to be done.

I resolved to keep Aldis indoors until the wound healed, and then he could go out.

I seem to recall that at that time we had a washing machine in the bathroom, and the laundry was hardly used. The laundry had a small, high window with fixed glass louvres. I put Aldis in the laundry with a sandbox, food, and a cushion to sleep on. Aldis however was having none of this! No sooner had I closed the door to the laundry than Aldis somehow scrambled up to the small window and started to wriggle through the glass louvres, even though they were only one or two inches apart. I grabbed Aldis as he wriggled through, grabbed some newspapers and went back in the laundry.

I taped the newspapers over the window so it couldn't be seen, and locked Aldis in again. Aldis wasn't that stupid. He leapt up, tore the newspaper away from the window, and wriggled through again.

After this I had some discussions and the consensus was that the only thing to do was to remove the source of his libido, so it was off to the vet's, to fix the paw and desex him. He had had a good three years, about the average life span of an alley cat, amongst the traps of Mosman and Paddington, but for a longer life, it was necessary.

After a couple of weeks a desexed and healthy Aldis was reclaimed from the vet. He now spent more time indoors, and his behaviour seemed somewhat strange. Perhaps his behaviour had always been strange, we were just observing it more often.

At the lower floor of the house, abutting the kitchen, was what might be called the common room. It wasn't really a dining room or lounge, but it did contain a large table that I had brought from Mosman, which filled up a fair percentage of the somewhat small room. Around it people would gather to talk, drink or play cards. The old Push board game, as it was known. I recall on one occasion when George was both playing and marking exam papers at the same time. George certainly wasn't poker faced about it. If he had been dealt a reasonable hand, after looking at it he would reach over and mark an exam paper muttering something like "Oh well, give 'em the benefit of the doubt" and ticking the paper. If, on the other hand, he was dealt a poor hand, he would exclaim "Who has dealt these dreadful boards?!!!" and when play slowed while someone considered a bet, he would reach over for another exam

paper, produce a red pencil and shout "What sort of rubbish is this?!" and put big red crosses through the paper. Gunt, who was one of the players at the time, was so impressed he decided then and there to embark on an academic career.

The steps into the room were pretty steep, and just underneath where they intersected the floor, Aldis would squat, staring wild-eyed at these proceedings.

It was in this lower room at Paddington Street that the peculiarities of Aldis really came to the fore. As part of the house refurbishment, all the old fireplaces had been sealed up. The main mode of heating when winter finally came was the electric radiator. Aldis quickly discovered the benefit of sitting by it. However he would get up every so often and swish his tail, and in doing so swish it against the red-hot element; there would be a bit of a sizzle, and the smell of burning fur would permeate the air. He did not seem to be electrocuted, or even notice it. Just a small reflex action of the tail whipping back from the hot element. He did this quite a few times. How peculiar!

On another occasion I was reading the paper that was spread out on the big table. Aldis jumped up on the end of the table and commenced to pad towards me. He slowly walked across the spread-out paper and exactly on the article I was reading he sat down, so that I couldn't read it. I tried gently to push him off the spot, but the more I pushed, the more he pushed back against me. He was sitting at right angles to me, looking toward the end of the table, and as I pushed him he turned his head and looked at me with an expression of "Why are you pushing me? I'm sitting here. You move!". I physically had to pick him up to read the paper and at that he looked very peeved.

Another time, after a small party, I had crashed on the floor underneath the staircase, and remained somnolent for about two hours. I came to and discovered Aldis sitting on my stomach, staring straight at me. Other people told me Aldis jumped on me and assumed this position almost as soon as I passed out. What was going on in Aldis's mind is open to conjecture but I thought it was something like "He's the person who generally feeds me so when he comes to he'll have to notice me".

On the other hand, my stomach may just have been a warm, comfortable place to sit. Still, Aldis with his somewhat unusual behaviour patterns became quite a source of interest.

To be continued

Michael Baldwin

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A CORRECTION

In Steve Cooper's paper, "Vanguards And Backwaters", Heraclitus No. 86, the analyst mentioned was E.O. Haes (not Maes).

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