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### Prospects for regional philosophies in Australasia

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## PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL PHILOSOPHIES IN AUSTRALASIA

Richard Sylvan

Philosophy, especially academic philosophy but also folk philosophy, like other intellectual and higher cultural activity in Australasia, has long been dominated, indeed largely swamped, by Northern influences, initially from Europe, now increasingly from North America. Given the migration patterns, the cultural and other baggage imported, the ethnic composition of the resulting controlling populations, such a result was virtually inevitable. But it does not have to stay that way. Suitable policies, a good philosophy policy, could change things.

The thought of a regional philosophy, perhaps matching a regional culture, is hardly a new one. In 1923, a New Zealand correspondent to the newly-launched *Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy* mentioned the possibility of 'a new kind or temper of philosophy under these southern skies' which the Journal might foster.<sup>1</sup> The Journal has however hardly fulfilled such a role (or, for that matter, actively pursued its pronounced aim of reaching not merely professional philosophers but a wider Australasian community). And although some things have changed in Australia, laying a solid foundation for a new regionalism in philosophy, that possibility of a new temper of philosophy has hardly been realised. There is little in the way of a new kind and temper of philosophy under New Zealand skies, which the southern skies were intended to include: but few distinguishing features, 'no distinctively New Zealand characteristics, have shown up in New Zealand philosophy'.<sup>2</sup> New Zealand remains a substantial net importer of philosophy, and philosophers. The situation of colonial dominance that used to prevail in Australia, where virtually all chairs, and many other academic posts in philosophy, were filled by academics from the North, tends to persist in New Zealand, where no established chairs are occupied by locals.<sup>3</sup> Given the usual power and influence of professors in small departments, in courses designed, topics covered and considered and especially appointments made, the heavy Northern orientation of philosophy taught and researched in New Zealand is not surprising. The Northern control is perhaps most strikingly exhibited at the oldest of New Zealand universities, the University of Otago, where

<sup>1</sup> *Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy*, March 1923, p. 74. The question was taken up by the Editor in the same volume, p. 292ff; his discussion is considered below, especially in Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup> S. A. Grave, *A History of Philosophy in Australia*, Queensland University Press, 1984, p. 1. Page references are to the manuscript. The paper draws heavily on this history.

<sup>3</sup> This claim was correct at the time of presentation of the paper (August 1983). With the recent loss of a chair at Wellington, the claim requires qualification, but the pattern of domination persists.

the Philosophy Department has been substantially captured by a British School and looks increasingly like an offshoot of the University of London.<sup>4</sup> In any event, the overwhelming Anglo-American dominance of New Zealand philosophy—also a feature only in slightly lesser degree of Australian philosophy—can be confirmed by a content survey of the courses offered and research papers written at New Zealand universities.

Even when local people have been appointed to positions in Australasia, they have been brought up on a solid diet of Anglo-American material, and they have often been reformed or finished in the North as well. In particular, the requirements of Australasian universities in the major period of post-World War II expansion were conveniently seen to in the case of philosophy by the Oxford B.Phil. degree. Many departments of philosophy remain full of products of this cultural mill: indeed until the mid 70s candidates finished in Oxford were hard to beat out when they applied for positions, such was the (unwarranted) prestige of Oxford and the regrettable, but still continuing, 'cultural cringe'.

Nonetheless, despite the Northern dominance, significant changes have been occurring in the Antipodes, especially on the Australian philosophical scene (as will be indicated). It is worth asking whether Australian philosophy is moving towards the sort of change that occurred in USA more than 100 years ago when the Harvard Philosophy Department was brought (or bought) together, and its 'golden age' began.<sup>5</sup> American philosophy was never quite the same again, and became its own thing. There are now new forces operating which could help to move Australian philosophy in such a direction. There is the widespread emergence, particularly in alternative culture, of a new regionalism,<sup>6</sup> which applies to cultural and ideological choice along with other local choices; and in stark contrast, there is the centralised fashioning of national science and technology policies, which not only provides a model for reflection in regional philosophy policy but also directly bears on parts of the philosophy of science. Unfortunately, as will soon appear, there are also some serious obstacles to regional philosophies and to the very idea of a regional philosophy.

USA, long an importer of culture from Europe, has recently become a net exporter of culture, certainly of lower culture, but evidently also of components of higher culture such as philosophy (witness the American turn philosophical output from Oxford has taken). Are there reasons why Australasia, if not following suit, should not achieve a better cultural balance of payments, especially in philosophy? Yes, there are reasons. In the first place, the change in the cultural position of the USA went with, and perhaps in part derived from, vast changes in economic power relations. If economic

<sup>4</sup> In the 1983 Commonwealth University Handbook listing, 6 of the 8 members of the Department held their main degree, Ph.D., from London, and one of the remainder from Exeter. Only one member of the Department, soon to retire, falls outside the nexus.

<sup>5</sup> See B. Kuklick, *The Rise of American Philosophy; Cambridge, Massachusetts 1860-1930*, Yale University Press, 1977, Parts 2 and 3.

<sup>6</sup> On this bio-regionalism, see especially, *Fourth World News*, Vol. 1, 1983, and K. Sale, *Human Scale*, Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, New York, 1980.

dominance entails cultural dominance, there is little prospect for most of Australasia's culture, since there is no serious prospect that Australasia will ever emulate or attain American economic eminence (at least not without nuclear destruction of the North, and disruption of the entire flow of commodities, cultural and other). Secondly, as observed, Antipodean universities not only contain a large component of Northern academics, increasingly of Americans, they also include a substantial additional contingent of fellow-travellers, whose research and teaching is bent to Northern concerns. It is unlikely that this influential segment, especially the former group, will (become so locally acclimatised as to) give up its Northern cultural commitments, apart from the isolated person. Nor should they. As long as Antipodeans do not drastically alter their cultural priorities, they are in a bind situation; for it can be persuasively argued that they would be better off, as far as quality and product goes, stocking their universities with American teaching components and researching American-oriented concerns.

One simple *numerical argument* that Antipodean universities would be better off with Americans in the main, takes the following lines: The (higher degree) graduates of Australasian and American universities are not significantly culturally distinguished, at least in subjects such as philosophy. Consider now the number of quality academics produced per number of higher degree Austroamerican graduates; say there is 1 per every  $n$  graduates. The (great) preponderance of graduates will be Americans, just by virtue of their vastly greater population and their more extensive system of university education.<sup>7</sup> So also then, just by ratio considerations, the great preponderance of quality academics drawn from an Austroamerican base will be American, as will the upper percentiles among those quality products. Clearly, Antipodeans, were they interested in quality, would be appointing more Americans to their universities. Such an argument does not work to show that, for similar reasons, American universities should be full of Chinese or Indian professors, for two reasons; first there are significant cultural differences between Asians and Americans, especially in disciplines such as philosophy; and secondly, their university systems do not deliver such great quotas of higher degree or high quality graduates, at least in philosophy.

The conclusion of the numerical argument will not be a popular one. The anti-Americanism felt in portions of the Australasian community extends into the universities; and recently there has been increasing insistence, especially by the now aging younger Turks that university positions should be reserved for locals. This at the same time as these Turks often preach of

<sup>7</sup> The ratio of U.S. philosophy graduates with doctorates as compared with Australian exceeded 30 to 1 in each of the years 1974 to 1980. In 1977 it was 110 to 1. New Zealand compares even less favourably with U.S. output. For details see *Digest of Education Statistics* (U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1976, 1977-78, 1979, 1980, 1981, and 1982); *University Statistics*, (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980); *Education Statistics of New Zealand*, (N.Z. Department of Education, Wellington, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980).

an international community of scholars, presumably then with 'free' interchange, etc. They cannot have it all ways.<sup>8</sup>

So long as the present free-flow interchange of ideas and personnel continues, the centre will dominate the periphery culturally as well as economically; they will have more than us, and jobs here should go by and large to them if it is (centrally-determined) quality in this high cultural business that we seek, as we mostly claim.

Now it is widely enough recognised, lower-down heirarchical ladders anyway, that there is something drastically wrong with these sorts of arguments. For we are not flooded with high-quality Northerners who would regularly drive out local contenders for positions, if we only preferred the Northerners when they were quite visibly superior: rather we are inundated by Americans with inflated references, who have the messages of the centre better than locals do, and remote Northern fields tend to look greener to higher-echelon (often Northern biased) appointment committees than dusty locals whose shortcomings are known better. As is beginning to be recognised too, the Northern centres tend to retain their higher-quality products, and allow them to be exiled to the periphery only if they somehow fall foul of the system (e.g. of the academic system for political or personal reasons). Too often the Northern centres have disposed of their intellectually inferior products in the periphery.

All this makes the position look doubly bad. We ought, it seems, to be appointing Northerners, especially Americans, even if they are overrated in their references, and usually not out of the top drawer, in order to maximize quality. And yet doing so does not achieve the desired quality result, and breeds discontent elsewhere, especially among the aging Turks.

Fortunately there is a way out from this awkward situation and these shaky arguments; and that is the way of regionalism. *We do our own things*; and obtain sufficient cultural distance,<sup>9</sup> so that they are not simply substitutable for us. Then the shaky numerical argument does fall down. But before we elaborate the emerging proposal there are other influential arguments to dispose of, and the disposal bears on the proposal.

There is, to begin with, the *argument for excellence*, elements of which

<sup>8</sup> A reverse flow of the better orthodox academics from Australasia to America should also be expected (outside times of university contraction). According to assumptions of this *brain drain argument*, which is based on labour market considerations, appointment and lifestyle conditions for academics are generally better in USA than Australia and much better than those in economically-depressed New Zealand (e.g. higher salaries, better standard of living, superior research conditions, etc.). So, other things being equal, able academics from the Antipodes will relocate in USA as academic positions become available. The argument also helps explain why Antipodean universities cannot expect, for the most part, to attract really top-drawer Northerners for very long.

Of course, economically irrelevant factors do induce interference; e.g. perverse commitments to odd-ball Antipodean intellectual enterprises which reduce market acceptability, or pre-industrial ties to place or persons or lifestyle which unduly restrict mobility (such as local roots, family attachments, even distaste for American urban lifestyles).

<sup>9</sup> This is easier in the cultural than the technological sphere. However it is also possible technologically: (stronger) theses of technological determinism, and so of cultural determinism, are false. We can choose different options, technologically, as well as culturally.

have so far been conceded: that there is an objective commodity, *quality* or *excellence*, which we all more or less agree about, which is proportionately more abundant in the North, and which is what academic institutions crave and seek and what appointments aim to capture, indeed maximize. That at least is the type of myth most of us have encountered; and many of us now know it is a myth, in fact a dangerous myth. Most places don't even try to make appointments that way, any more than organisations aim just to maximize profit, but rather seek to satisfice on a mix of factors, of which assessed quality is only one, and not often the highest ranking one. Ability to fit into some sort of program, teaching or research, is another, and commonly more important factor; and there is no good reason why such a program should not sometimes be a regionally oriented one. So given prevailing practices, the argument from excellence does not exclude regional philosophy programs. And, in any event, there are enough local candidates of sufficient worth to proceed with regional programs without clearcut sacrifice of excellence. Local enterprise need entail no loss of excellence, and could well increase it.

The deeper-cutting objection is that there is something seriously amiss with the idea of objective excellence, and with the connected notion of objective importance; that these notions are open to the same sorts of criticism as notions of objective values more generally, that they have *bracketed out* the contextual-relativisation component of valuing: the framework or viewpoint to which these values relate.<sup>10</sup> While those operating within a rather narrow intellectual paradigm, such as Oxbridge ordinary language philosophy or Sydney materialism say, can bracket out the viewpoint, since it is incorporated in the operational paradigm, and so arrive at seemingly objective quality judgements, the judgements are not preserved (e.g. in truth value) when transposed to other frameworks, e.g. idealistic or Marxist viewpoints. Consider, for comparison, the judgements as to the quality or worth of a forest, made variously by a deep ecologist, an industrial forester, and a recreational officer. Compare judgements as to the quality of a holistically-inclined environmental philosopher, by ordinary language, Marxist, and Californian environmental philosophers. There are even philosophers who pretend that such environmental work cannot be judged, seemingly because it is not done by members of the main philosophical peer group at Harvard and like institutions.

As this begins to reveal, judgements of quality are not independent of judgements of the importance of work done or problems tackled. But the importance of problems and issues is highly paradigm dependent. For example, problems such as those of *quantifying-in* and of *possible worlds* and of *de re thought*, which assume immense importance for fashionable

<sup>10</sup> What follows also begins to bring out what is omitted in a main theme of R. S. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motor Cycle Maintenance*, Bodley Head, London, 1974. Note that defusing the notion of objective excellence does not lead to subjectivism. To avoid the customary false dichotomy, compare the notion of validity (usually ceded to themselves these days by classical logicians) with that of quality.

referential theories within the mainstream empiricist paradigm, vanish to relative insignificance outside that restricted viewpoint. Now observe that most judgements as to what are the *important* problems and what constitutes important work – matters helping determine quality – are shipped down from the North.<sup>11</sup> Their importance is relative to their paradigmatic placement, and the paradigms concerned are exported to the Antipodes through the main channels already indicated. We are free to reject these paradigms and select alternatives, and there are, it can be argued, good reasons to do just that, much as there are good reasons to choose different energy technology (or different military technology) from that generally favoured in the North which the North is eager to export southwards.

Similar points apply against the *cosmopolitan/international argument* which might alternatively be called the Peter Stuyvesant International argument, that sophisticated people everywhere smoke this superior product mass-produced and -marketed from Holland; cigarette-sophistication is cosmopolitan. The argument is based on the assumption that philosophy is a 'cosmopolitan subject', that it is not the sort of enterprise for which place and people are significant as they are for poetry or the novel.<sup>12</sup> The assumption has only to be presented to be questioned. It takes for granted, for one important thing, that philosophy is a finished product of a certain sort (a propositional theory), not a process of production also. But in the process of production the place and people involved (e.g. in discussion) are material. And if the product is like a work of art, like a piece of literature, and not just theorems and arguments assembled in an internationally-approved format,<sup>13</sup> then again the historical setting matters, since philosophy, no more than literature, does not emerge in a vacuum. Plato's philosophy could not have emerged in ancient Australia, and if cribbed in mid 20th century Oxford would surely have been marked down or rejected.<sup>14</sup>

It is important not to be sidetracked into issues – resembling problems in aesthetics – that do not need to be contested, such as whether and to what extent sets of themes and arguments produced in one place and setting could have been produced in another. A nonnuclear technology of some sort could be adopted in Europe but apparently will not be, whereas there is reasonable prospect that New Zealand, in contrast with Australia, will pursue a nonnuclear energy strategy. It is *the doing*, and not what could be done, that

<sup>11</sup> Often enough fashionability is mistaken for importance. As to the unsatisfactory way in which such 'important' problems are commonly set, see F. Dyson, 'Unfashionable pursuits', *The Mathematical Intelligencer* 5 (1983) 47-54.

<sup>12</sup> Grave, *op. cit.*, p. 2: the term 'cosmopolitan subject' used there comes from Donegan. As to the significance of place and people for literature, see further C. Partridge, *The Making of New Cultures*, Editions Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1982.

<sup>13</sup> Like a paper in the biological sciences. But here again technique and methodology, which may both be regional, are crucially important.

<sup>14</sup> Related points can be made using less extreme examples, e.g. concerning modern American work. Consider, for instance such text as W. V. Quine's *Word and Object*, (Wiley, New York, 1960) or R. Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (Basic Books, New York, 1974). The assumptions taken for granted, the arguments involved, etc., are especially American: it is not just the style. The *acceptability* of arguments and positions is dependent on place and received paradigm.



*matters* here. Dialethic logic, which invalidates the technique and methodology of much Anglo-American philosophy, could perhaps be done in the North (though there would be substantial cultural resistance): it is not being done there, and is not likely to be done in the Anglo-American sphere.<sup>15</sup> To this extent, Antipodeans can choose their own distinctive technology and logical techniques, do their own distinctive thing. The international/cosmopolitan argument, stated in a form that would be telling, fails.

Of course it can be argued, it is being argued, that Antipodeans don't need to be, or even oughtn't to be pursuing their own energy or logic policies and apparatus. But meeting these considerations takes us to a whole new set of issues concerning the merit of various policies and programs, the point of diversity, etc. — far beyond the cosmopolitan argument. The new arguments, to which we shall return, are not a lot more convincing however than comparable arguments concerning cooking: that we don't need to be or oughtn't to be devising our own cuisine or wine styles. British, or at least cosmopolitan, cooking is adequate: we should stick to that and buy it off the shelf from the North, ideally importing the cooks also. Do we have good reasons to think that British philosophy is better, these days, than British cooking?

Antipodeans are free, in principle then, to pursue their own paradigms; and to do so they will by and large want to, and mostly have to, appoint their own people, people they have educated — not saboteurs or people who have (had) to be re-educated, from elsewhere, in particular from the North. But will the intellectual paradigms pursued tie with cultural paradigms, with distinctive features of the local culture? In a loose way, at least, they may link, though works of philosophy will not usually tie in with the culture in the integral fashion that novels (as distinct from more technical works) sometimes do. Indeed, to a limited extent, they do already link. Grave considers certain cultural features, not restricted to particular philosophical programs, that help mark philosophy in Australia as 'an Australian product' — 'unimportant though this is compared with what matters in philosophy' he hastens to add. But style, acceptability, truth, do matter, and are not independent — or independent so far as their perception goes in the case of truth and correctness<sup>16</sup> — from underlying broad theory or received paradigm.

However the marks which can be extracted from Grave, significant though they are, do not serve to distinguish the Australian product, the first two

<sup>15</sup> Much as communist anarchism, a live possibility for communes and perhaps communities in Australia, is culturally excluded in North America, owing to the extreme possessive individualism of that culture.

On dialethic logic, see G. Priest and R. Routley, *On Paraconsistency*, Research Papers in Logic, #13, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, 1983.

<sup>16</sup> Nothing need be conceded to strong cultural relativity themes, though they would support the case. It is enough that our theories remain radically incomplete and that there can accordingly be rival theories as to what is true. Similarly, however philosophy is conceived — as the search for truth, explanation, understanding and wisdom (*all* of these and more, really), or as, more vaguely, inquiry of a certain sort — there can be, and will be, competing accounts; so a pluralistic theory is inevitable in giving a fuller view.

being features Australian philosophy exhibits in lesser degree than the more adventurous and polemical philosophy of Greek antiquity. The first, described by Passmore as 'most typical of Australian philosophy', is a 'diversity of approach and readiness to put forward an unconventional or unfashionable point of view',<sup>17</sup> something more typical of ancient philosophy than Australian philosophy, which (with some notable exceptions) exhibits an austere uniformity reflecting that often attributed to the land itself. What may be nearer true is that compared with other recent 'Oxbridge colonies', such as Canada, South Africa, and provincial England, Australian philosophy is adventurous and diverse. The second, and more surprising, mark is 'the manifested character' of Australian philosophy, 'the most notable example . . . being . . . the line-up between Wittgensteinian Melbourne and Andersonian Sydney, if it was not the Andersonian philosophy itself' (p. 2). This example is far from isolated: others among them concern the fervour generated by 'Australian materialism', the extraordinary political engagement by some philosophy departments (both discussed by Grave), and the growing confrontation concerning the relevant/paraconsistent program, with the local ('adversarial') style leading to sharp criticism by Americans. Connected with these first two marks are further characteristics of much Australian philosophy,<sup>18</sup> as of much 18th century Scottish philosophy and turn-of-this-century Cambridge philosophy: namely directness, unwillingness to muffle points, surface clarity, and, some would unkindly add (in the hope perhaps of locating a genuine difference), bluntness, subtlety and crudity.

The third and the fourth marks are very different, but again hardly distinguishing features of Australian philosophy as Grave, who wouldn't call them marks at all, in effect observes. The third, which applies well to other intellectual areas, is the contrast of the Australian reputation in philosophy, indeed of Australia as a 'center of philosophical inquiry', with the anti-intellectual national stereotype of Australians as a people 'devoted to physical achievement rather than to intellectual subtlety'. The fourth mark is especially a feature of Anglo-American philosophy; namely the isolation of academic philosophy in Australasia from, and its general indifference or even hostility to, the sort of imported philosophy (e.g. that of Nietzsche and the existentialists) generating interest in literary and arts circles.

The failure of such marks to entirely separate out Australian philosophy does not matter. For one thing, the Australian produce is sufficiently separated by its research projects. For another, regionalism should not be confused with nationalism, nor more regional positions such as Sydneyside materialism or Wellington modalism with national philosophies. Nationalism in philosophy, as in most other things, is an undesirable trait, not to be

<sup>17</sup> Both preceding quotations, while included as such in Grave's Introduction, are from J. Passmore, 'Philosophy', in *The Pattern of Australian Culture* (ed. A. L. McLeod), Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y., 1963, pp. 131-168. The same annotation also applies to the third mark.

<sup>18</sup> Though again for the most part that influenced by Sydney rather than that originating in Melbourne. To some extent this reflects the different historical influences shaping Sydney and Melbourne philosophy: roughly, Scottish as opposed to Continental antecedents.

encouraged; and the new regionalism is commonly linked, in other cultural things, with the breakdown of nations and contraction of state power.<sup>19</sup>

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To get back to where we were: the emerging proposal is this, that we start – or better much increase – doing our own distinctive things, *and* that we team up to do so. In fact there are several suggestions that begin to emerge, concerning research and teaching, publications and appointments, study leave and sponsored visitors. These are not just that we do our own selection of topics and people, and style and methods, decide our own priorities, instead of having these foisted upon us – not just, that is, that we play our own games (whether invented here or taken over from the North) and not theirs, Rules and Rugby instead of Gridiron and Basketball – but that we abandon the individual competitive model of cultural achievement, sold to us and fostered by the North, in favour of a group cooperative approach (elements of which are already modelled in Antipodean social clubs).

The thoughts here are simple and familiar. On the one side is the ditch-digging example: it is well-known that two people cooperating can dig a ditch more rapidly and enjoyably than two people working on the ditch separately. Cooperative work tends to pay off – in philosophy or elsewhere – in terms of output, quality, and enjoyment in the doing. On the other side, experience shows that we in the periphery cannot individually compete very successfully with the centre on achievements in their programs. There are several reasons for this. One is the communication situation. Despite the highly competitive predominantly individualistic nature of Amercian academic enterprise,<sup>20</sup> much in the attainment of results depends upon rapid verbal communication and access to unpublished material. For, despite the individualism myth, work is jointly based, and builds on the work of many; when the time is ripe for some idea or result, several clever people will be able to hit on it. Then again communications are important in obtaining rapid publication of the idea or result, and the assignment of credit for it. Here again people at the periphery tend to lose out. There is a mix of reasons: Again there are nationalistic considerations (e.g. Poles tend to promote Polish results, Russians will cite a Russian who achieves a result at about the same time as an outsider). There is the fact that much is conveyed verbally and through face-to-face seminars so that local results will be conveyed. There is the fact of limited reading, and that people at the centre tend to concentrate when they read on material

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., Sale, *op. cit.*, and L. Kohr, *The Breakdown of Nations*, RKP, London, 1957.

The Editor of the new 1923 AJPP did however take seriously the notion of National Philosophy, of (what must have surprised some New Zealand readers) an Australian Philosophy; some of the issues there raised (p. 292ff) are addressed in the Appendix.

<sup>20</sup> Reflecting other features of the culture and enterprise of the centre which are not so deeply embedded in Australasia: see further R. Sylvan, 'Culture, philosophy, and approaches to the natural environment – an Australian perspective', in *The Environment, Ethics and Ecology* (ed. D. Bennett), The Faculties, Australian National University, 1985, and also 'Culture and the roots of social and political divergence, with emphasis on the Australian/American contrast', typescript, Canberra, 1983; both referred to subsequently as 'Culture'.

from the centre by central people, so that published items and results from the periphery will often not be noticed, and may well lose out to central competitors even if they achieve central publication. There is also the fact that people at the centre tend to receive, merit for merit, more publication and communication opportunities than people towards the periphery. Here economic factors do begin to enter; consider the size and distribution of the academic market (there are, e.g., a *great* many more academic philosophers in North America than in the whole rest of the world), control of publishing outlets and journals (with few exceptions all Northern), etc. However economic power does not, and need not, determine culture—we can shut off the Northern philosophical propaganda in much the way we shut off our television sets if we really want to. And we can stop being impressed by those philosophical middle-men who make a living by importing the Northern stuff.

So what do we do? We adapt to the cultural-philosophical level, several of those things, that have been suggested in the newer regionalism. We aim at some regional awakening and local self-reliance. We do not remain slavish importers and imitators of, and local commentators on and peddlars of, doctrines and positions from the North. For example, we don't spend our academic lives trying to tease out what Davidson or Dummett or Kripke meant by this or that in the hope that some pale Northern light will perhaps filter through. To be sure, I am not suggesting that we emulate the appalling ignorance of people from the North who visit the Antipodes and know little or nothing about what has been done or is being done here;<sup>21</sup> so that we have eminent visitors, their bags heavy with cultural accoutrements, trekking through the Australian National University (now the main centre for investigation of relevant logics) and informing us that, or relying crucially on the assumption that, a contradiction entails every proposition. One reason that these Northerners often know little or nothing about distinctive positions and advances in the Antipodes is the prevailing assumption of the inferiority of cultural and intellectual life in these former southern colonies; another is the narrow (predominantly local) and limited reading undertaken by Northern luminaries.

But, despite having been given sufficient cause, we shouldn't cut ourselves off from Northern paradigms and influences (we could hardly manage to anyway: propaganda is different). We can reasonably use what we need from these continuing traditions: so we should stay informed of, but not imitators of, or part of, *their* enterprises. In any case, regional cultures are rooted in older Northern traditions, just as the people are largely European stock. So far from cutting loose from these traditions and starting afresh from nowhere, these older (and likely minority) traditions, and the local variations that have already appeared, are what we want to develop and perhaps mutate, as again with wine styles.

Part of the proposal is then that we increasingly do our own local things,

<sup>21</sup> Regrettably, the ignorance extends to many locals. In particular, those infected with Sydney materialism appear remarkably ill-informed as to basic features of other Australasian programs.

encourage and develop our own research programs, and so shape newer Antipodean paradigms, rather than working with pale reflections of Northern paradigms. It is not as if we have to build from nothing, to do – what is *very* difficult – entirely original work, to try to create cultural components. For there are research programs already initiated, which have the very great advantage of being grounded in features of the larger culture.<sup>22</sup> Nor, fortunately, do we need to make the story up – though helping to *shape* the future is part of what the proposal is about. Much of the story, for Australia – New Zealand is a different and more difficult proposition – is already indicated in Grave's survey of Australian philosophy. All one really has to do is to bring out programs he has already indicated and provide some elaboration and commentary. To pull the investigation down to a more concrete level, I shall sketch some more prominent cooperative programs – by *no* means the only programs – and remark on some relevant features of them.

The longest running and best known program is, without much doubt, that of *Australian naturalism*, and which aims to see the natural world, and *everything* else, as suitably encompassed within the framework of the world of (physical) science. The program is generally traced back to Anderson's empiricist metaphysics,<sup>23</sup> and is now best exhibited in Armstrong's work. It contains as a major subprogram *Sydney materialism*, a program initiated in Adelaide which subsequently died out there. The latter program has included such famous components as the mental-material contingent identity theme and central state materialism, and nowadays it takes in, more derivatively, a version of functionalism. Faced like all physicalisms with conspicuous failures in its reduction plans, it now incorporates a 'scientifically' trimmed theory of universals, and an account of natural laws as relations of universals, both components of the developing Sydney realism. Parts of the naturalism program, especially materialism and central state reductionism and the unified science ideal, have had counterparts in the North, but the program has, for the most part, retained its distinctively Australian character – despite export efforts, it never caught on in New Zealand. The program fits smoothly, moreover, into Australian culture. It is similarly down-to-earth, and earthy, so far as philosophy can be, without the fancy ideas or effete idealism of European philosophy or the spirituality and suppressed puritanism with which much of North American thinking simmers (including nowadays, pragmatism). And yet it does not shrink from explicit metaphysical commitments, and though it is basically empiricist, it is not positivistic (rejecting a verification principle, in particular).

It is a city based program, broadcast mainly from the University of Sydney to other metropolitan universities; but the program does extend outside the universities a bit (a tiny bit) to the larger metropolitan culture. As in North

<sup>22</sup> See Culture, *op. cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Anderson's metaphysics was however far more opposed to reductions than what has succeeded it. For an account of Anderson's philosophy, and a history and account of Australian naturalism and materialism, see especially Grave, *op. cit.*

America, so in Australasia, little professional philosophy impinges on the broader community,<sup>24</sup> or even on the wider academic community, work by Russell, Popper and Kuhn being exceptional. (To turn this around in Australasia would be quite an achievement, one worth working for.) The naturalism program used to stretch through to Adelaide; it now reaches to Perth, and has outliers in Canberra, as well as a core of opposition there. Apart from notable exceptions, the program has never had the same hold, or more than a rather precarious hold, in Melbourne:<sup>25</sup> nor, more surprisingly, has it had heavyweight criticism from there (or indeed much external criticism from elsewhere), the old confrontation of major city philosophies having died out. Melbourne philosophy is more historically oriented and more religion stricken than Sydney; Melbourne philosophy, much more than Sydney, has been dominated by a procession of Northern fashions: earlier idealism and Continental philosophy; more recently, Wittgenstein, ordinary language philosophy; then, a remarkable turnabout, Quine, Davidson and extensional reduction; now perhaps Lewis, Kripke and Dummett?

The one program that reaches beyond the confines of the cities in Australia—which is after all a metropolitan dominated culture, the vast land always being *the other*—is *Australian environmentalism*, a rather diffuse program, which has connections with the Colleges of Advanced Education in the country towns and the communes on the North Coast. So far the program is as much distinguished by what it is not as what it is. Serious and deeper environmental positions are a feature of the New World, the Old World, (and Europe specifically) having transformed most of its natural environment and having little wild untouched country left, and little sensitivity accordingly to issues such as those of wilderness. The main environmental issues in Europe tend to concern the built and human-transformed environment, issues that admit shallow approaches (and encourage technofix solutions). And European superficiality continues to dominate much of the New World environmentalism outside North America. North American environmentalism differs significantly however from Antipodean environmentalism, most obviously in the religious-spiritual component of the former, but in several other respects as well (see further Culture).

More positively, there are three strands to Australian environmentalism: Firstly, there is an extended utilitarianism, differing little in theory from Bentham's enlarged position, which insists upon counting in the utilities of

<sup>24</sup> In Canada, for example, while most academics from other disciplines would know of, and perhaps a little about, Russell, far fewer would know of Wittgenstein (though he is becoming known to lit. crit. groups), and virtually none would know of Quine. (The sampling is subjective.)

On the fairly recent 'triumph of professionalism' in philosophy in USA, see Kuklick, *op. cit.*, p. 565ff. Kuklick brings out well some of the more disastrous features of professionalism, but does not sufficiently notice that the virtuous features resulting from some professionalisation can be synthesized with broader philosophical activity.

<sup>25</sup> The exceptions include Ellis's distinctive program, which can be accounted part of the broader naturalist program, and at Monash the work of F. Jackson and, earlier, of H. Munro in value theory.

all sentient creatures. This position, developed from a British base, has figured prominently in animal welfare and animal liberation movements: and though it has focussed on domestic animals, animals used in research and hunted (wild) animals, it has also become entangled in issues of bio-research more generally such as genetic engineering. It is not however concerned with, or much interested in, endangered species, the disappearance of wild lands, the conversion of forests, etc., except insofar as these have a bearing on animal pain and pleasure. Wider and deeper environmental concerns appear only as a spinoff from animal welfare, and so deeper concerns get an inadequate deal. Secondly, there is a wider and a deeper ecological position, which is not utilitarian and which recognises irreducible value elsewhere than sentience or psychological states, which finds intrinsic value in trees and forests and ecosystems, especially wild and natural systems. This position differs from American spiritualism and from an extension of American naturalism.<sup>26</sup> Thirdly, there is of course, as almost everywhere, a reactionary component, critical of the other strands, which insists that all that needs to be accomplished on the environmental front can be achieved within older established (European) ethical and political frameworks.

Whereas materialism is based in Sydney, environmentalism is centred in Melbourne and Canberra, but also includes Brisbane and Perth. Also centred in Canberra, and reaching across the country, with good connections in Melbourne, but few in Sydney, is *the relevant/paraconsistent program*. Whereas the materialism and environmental programs have their core in metaphysics, with further input from epistemology and value theory respectively, the relevant/paraconsistent program is essentially a logic program, but one affecting other major areas of philosophy, especially metaphysics. The program which perhaps includes more centres in Australia than any other program, and which extends to New Zealand, has also been described elsewhere.<sup>27</sup>

The main research program evident in New Zealand philosophy is also a logic-grounded program. A program emanating from the work of Prior and now located mainly in Wellington, it might be called *the extended modal program*. The impact of the program on philosophy is perhaps best seen in Cresswell's work.<sup>28</sup>

Australian philosophy used to be known, and still is in some quarters, for its hard-headed empiricism; regrettably New Zealand philosophy is mostly not known for anything much, except perhaps, in UK, that Prior brought

<sup>26</sup> It has been described more fully elsewhere: see, in particular, *Environmental Philosophy* (ed. D. Mannison and others), RSSS, Australian National University, 1980.

<sup>27</sup> Again, like all the Australian programs, both those mentioned and others, in Grave, *op. cit.* But see further, R. Routley, 'Research in Logic in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania', *Research Papers in Logic* #14, Australian National University, 1983 (which also considers other programs in logic); G. Priest and R. Routley, *op. cit.*; and R. Routley, R. K. Meyer and others, *Relevant Logics and Their Rivals*, Ridgeview, California, 1982.

<sup>28</sup> See especially M. J. Cresswell, *Logics and Languages*, Methuen, London, 1973; but see also work by Goldblatt and by Hughes referred to in *Research in Logic*, *op. cit.* Also described there is an original version of the modal program (transparent intensional logic) elaborated by Tichy at Otago.

his unusual adaption of Russellian philosophy from that remote place. Neither of these impressions is particularly accurate; both are rather out-of-date. But the aim of work of the present type is, of course, not just to correct these impressions, not just to reflect or report on culture—for what one would like to reflect upon is not sufficiently there—but also to help manufacture elements of a culture, to make an image.

To resist the North, we should increase our efforts to further the already flourishing programs, and perhaps other sunrise projects;<sup>29</sup> to build teaching and research around the programs selected for promotion, elaboration, and criticism, to orient appointments, especially of involved local people, to these programs.<sup>30</sup> Why bother? Why not simply buy our philosophy, like almost all our technology, off the shelf, from the North? There are several arguments for not doing this, in more than a limited fashion, which are now sketched.<sup>31</sup>

There is, firstly, the inferiority and built-in obsolescence of most Northern products, despite their attractive packaging. Without putting too fine a point on it, many of the imported intellectual goods are shoddy, and only work for a very limited range of applications (e.g. they're hopeless in the vicinity of contradictions or dilemmas). Much that is wrong with Antipodean philosophy undoubtedly derives from shoddy intellectual goods imported from the North. Yet buying this material is encouraged by hard-sell cultural ambassadors from the North, who are often enough paid to visit. This is part of the philosophical imperialism from the North—the successor to

<sup>29</sup> Among sunrise projects in Australian philosophy so far suggested (not all of them feasible) are these: Australian feminism, Antipodean social and political alternatives, peace studies, indigenous regional philosophies (especially Aboriginal, Melanesian, and Polynesian). Another promising field, with practical consequences, for local initiative is the philosophy of education, where material produced by R. S. Peters has dominated the market, with stultifying effects it is now alleged.

As foreshadowed with the notion of 'sunrise projects', much of the rhetoric, and argument, concerning science and technology policy (presented in the case of Australia in B. Jones, *Sleepers Awake!*, Oxford University Press, 1982 can be taken over to apply to *X* policy, where *X* is some subject discipline, such as philosophy.

<sup>30</sup> In fact something like the last has been the policy of the LSE Philosophy Department, where the only outside appointment over a long period was that of Lakatos (hardly a person far removed ideologically). As observed, it now looks like the practice of the Otago Department also; and apparently it used to be a tendency at Melbourne. But in most places the practice is condemned as nepotistic or parochial, and overridden by the call for 'new (Northern) blood'. However there can be significant differences between nepotistic appointments and those strengthening local programs.

It is at this stage, among others that administrative measures do matter; for example, to ensure that suitable locally-engaged locals gain employment rather than Northern stooges, to direct funds into on-going local programs rather than imported fashions, etc. There are various ways appropriate administrative details can be handled, locally or nationally; but nothing draconian, such as wholesale exclusion of noncitizens, is required.

Observe, indeed, that no restriction of academic appointments to nationals (in Canadian style) or the like is being advocated. Anyone who arrives at a conclusion of that sort from what has been argued has misunderstood the case in crucial respects. As a matter of simple mathematics, restricting appointment fields characteristically reduces both quality of candidates available (however quality is assessed) and range of possibilities open for future research; and no such restrictions are advocated. The author has witnessed the debilitating effects of field restrictions at the Australian National University and elsewhere.

<sup>31</sup> Some of these arguments support change (perhaps revolutionary) at the centre also.



Northern colonialism—that the Antipodes too willingly suffers, or, more remarkable, encourages!

Secondly, there is the inappropriateness of much of the Northern product, especially considered as a package, for instance, to cover, as well as metaphysics, environmental concerns. The European North has no satisfactory land or environmental ethic fit for Antipodean circumstances, and the deeper American package is too spiritually-loaded for mainstream Australian culture.<sup>32</sup> In political theory, American work is much too individualistic and competition-based, and the European product, especially the Marxist form, is unsuited being both too precious and too high-tech for local circumstances, especially again for more environmentally-perceptive people.

Thirdly, also telling against comparative advantage, are appealing features of import substitution and regionalism; namely, avoidance of the world's markets and pressures and fashions, removal of overseas control and power structures (including the Old Boy's network in jobs, policies, etc.), and gaining of local control, employment of local people, etc.

Fourthly, there are arguments for cultural diversity, applied to philosophy as part of intellectual culture: arguments from richness, complexity, sheer diversity, stability, etc.<sup>33</sup> In fact, the *garden analogy* built into the whole notion of 'culture' transfers. Naturally we want a rich, dense, productive garden. But not only seeds and plants but weeds and many pests are being introduced. We obtain not only good products, Indian maize and European cultivars, but European pests and American weeds. This is why selectiveness and control are *essential*, as against previous haphazard procedures.

The proposal is not for, nor would the case sustain, a narrow localism, with local products, whatever their quality, local fashions, and local cult heroes, replacing Northern ones. That is certainly not the preferred way of the newer regionalism, which tends to do without fashions and heroes and which seeks durable quality in products, low environmental impact, and so on; nor is it the way of technology policy. Rather, as with technology policy, we select niches which are not occupied or satisfactorily filled, where we can make a difference, and use and develop local skills and methods. Indeed the policy has to be selective given our resource base (of philosophers, publishing outlets, etc.). But granting regionalism, to what extent should components, for instance people, books and other teaching elements, theories and ideas, be imported and to what extent should they be produced, trained, conceived locally? The possibility of selectiveness in different components means that many mixes are possible. There is no need to insist, so far at least, on a particular mix. The case for the present is mainly for a regional shift, for a significantly greater degree of local autonomy and production.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The point is elaborated in Culture. At a more practical level Northern products are again often unsuitable, though for different reasons. For example, the transfer of American agricultural methods and equipment to the thin poor soils of the Antipodes has had disastrous effects, at last beginning to be recognised.

<sup>33</sup> See, for instance, A. A. Mazrui, *A World Federation of Cultures: An African Perspective*, Free Press, New York, 1976.

<sup>34</sup> Does it sound familiar? Outside philosophy, it should. For example, we have now been told

But it will do no harm to indicate elements of a mix that finds much local favour. Negatively, the suggestion is that we try to eradicate much of the Oxford style of teaching and doing philosophy. That includes such things as removal of the undue emphasis on British empiricism centred on Locke-Berkeley-Hume (a standard British focus); of the quasi-historical approach with however no proper attention to sources; of reinforcement of the prevailing Anglo-American status quo. The heavy Oxford influence, in particular, has mostly been a very conservative one. More generally, many of the main movements emanating from England, especially ordinary language philosophy, but also the Moore-Wittgenstein practice, have been very protective of the Northern status quo; they tend to leave things very much as they are, and recommend just this.<sup>35</sup> Positively, the proposal is that we achieve further disassociation from the Anglo-American empiricist past in two ways: by emphasizing local projects that move outside that constricting framework, and by diversifying the range of philosophical traditions selectively drawn upon, to include not only neglected Continental strands and parts of Eastern thought, but also Pacific ethnic material and Australasian philosophy. The idea is that such a *plurality* of sources, especially in teaching, will assist in removing narrower cultural biases, such as British parochialism, and enable more discrimination to be obtained. Then too we should be better able to see the ranges of theories that are open to us in the Antipodes and how to advance our own programs.

There remain some things we should want to see whatever mixes are chosen in different Antipodean regions. One crucial issue is the removal of Northern bias from papers and publications, research seminars and lectures, letters of reference, and so on. This Northern bias is a disposition to cite and discuss the works and projects of Northern authors, the more famous the better, irrespective of the quality of their contribution to the topic under discussion and to ignore the works of local authors, again largely irrespective of the quality of their contribution. It is the disposition to defer to authors from prestigious Northern institutions, and to uncritically accept their opinions of worth, importance, etc. It is the disposition to write or lecture as though work produced locally either does not exist or has not been influential (thus ensuring that it is not). And Australasian philosophers, are, if anything, more inclined to Northern bias than many overseas intellectuals, who are perhaps less concerned to be seen as belonging to the Northern mainstream. The reduction, and eventual removal, of Northern bias affects not only the practice

by the Americans that our defence role, unlike theirs, is regional, not global: this is supposed to shed great light on our previously confused defence policies.

<sup>35</sup> The point is laboured in E. Gellner, *Words and Things*, Victor Gollancz, London, 1959. But even ordinary language philosophy, though conservative, and though it much contracted the proper range of philosophical investigations, had its liberating elements, e.g. removal of some of the narrowness and more cramping assumptions induced by technical jargon.

Nor has the social impact changed much with the subsequent decline, since 1959, of ordinary language philosophy, the increasing insolvency of Oxbridge philosophy, and its consequent limited take-over by right-wing Ivy League American philosophy. By contrast, the less economically influential growth of redbrick and applied philosophy in some of the British redbrick and polytechnic institutes has touched no more than the surface of Oxbridge practice.

of individual philosophers, but the policies of selection and review committees as well as of editors and referees of local journals. It involves, among other things, intellectual reorientation, with Antipodean philosophers getting to know local work and innovations better, so they can cite local work or point out regional initiatives and developments—things that would be assisted by greater local content in courses taught, more time spent at local institutions on study leave, and so on.

## APPENDIX

*On the earlier idea of a National Philosophy for Australia.* In considering ‘the possibility of a National Philosophy’, the (Australian) Editor of the initial AJPP, Francis Anderson, distinguished two senses corresponding to ‘the German distinction between *Weltanschauung* and *Lebensanschauung*’ (p. 292). In the first, that of ‘a scheme of the universe’, ‘an Australian Philosophy is as ridiculous as a Christian Science’. The argument is that both truth and its confirmation or falsification ‘are independent of national sympathies or prejudices’. Granted: but that does not mean that a theory may not be held, fostered, etc., in one region but not others, as intuitionism was for long in in Holland, or Cartesianism in France. In a second ‘more intimate and personal’ way, ‘a nation like an individual may develop a certain temperamental attitude to the problems of existence, which we may . . . call its philosophy of life. A nation’s philosophy, like its art and its literature, is a mode of expression for the national consciousness. It is a specialised form of the national genius . . .’ (pp. 292–293). It is, in short, part of the evolving national culture. But, in the first place, this is by no means entirely separate from the initial sense, a philosophy comprising not merely a fairly comprehensive theory but also an integrated set of attitudes (like an operational paradigm). Furthermore, only by concession are such items as ‘the national consciousness’ and ‘the Australian landscape’ accounted single units meriting of definite descriptors. Australian philosophy, like Australian literature, has many strands to it, some not particularly distinctive (in any sense): such things form rather loose families.

Anderson does not find, does not really hope to find in ‘a modern industrialised community’—with its modular parts interchangeable with those of others—a national philosophy of life, with a difference. In fact he claims to find a (somewhat) trite moral base to build on, ‘traditions . . . of humour, courage and fair dealing’, but nothing at all distinctive, or particularly philosophical. So far, then, there could a national philosophy, at least of life, but is not; this does not however exclude there being various regional philosophies (such as local research programs). So far, apart from residual problems about identifying and legitimating a national philosophy, so good. But shortly Anderson is plunged into inconsistency: the trouble derives from the extravagant claim that ‘if Australia has nothing to do with these—the eternal values of the Spirit, the Ideals of Truth, Goodness and Beauty—then and only then has she nothing to do with Philosophy’ (p. 295 with rearrangement). But, as Australia has nothing *per se* to do with these—as is virtually conceded, these values involving a ‘wider sweep’ than any national boundaries—‘she’ has nothing to do with Philosophy, contradicting the possibility of a National Philosophy. Though the contradiction is easily avoided by rescinding the extravagant claim, the ideal of a National Philosophy should be allowed to rest in peace: nationalism has had its time.<sup>36</sup>

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