

RUN THE BASTARDS OVER!

The Australian Primal Directive

and

Cultural policy

(The answer to the question *What is Australian art?*)

1965

Discussion Paper by Ian Griffin and Jim Venturini
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INTRODUCTION

One day it will be realised that the only Australian painting is that by William Dobell of the immigrant Scottish philosopher professor John Anderson. Just like an Aboriginal rock painting this is, of course, a caricature. We have the Harbour Bridge, we have the Opera House, we have Mitchell Library, and we are badly in need of Luna Park. An Australian Cultural Policy (ACP) would mean a better standard of living, a decent morality, art in its place and a native strain in philosophy.

Let this painting stand as a warning to the cultural Empire that is Europe: your Sun will set and we shall close the books to portraiture. Indeed the paintings at Ayer's Rock teach us that the portrait is just a poor caricature.

Just as William Dobell painted Prof. John Anderson despite what he obviously represented, we have spent countless hours in Mitchell Library forming our own idea of European thought. We have come up with a Cultural Policy (ACP) palatable to most Australians (Note added 1982: unfortunately we have now become a threatened racial minority). If we are not to go the way of the last Tasmanian, we must fight against the habit of judging a man by the colour of his grandparents instead of by whether he is a good sport. This can be the only cultural policy possible today, as sterner measures have failed in the past.

What we have learnt from the example of Our Boys, who never returned! in the last two wars is that anywhere, even Europe, can be the field on which is played out acts of bravery and devotion. In their spirit we are prepared to weather the storm of resistance our ACP will initially provoke. If our native land, Australia itself, is to become the battlefield, we are armed!

Jim Venturini

INTRODUCTION

Why is it that Prof. Bertrand Russell never completed his projected study of social evolution: has he not heard of geometry? It would be easy to build a self evolving machine. Spencer's theorems lead us to know that this is applicable to Australia, in its entirety.

My doctoral dissertation *Tractatus Culturo-Geometricus* (1959) applied Euclid to "multicultural" Australia. The sheer ignorance of this part pseudo proposition was exposed once and for all. But it was my friend Jim Venturini (B Eng., Newcastle) who convinced me that an implementation of my structural designs was a necessity.

The folly of Prof. Einstein and his followers is to confuse geometry with a theory of location (of simple location, as Prof. Whitehead calls it) rather than a theory of transformational functions (an example is the function of "extermination" as so aptly suggested by my good friend Jim). If this is the best that the "rational mind" of Europe can produce, then how can they claim the rights of homo-rationalis? (I am a humanist).

Ian Griffin

1965. amended 1982

What Is An Australian?

What is Australian Culture?

Motto

To say that I am an Australian is a contradiction in terms.

CHAPTER ONE

The metaphysical force of Australian art is its movement from the reproduction to the original; the tragedy is that this is a contradiction in terms. In order to decide whether Australian art exists we might consult the original. This would not, however, raise the prior question of whether the original exists. All this points to the fundamental tenet that Australian art is not a special type requiring justification; it is a brute fact of Nature.

One could spend **years** in deciding whether an Australian artist is in pain or not? (Schmerz oder nicht?) Without realising that this is not an empirical question.

It is at the point of exhaustion of this line of thought that the typical Australian philosopher **sits** (sie setzen) without knowing. **Is** the size or shape of an Australian philosopher's response determined by the mere fact that it is Australian. It would not be irresponsible to say the size (yes), the shape (never) - however skeptical this may appear to some ears.

We do not wish to contemplate now - though it is our hope if not our ambition. We can only ask "What is it to be an Australian philosopher, irrespective of being known?" It is no coincidence that the temptation to say "I am an Australian" arises in **precisely** these circumstances, yet, as we have already indicated, this temptation coincides with the resistance of its own question. But we are not to say that these circumstances are exhausted by this question or the corresponding exclamation; could this be the **famous** analogy of the "beetle in the box"? This is no mere prejudice in favour of ordinary language but the simple recognition that an Australian philosopher's conclusion is not a discovery. It has, as they say, no "face value". Perhaps it is typically Australian to imagine this beetle as sitting. Is one mistaken in assuming that this beetle can speak?

Let this book **be**, then, in the steadfast refusal of this analogy. But if in turning our gaze we displace the **beetle** to the horizon, are we to blame? Or is it, as we have said already, a brute fact of Nature, in flight, as it were. The beetle does not sweep the horizon **with the purpose** of questioning the "brute fact". If one no longer relies on these "facts of Nature" the beetle flies.

Applying this to language, is one to say that Harold Holt's "swimming-out" is strictly identical to the media's forgetful ness. Indeed in the case of Azaria it is the very action of the news which is the true dingo. Our own experience leads us to believe that the media **always** play an active part in any disturbance.

CHAPTER TWO

Take the proposition
A₁ at time t₁ should X

We ask,

- 1 Who would **dare** make such a statement today?
- 2 What would the world **be** like if such statements were, strictu senso, unavoidable?
- 3 This book is this world - dare **we** write such a statement? It is no idle piece of "rhetoric" to say: Today, everybody should make such statements.
- 4 But it is from this **daringness** that we were driven eg to look at fairytales
- 5 It would be no exaggeration to say that the "moral" we have drawn from the very phenomenon of the fairytale is that this daringness is already there It is no heroic prize.
- 6 Let us take the primal Australian directive,
D1 "Run the Bastards over"
as against the **daring** of an ethical statement, we can only describe D1 as **thoughtless**, as only an Australian can be thoughtless. This is not the dreaded anti-intellectual Ocker syndrome, but a grammatical category.
- 7 ?
- 8 This thoughtlessness for the Australian turns indeed into **pain**.
- 9 It is no easy thing to be an Australian. From a totally different direction facing the **pain** of this thoughtlessness, we are moved to agree:
Life was not meant to be easy.
(As another fellow engineer said to us once, we are certainly not born to have a good time.)
- 10 Chapter Three, Thoughtlessness.
- 11 Fables, as unlike our European or our Oriental, are grasped by Australians (from anywhere).
- 12 Thus we Australians emphasise the "running over-ness" rather than the "bastards"
For running-over is the energy of fable itself, the will to story
- 13 The whole message of Gallipoli (and we do not distinguish the film and the real" war) is: Don't take things literally!
- 14 Pride and Vanity
The general form of the attempt to install a type of pride is that of the "punch line in search of a joke". For example: the Australian male.
- 15 Hypocrisy, as the space between this primal directive,
the will to story closes in to its diametric form:
"Australians **should** be X"
the energy of hypocrisy serves yet as a driving force of a different plane of existence.
- 16 The ethical space between the prime directive and its travesty in words can be left only by a bastard.
- 17 The directive turns back onto its annunciator, the bastard, whom in its annunciation, "must" be "runned over". Take Sir Robert Askin in the philosophic sense:- the zenith of hypocrisy that dares dissemble itself under its true form- that of the bastard.

- 18 The Australian hypocrite has explored all the states of existence between 0 & I. The primal directive assures us that this distinction (between 0 & I) is itself hypocritical. The **posing** of this distinction enacts the dissembling of the bastard under the form of the hypocrite.
- 19 The primal directive calls forth its servants, both living or yet to be born.
- 20 It is by the sheer force and vastness of its horizon that the beetle cannot imagine a queue **or even** its **otherwise** i.e. no European **could** experience it, if only for the reason that "experience" is a thoroughly European category. Yet, this is not to say that sitting is, ipso facto, the Australian counterpart for "experience".
- 21 This beetle destroys the face of European experience, and need we add, it has no primacy. The beetle warns itself, and thus can only be jealous of its **own horizon,**
BUT WHY **cannot** we tell, for its own sake, whether it is jealous or not?

CHAPTER THREE

"Look at the football not at the match "

The limitations of the beetle are not failures of it. The horizon is its friend.
This clarity of the beetle is threatened by the vanity of those happy Australians
who say:-

"Forget the beetle! Good and evil are simply countries one can visit."

This morality of location **turns** Australian into yet another Continent, with all the
well-known consequences.

What does it mean "Australia is metaphysically impossible"?

Yes! Australia **is** the desert". More seductively, the new biogmatism preaches: "the
beetle is the marsupial Christ. By leaving the central womb for the pouch, it has made
us free to be marginals."

But Anzac Day has taught us otherwise

There **are** no Australians.

Those who go **to** Europe die

Let running-over be our only form of negation

Dare we say that the beetle **is** the running over. No, we hold back. The beetle

Cancels every "is" in its running over.

The bastard speaks of a new location

But the prime directive has already struck.

Jim Venturini and Ian Griffin are pseudonyms for John Young and Terry Blake.

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