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# 1

# A Hemisphere Awry

## 'All Different, Quite Different'

About face. Awry. Alien. The farthest far. For many of the world's readers, around nine in ten, the far southern hemisphere is, in every way, out of kilter.[1] The 'edge of the skirt of the world' unsettles the frameworks that most people use to see our planet.[2] Vast and excessive, the south defies everyday comprehension.

Images of the far south as remote, strange, and unbalanced are sedimented into northern perceptions. From ancient legends through to contemporary media, the southern fringes of the world have been perceived as underworlds, obscure and discardable. The first northerners to travel, whether imaginatively or in actuality, beyond the equator and then on to the higher southern latitudes,

believed that the hemisphere had a different camber. This oscillation between northern projections onto the south and perceptions of southern difference from within, recurs throughout this framing chapter and continues through the book, so braiding piece by piece a picture of southern imagining as a complex process of entangled diegetic thinking—of conceiving the far south through image, symbol, and story of both northern and (increasingly) southern provenance.[3]

At the turn of the last century, Thomas Hardy, in his 1899 Anglo-Boer War poem 'Drummer Hodge', twice described the constellations of the southern hemisphere as 'strange' or 'strange-eyed'. At the time that Antarctic exploration was gathering momentum, the brilliant southern night sky may have been in the news, though Hardy was never to see it in reality. Some twenty years later, D. H. Lawrence in *Kangaroo*, the novel of his six-month stay in Australia, noticed the 'uncomfortable' tilt of the 'bushy' Milky Way to the south, 'so that you feel all on one side if you look at it'.[4] To his hero Richard Somers, 'things seemed so different. Perhaps everything *was* different from all he had known'. Settler writers across the southern hemisphere might have agreed. The south's geophysics appeared to require an entirely different mode of understanding. To develop the artistry necessary to recalibrate this difference as ordinary would mean remaking thought-worlds from scratch.

No image is more evocative of this apparently unbalanced state than the unusual shape of the kangaroo, captured in northern writing from the time of Captain James Cook's first observations in late April 1770. Even the word 'kangaroo' is an outlier. It is one of only a relatively few words of Aboriginal Australian provenance with widespread currency in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, its other forms being *kanguru*, *gamgarou*, and *Patagaran*. *Bandaarr* was the Gamilaraay word I learned. Along with 'boomerang' (Gamilaroy, *barran*), 'koala', 'bombora', and others, 'kangaroo' assumes a metonymic function. It stands for a land far out of the everyday where duckbilled mammals lay eggs and throwing sticks return to the hand of the thrower.[5]

Within a week of making landfall in Australia, Cook began to note sightings of a 'perplexing' creature, something like a dog and 'less than a deer'; withal unlike 'any Animal I ever saw'. As his ship, the *Endeavour*, groped its way up the eastern Australian coast, the crew repeatedly encountered the out-of-proportion, jumping animal, the thick tail 'nearly as long as the body', the forelegs puny, 'design'd for scratching in the ground &c'.[6] By August, the ship's botanist Joseph Banks had taken note of the local name for the creature, 'Kanguru'. But this was a possible mishearing of *gangurru*, the local Guugu Yimithirr word for a species of large kangaroo.

Some fifty years later, Barron Field in his collection, *First Fruits of Australian Poetry* (1819), introduced the 'not incongruous,/ Repugnant or preposterous creature' into poetry in English.[7] Field spends the greater part of his poem 'Kangaroo' trying to find merit in the animal's anomalies, though, from the start, he has difficulty in distinguishing it from its 'desolate', discordant surroundings. The poem, in this sense, like the creature, lacks proportion. Already the kangaroo has turned into an emblem for the seemingly unpromising country.

D. H. Lawrence, in 1923, incorporated that same contradictory sense of imbalance in the bulky, amazed language of his poem 'Kangaroo', written at the same time as the novel. Once again, the kangaroo, with its contrasting delicate and heavy qualities, its fine facial features, and 'python-stretch of a tail', embodies this 'silent lost' land of the South, 'lost so many centuries on the margins of existence!'[8] Though the poet observed the creature in question in captivity at Sydney Zoo, his poem tries hard to get at its alienness by using repetitive, at times deliberately unpoetic (as if clumsy) diction. The creature's awryness is then reinforced by the visual effects. Its drooping, bottom-heavy shape 'dropping sackwise down towards the earth's centre', if visualised as cartography, resembles the elongated, tapering shape of the southern continents, reversed, so turning the world on its head.

In strong contrast, only six years later, the Australian settler novelist and ethnographer Katharine Susannah Prichard would syncopate her novel *Coonardoo* (1929) with a 'corroboree song' about dancing kangaroos. The titular Aboriginal heroine sings the refrain in her language, Ngarla, at key points in her life:

> *Towera chinimapodinya*
> *Towera jinner mulbeena*
> *Poodinyoober mulbeena*
> *(Kangaroos coming over the range in the twilight and making a devil dance with their little feet, before they begin to feed.)*

The translation, italicised like the song, is built into the text.[9]

At once progressive and distinctively settler colonial, *Coonardoo* is significant for the very different frame of reference Prichard gives a native creature like the kangaroo compared to a European writer like Lawrence—or Field. In the novel, the animals appear to the character Coonardoo not only in reality, trooping over the range, but they also figure, simultaneously, in her song. It seems to us that she is calling them up. The animals are pictured moving together in unison as a mob, awe-inspiring, mysterious, very much of the land, as is Coonardoo herself—fatally so, as it turns out.

For all its intrusive ethnography, Prichard's novel crucially pivots our perspective as readers (whether northern or southern) away from northern representations of awkward, stranded kangaroos, caged or on display. Coonardoo, and her refrain 'sung to the clicking of sticks', recall us (but do not equate) to the view from within. Here, in the south, the kangaroo is but one animal figure among many. The creature features in Indigenous song cycles and legends, for example, as a totemic figure alongside a great crowd of others—cockatoos, dugong, groper fish, crocodiles, and snakes.

## Inhabiting the South in the Mind

For northerners, southern spaces for aeons raised questions not only of going beyond the edge of the known world, but quite simply of being *extremely* remote. Even if some features of southern geography—stars, seasons, sun paths—were recognisable, though topsy-turvy, the key element that challenged expectations was the sheer reach of the south.[10] Indicatively, northern versions of world history still deem all the ancient civilisations of the world to have been located north of the equator, bar that of Peru.[11] Till the time of the moon landings, travellers to the Southern Ocean and beyond were as far from the rest of humanity as it was possible to be.

There were seemingly no limits to watery southern worlds, or to the imaginative possibilities they stimulated. For Edgar Allan Poe, and Jules Verne writing in his wake, 'the awful solitudes of the south' presented to the traveller a mysterious 'curtain of vapours' like a 'limitless cataract', and the prospect of powerful polar currents whirling down into bottomless vortices.[12] The 'ancient antipodal trope of the world turned upside down', writes Alfred Hiatt, encouraged utopian ideals of perfect worlds, places of solitary retreat, and contemplation. Yet these alluring spaces also always bore darker connotations of extreme remoteness, danger, threat, and savagery.[13] From the late fifteenth century, with the voyages of Dias and Da Gama, Magellan and de Elcano, Malaspina, Schouten, and many others, the south became code for the long, perilous route to the treasures of the east. The astronaut Michael Collins on Apollo 11 used the metaphor of rounding the Horn to describe his feelings of extreme remoteness when circling around the dark side of the moon.[14]

Yet, for southern peoples, that far-off beyond was home. (Even the word *yet* in that sentence is off-kilter when read 'south'.) They inhabited their spaces inwardly and intimately—as people do. The lands onto which Europe projected its fantasies were where they belonged. Their legends, songs, and stories

located them in place from one generation to another and provided conduits for passing their memories on to their descendants within those same familiar southern worlds.

*Southern Imagining* considers what it is to inhabit the south in the mind, as did these southerners, or, put differently, it looks at how we imagine our planet *otherwise* by counterpointing northern perspectives with southern. Wherever possible, the book keeps in play cartographical concepts (telluric, littoral, oceanic) from southern worlds and northern alongside one another. Throughout, I am mindful that southern geographies have always been encoded in local languages and myth systems—and that these give us powerful tools for deconstructing hemispheric biases. The chapters, therefore, collaborate after their fashion with the 'third archive' project, based in Australia, that juxtaposes western and Indigenous knowledge structures in an intentional fusion.[15] Images and concepts from First Nations legends, star-maps, and mythologies interleave below with ideas from James Cook through Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Olive Schreiner and Joseph Conrad, and on. For austral imagining, singers, poets, storytellers, travellers, and artists and their creations are our primary mapmakers and guides.

Any book commits us to a more or less linear reading experience, yet a study of southern imagining involves destabilising conceptual moves that at once invert space and collapse time. A certain pliability has therefore been built into the design of the book to give the reader, at moments, the vertiginous experience of, as it were, teetering south over the equator, tilting towards the far edge of the world. The elastic figures of the parabola and, in the polar chapter, the asymptote, help me to make these moves, as we will soon see in more detail.[16] As the chapters loop south, across the southern oceans, towards the pole, our latitude of perception as readers, too, will bend, inflect, and sometimes warp. In both the canonical and the lesser-known writings, the curvilinear figures clarify instances that define and sharpen spatial perception and help us to think about and within southern worlds.

## Where Is the South?

Across *Southern Imagining*, the south is at once a real and imagined space—a space that bears complex atmospheric, historical, and cultural overlays. Geographically, as in the Preface, 'south' refers to the lands and islands of the far south of the world, facing the Southern Ocean—the distant extremities of the southern hemisphere, its coastlines, tapering continents, wild capes, and peninsular tips, what might be called the verandas or stoops of the world.[17] To use

their formal names, southern regions include the far reaches of the two great continents of South America and Africa that run north-south, the island continent of Australia and its icy counterpart, Antarctica, until recently uninhabited, and the various larger and smaller island clusters in the Pacific, and, to a lesser extent, in the Indian, Atlantic, and Southern Oceans. These spaces, on occasion, overlap with the areas comprising the geopolitical entity of the Global South but are distinct from them, as we will see.

The southern landmasses, together with India, formed the southern supercontinent Gondwanaland, which broke up at the start of the Jurassic period between 120 and fifty-five million years ago. Geological features, including basaltic strata and glacial striations observed in southern Africa, South Australia and Antarctica, testify to their prehistoric interconnection. On any world map, the puzzle-piece fit between the continents can easily be discerned and is clearest from the correspondence between the coastlines of South America and Africa. Gondwanaland's fragmentation began with that split, and the final separation was at the Tasmanian hinge that once joined Australia and Antarctica. The break produced the globe-encircling Southern Ocean with its great circumpolar currents and converging wind streams that still impact climates worldwide.[18]

The flora and fauna of the southern landmasses also exhibit family connections despite the long ages that separate them, as part of an extensive Gondwanan biota.[19] Combined, these links provided evidence for the theory of continental drift that began to take shape at the turn of the twentieth century.[20] Scientists noticed that certain distinctive plants feature or featured only across the south, as do flightless birds, including penguins. The Kerguelen cabbage grows on the Indian Ocean island of that name, yet is also found in South America's higher latitudes. The southern hemisphere beech (*calucechinus Antarctica*) grows in Tasmania, New Zealand's South Island, as well as on Tierra del Fuego and Kerguelen, as Joseph Hooker, the palaeobotanist on the 1830s Ross expedition to the South Magnetic Pole, first observed.[21] Fossilised *Glossopteris* specimens have been found on all the southern continents and include the samples from both of Scott's Antarctic expeditions.[22] Penguins, meanwhile, breed naturally only on the south-facing coastlines of Australia, the South American Cone, southern Africa, and the far southern islands, and, of course, on the icy edges of Antarctica.[23]

Portuguese is the predominant language of the south, partly due to the size of Brazil (which, however, lies in both hemispheres), followed by Spanish, Javanese, and then English. The 11 percent of the world's population who live

in the hemisphere are concentrated mostly in the higher twenties and lower thirties of latitude, that is, in the novelist J. M. Coetzee's so-called 'one south', where the climate is temperate.[24] Most southern cities lie on the edge of the continental masses within this zone, while hinterlands are 'hollow' demographically. The sparseness of the land—and, for littoral and island dwellers, the immensity of the ocean—impinges constantly on people's awareness. Great winds, southwesterlies and easterlies, batter ocean-facing southern cities—some of which, including humid Wellington, Sydney, and Durban, looking east, are rust prone. The Antarctic convergence powers these huge winds, which roar not only through the forties but also the fifties and sixties of latitude.

In *Prisoners of Geography*, Tim Marshall argues that geography—for him, chiefly, continental location—impacts the interaction between peoples and so shapes societies and economies globally. He observes that the southern tips of South America and Africa lie extremely far away from 'anywhere' and hence are deemed by most people to be of lesser importance (though how 'anywhere' is defined is moot for any southern study on how the south is constructed).[25] Certainly, with respect to the prehistoric migration of peoples, the hemisphere lacks the great east-west land bridge of Eurasia and the further possibilities for cross-continental movement of the once-frozen Bering Sea.[26] For centuries, therefore, major economic, military, and diplomatic activity was concentrated in the north of the globe, with the result that southern lands and seas appeared by most measures to be marginal unless they offered the promise of extractable wealth, as did sealing, whaling, and, later, mining.

Another way of expressing the pervasive sense of southern remoteness is in terms of event density. To speak in intentionally loaded terms, nothing much is perceived to occur in the south, often even by southerners.[27] This relative spatial distance correlates with a lack of expectation on their part of political and cultural importance. Southerners see themselves as if from without, as located far away from where things count. Real stuff does not happen where they live. In effect, they internalise the wider global sense of their relative insignificance. They are seen to inhabit atopias—defined by Siobhan Carroll as intangible, inhospitable, inaccessible spaces that resist conversion into 'places of home and community'.[28] Perhaps the entire south constitutes an atopia—that is, if viewed from the north.

It is indicative that even the two great southern exit points from the Atlantic, the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn, though located on historic shipping routes, were nonetheless seen by northern nations as cut off from the

wider oceanic world.[29] Traffic passed around here, but key players did not stay. These were the margins where the world's leftovers and detritus accumulated—long out-of-print books in secondhand bookshops; the commodity lists, ledgers, account books, manuals, and other documents piled high in the custom houses of colonial ports; rusting and discarded telescopes; the hull of the Anglo-Polish novelist Joseph Conrad's first command, the *Otago* in the Maritime Museum in Hobart—and greenhouse gases trapped in the Southern Ocean.[30]

As a directional term, 'south' is relative and contingent. Many lands on Earth have their particular south, and many regions, including in the far north, perceive themselves as provincial and out on the edge. In Europe, 'south' immediately bears connotations of the Mediterranean world and the pleasures of its light and warmth but also of temptation and peril, as in John Keats's now-proverbial lines from 'Ode to a Nightingale' (1819) about 'the warm south', or Tennyson's image of the 'warmer sky . . . of the South', in 'You Ask Me, Why, Tho' Ill at Ease' written twenty years later. This south also signifies a quality of character that is more physical yet less industrious. In colonial times, such antiphonal significations deepened with reference to European colonial possessions in the southern tropics and subtropics, where native peoples were labelled lazy and recalcitrant. In North America, till today, as we find in American literature, the violent history of slavery shadows any mention of that South.[31] The American South is an explicitly raced geohistorical entity, tagged as black, oppressed, and minor.

World cartography has understood the planet from a northern vantage point for millennia, relegating the south to realms beyond ken. From the time of Pythagoras, ideas of a great continent in the higher southern latitudes—Terra Australis Incognita, the *alter orbis*—preoccupied seafarers, geographers and thinkers.[32] The great south, a counterbalancing entity to the north, was regarded as world-shaping and 'geographically essential', in the words of John Livingston Lowes, and yet as unimaginable.[33] In Claudius Ptolemy's *Geographia* (c. 150 CE), the Indian Ocean is seen as a lake surrounded by land, including in the south, where an 'arm' of southern Africa stretches east to meet the Indonesian archipelago.[34] Based on information drawn from traders across that same monsoon-swept ocean, Ptolemy's maps laid down models for early modern cartography. By the time Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope to reach India in 1497–98, and the Ferdinand Magellan (and Juan Sebastián de Elcano) expedition circumnavigated the globe around thirty years later, a view of the planet with the North Pole 'uppermost' had become normative, at least from Europe and the Middle East.

Early modern geographers processed the findings from the first Portuguese, Spanish, and later Dutch and British voyages into the southern hemisphere according to this predominant model, establishing relational understandings of the south that persist into the present day: of counterbalancing landmasses, a dichotomous far south, either monstrous or sublime, and distant lands that beckoned northerners to name and claim them.[35] Even representations of the American 'new world' took 'south' as an 'inexact but powerful descriptor' that 'advertised strangeness', in Sandra Young's words. Peter Martyr's *The Decades of the Newe World of West India,* Richard Eden's compilation of Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographiæ vniversalis* based on Ptolemy, and many other sixteenth-century English chronicles of European exploration used a recognisably hierarchical 'language of the global "south"' to encourage colonial ambitions.[36]

Up to the present day, the projection of a European planetary consciousness on the south is reflected in the Linnaean or binomial system of classification through which ecologies from around the natural world were brought under one pyramidical system, beginning from the time of Cook's voyages.[37] Its apex, comprising the most advanced forms of life, was assumed to lie in the north, and the terms cataloguing all life on Earth were taken from Latin. In another telling instance, two centuries later, in 1972, the first pictures of the whole earth as photographed from space, the so-called 'blue marble' image, showed the North Pole 'at the top' when published in the world's newspapers. But the photograph had been inverted for global consumption. Apollo 17's camera had first pictured the globe as bearing the white cap of Antarctica.

Exotic visions of the great southern continent conditioned ideas of what Antarctica might comprise for centuries—and recur in twenty-first-century touristic representations of its glamour and danger.[38] From the 1700s voyages of Wallis, de Bougainville, Cook, and others, the lure of the farthest south drove European exploration into the Antarctic Circle. The British Admiralty famously gave James Cook secret instructions ordering him to seek and, if found, claim this mythic land for the Crown. Arriving in Aotearoa New Zealand on the *Endeavour* in 1769, Cook wondered if he might not have reached the 'Continent we are in search of', but subsequent circumnavigation of the two main islands disabused him of this hope.[39] His finding that the southern continent must lie in the higher southern latitudes harmonised with reports from earlier navigators like Magellan and Drake of open sea beyond the Horn. Within three years Cook had embarked on the *Resolution* on a further quest for the 'southermost land [*sic*]', yet, once again, though his ships lay 'South of Tasmans track', he correctly surmised from the 'high swell' that no land lay

within the fifties and sixties of latitude, though there might be some possibility in the 'Meridian of the Mauritius'.

Other late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century navigators like Jules Dumont D'Urville and Yves-Joseph de Kerguélen-Trémarec were similarly compelled by legends of the far southern continent. They, too, deduced from the evidence of floating ice sheets, prevailing winds, and sea temperatures that there must be a significant icebound landmass to the south. However, till the James Clark Ross and Charles Wilkes expeditions of 1839–43 and 1838–42, respectively, it was mainly whalers and sealers who travelled into the roaring forties and beyond, drawn by reports in Cook and Banks of copious fishing stocks in these waters. An 1831 map of the southern continent, drawn for the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, reflects how little known the polar regions were, even then.[40] Right across the nineteenth century, from Coleridge through Melville to Verne and Conrad, the icy austral latitudes goaded the imagination to overleap barriers that humans could not yet physically pierce.[41] The pursuit of the elusive south continued to mark its cartography, and the inscrutable areas of those maps went on encouraging the pursuit. 'The farthest South . . . disappears . . . under the globe', as the poet Elizabeth Lewis Williams writes.[42]

Yet, far south questing was not confined to Europe. Far from it. According to seventh-century Polynesian legends from Rarotonga or Ui-Te-Rangiora in the Cook Islands, as we will see, Pacific Islanders who had migrated eastwards and southwards as far as the Auckland Islands brought back knowledge of bitterly cold waters. They described this ocean as covered in white powder, its powerful currents resembling the hair of a legendary 'woman of the sea'.[43] Twelfth- to fourteenth-century Māori or Polynesian earth ovens on the Aucklands corroborate how far south Pacific navigators came.

All southern lands were, at one point or another in the past five hundred years, colonised by northern powers, and all bear signs of violent incursion, resource exploitation, and cultural marginalisation. Colonisation cut entire populations adrift from their languages, traditions, resources, and industries, producing the uneven networks that shape global geopolitics to this day. Colonial infrastructures—roads, railways, shipping lines—came to dictate that all main routes ran to the capital and from there to the imperial metropolis, while peripheral places were not connected in the same way.[44] North-south unevenness also meant that southern writers and artists were obliged to relocate to northern capitals both imaginatively and in person to forge their careers. Even up to the early twenty-first century, southern authors, including those discussed

in this book, have taken pains to situate themselves in a filial relationship to northern metropolitan traditions and write the south as elsewhere, not here.

*Southern Imagining* takes account of the global expansion of capitalist modernity from the north and the racialised stadial discourses that were used to justify that expansion. Victorian science, for example, placed far-south human beings and animals farther back on a single universal trajectory of development.[45] (Penguins were described as less evolved birds, for example.) Indigenous knowledge was discredited to the point that Europeans declared an entire continent, Australia, to be *terra nullius* for not demonstrating the forms of civilised occupation that they were able to recognise. The remoteness of the south was used to facilitate such occlusion. Abuses of power could thrive here unchecked, far from the eye of the northern law.[46]

Yet, at the same time, *Southern Imagining* strives to keep in suspension the idea of a single, uneven world and allows space for other imagined worlds to thrive.[47] All theories of modernity, at least in English, take Europe as the centre of historicity. Therefore, where possible, my readings sidestep a singular interpretative standpoint located in the northern hemisphere and draw on southern conceptual approaches.[48] I proceed strategically, with care, always maintaining awareness of the limitations of northern theory, drawing in Indigenous interlocutors to cultivate multiple perspectives and question entrenched lines of sight. My readings attend to the links and commonalities across the southern hemisphere that navigators and scientists like Joseph Hooker traced, but that indigenous astral mythologies from around the hemisphere have also recorded. These links become a kind of stimulus for a southern semiotics, a lateral and comparative way of thinking around the Southern Ocean.[49]

## Not East: The South as External

The south was not only far, or farther than far; it was also deemed by many would-be observers as a place outside, as early modern maps reflect. For many, the far south still remains a limitless beyond, like outer space, something that can be used without ever being used up. If anything, the seeming externality of the region drove and drives its exploitability. Its unplumbed distances at one and the same time gave exploratory and representational licence and defied policing. New Zealand's fertile plains may have been the last that Europeans found 'before the Earth's supply revealed itself as finite', the historian Michael King writes, but the majority of humanity took several hundred years to compute that finitude.[50]

For Timothy Clark, the concept of 'externality', derived from market economics, implies that within any given system, space for expansion exists. Max Liboiron relatedly discusses how capitalist accumulation ejects its costs to borderlands and edge countries.[51] The idea goes hand-in-hand with the assumption that natural resources are free for the taking, and suffer no damage from processes of extraction. Production is taken to rely on outside or faraway spaces that will absorb excess and contamination, where waste can be dumped without ever seemingly accumulating. Capitalist reasoning along these lines subtends not only most discourses of development but also, specifically for my purposes, historical approaches to southern lands. For, if the earth and its oceans were everywhere taken to be exploitable, this treatment was perhaps particularly severe in the remote southern hemisphere precisely because these edges could be the more ignored, the more occluded. Till only yesterday, the great external of the south has been treated as a dumping ground at the bottom of the world, its lands 'empty' enough to warrant nuclear testing, its seas capacious enough to absorb excess carbon dioxide.[52]

There is probably no more telling example of the perils of treating the south as external than the early nineteenth-century sealing and whaling industries. The oil that lit the burgeoning cities of the industrial age came from rendered whales taken from oceans worldwide. However, the secrecy and anonymity that the high southern latitudes afforded the sealers and whalers efficiently masked the industrial-scale carnage through which they operated. Already by the 1830s, whale and seal numbers in the southern seas had dropped catastrophically to the point that the vast fish stocks that Cook had observed would never again be seen in these waters.[53]

Whaling provides a sobering lesson. Treating the far south as an exploitable outside has had, and continues to have, far-reaching environmental consequences, though the region's remoteness has meant that for over two centuries, this damage went relatively unobserved. In response, *Southern Imagining* invites a more interconnected understanding of southern spaces, a view of the external from the inside, no matter how counterintuitive this perspective might be for most. As in the work of Barry Lopez, the book tries to 'resituate' readers in cultural ecologies that are three-dimensional everywhere, in the south just as in the north.[54] And to do this, it draws out, wherever possible, the geological, meteorological, and atmospheric commonalities that pertain around the hemisphere. Southern poetry and stories serve as astrolabes or mesasuring devices for this purpose, constellating views of the south from across the south, affording relational perspectives on southern worlds.[55] These

works remind us, even if only figuratively, that nothing on Earth is so far removed as not to have an impact on somewhere else.

The contrasting relationship of north as against south, or global inside and outside, will inevitably call up associations with Edward Said's influential work on Orientalism as a system of knowledge that Europe used to wield imperial power.[56] Like the east, the lore of the south is a geopolitical construct used to impose cultural values. It, too, may appear to operate according to the polarised dynamic of the west as against the rest that Said theorised. As with the Orient, antipodean myths were projected onto southern lands as ways of organising, managing, and exploiting their resources. The discussion of European centrality and southern marginality in these pages will, therefore, be almost unavoidably indebted to Said's thesis, and his critique assists with any interrogation of western or Global North dominance.

At the same time, however, the remote south does not bear analogy with the fabulous east. It is far from being an austral orient swivelled through ninety degrees, from a north-south to an east-west axis. The south explored in *Southern Imagining* is too amorphous and dispersed to operate as a discourse in the way of Orientalism. Its scatteredness does not conform to the singular idea of an opposite to the western norm. Though northerners assume their perspective is dominant in relation to the south, they are by and large indifferent to it, unlike they have been to the Orient. Post the whaling heyday, the south has always lacked sufficient economic or geopolitical interest. Therefore, if, on western timelines, the east was degenerate and Africa backward, if the former lagged behind and the latter had not yet mounted the scale of civilisation, the south, by contrast, was nowhere on or near this scale. Far distant geographically, it also lay far distant in time, right outside the chronologies of Europe.[57] Where Orientalism had generated an excess of representation, the dubious distinction of the far south was that it appeared to demand new tools of description entirely.

## Thinking from the South with Story

If we accept that language informs our sense of being in place, then both writing and reading will be vital to any process of imaginative reorientation south. Though our utterances can never be held to equate to the things they name, still, words that sing or speak the lands, islands, and oceans of the south will, at the very least, make possible a more inward southern understanding. Just as an architectural plan takes a certain vantage point relative to the sun as read,

southern texts assume a southern location. They orient south; their sequences parse its spaces. While northern concepts require translation into southern environments, by contrast, south-forged imaginative work conceives of its southern contexts *from within*. 'Down there' is experienced as *right here*.

A starting premise, therefore, is that literature helps to theorise southern space. Far-south poetry and fiction enables us to see the hemisphere differently, whether laterally, from south to south, or from the inside out. While the work of Cook, Darwin, Coleridge, and others first shaped the south in the Anglophone imagination, later creative work generated in the south, itself at times paradoxically moulded by these precursor writers, often makes better sense of southern worlds. It builds our understanding of the hemisphere's differently angled spaces and meets with less conceptual static.[58]

The premise of imaginative inwardness is related to another leading perception of how creative artefacts operate. *Southern Imagining* holds that imaginative work, here embodied primarily but not exclusively in literary writing, itself stimulates and shapes our phenomenological understanding. The approach adapts the idea from reception theory that writing—and also oral narratives, legends, and myths—gives us ways of interpreting our worlds, of thinking from the space we inhabit. Environmental anthropology offers the supporting idea that our surroundings inform our perceptions.[59] Therefore, to read, tell, or hear legends, narratives, songs, and poems from the south is to be located (in the) south, at least for the duration of the reading or telling. It is to experience an otherwise elusive southern haecceity even when dealing in imported tools (languages, genres, technologies of writing). The writings craft ways of understanding *being south*, even in those cases, as with some settler writing, where the dominant sense that is communicated is of being out of place and unhomed.

Putting these two premises together, any attempt to see through southern lenses requires a methodology of attending (reading and listening) south. Close reading, as the Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith believes, offers a powerful means through which to dismantle established, colonial ways of looking.[60] Across these pages, writers from Olive Schreiner to Judith Wright, from Zoë Wicomb to Alexis Wright, draw links and lines through which southern effects—truths, we might say—become perceptible. Chapters 2 and 3, in particular, work with this heuristic, but it is threaded throughout.[61] Across the book, literary artefacts, including pieces of orature, provide the means through which the far south—its uncomfortableness, its opacity, its difficulty—can be approached and better understood. The epigraphs that

head up the chapters, too, set an interpretative course, shedding anticipatory light on the readings to come.

In a realm so vast and fluid, oceanic methodologies offer generative insights, as we find in Edouard Glissant's idea of relationality—of the sea as *the* medium through which worlds are brought into creative exchange with one another. For Glissant, though we cannot strip back colonial history, we can retrieve and filter in understandings from beyond its conceptual range. So, too, Hawaiian Epeli Hau'ofa's concept of the archipelagic draws out writings that are at once discrete and yet interconnected, as in the nature of an archipelago, that highlight the 'mutable relationship between human bodies and the ocean'.[62] The Caribbean poet Kamau Brathwaite relatedly describes the action of the ocean as tidalectic, open-ended, and cyclical, where the local and global exist in a state of continuous contact and interchange. In the far south, glacial striations, atmospheric effects, littoral experiences, and other interrelated geophysical features can be used as alternative prompts for thinking more southerly, allowing us to speak of a certain degree of hemispheric intimacy, as later chapters will explore.[63]

Maintaining hemispheric solidarity, Isabel Hofmeyr's methodological reflections on 'dockside reading' from and through coastal environments offer further helpful protocols for oceanic thinking, always directed from a 'southern latitude'.[64] For Hofmeyr, 'punctuated sequences', stringing together 'a bit of this and a bit of that', provide ways of theorising 'laterally, vertically, and contrapuntally between different water worlds'. This emphasis on affinities and parallels between fluid southern latitudes interleaves with Boaventura de Sousa Santos's precept in *Epistemologies of the South* that 'the understanding of the world is greater than the western understanding of the world'. Or, in Anne Salmond's definition of 'cosmo-diversity', the world is 'a composite of different realities as seen by different peoples'. (Therefore, a song, a chant or indeed a literary text can express 'a world *objectively from inside it*').[65] Such recognitions challenge and disrupt the imperial 'terms and sensibility' of western thought, as Walter Mignolo's work on decoloniality also outlines.[66]

From the layered, collage-like readings that this book gathers together, my hope is that the far south will emerge as a composite space in which different planes of experience—littoral, peninsular, oceanic—may be seen to overlap, diverge, and interconnect again. In this view, in the words of geographer Doreen Massey, the overlooked limits and edges become 'coeval' and 'radically contemporary' with everywhere else.[67]

## The Global South in Theory

The south of *Southern Imagining* at certain points intersects but does not coincide with the Global South. 'Global South' is a geopolitical term from development economics referring to lower and middle-income countries, and bears a similar valence to the now-outmoded 'Third World'. As did 'Third World', 'Global South' does work as a geographic metaphor to indicate underdevelopment and peripherality. Yet, while a number of countries in the Global South are in the southern hemisphere, the countries that make up the far southern edge of this book are not all Global South countries. At the same time, most austral countries are primary producers and, therefore, tend to have a client relationship with industrialised economies in the north.[68]

*Southern Imagining* collaborates with efforts in Global South historiography to recalibrate world thinking in a more southerly direction. It agrees that our efforts to theorise the global mean more than merely expanding the locations where social theory is carried out. Challenging presumptions of universal reach demands that we pay heed to 'counterflows' of knowledge from outside the west, as Gurminder Bhambra also advises.[69] Raewyn Connell's *Southern Theory* (2020) has made one of the more promising responses to this call by drawing Global South theorists, including Raul Prebisch and Paulin Hountondji, into a transnational dialogue with Global North interlocutors about empire, modernity, land and race.[70] For his part, Dilip Menon in *Changing Theory* (2022) develops terms from various African, Asian, and South American languages, including *tarbiyya* (rooftop cultivation, in Arabic) and *dadan* (credit, in Persian), as his contribution to the project of theorising from within nonwestern thought-worlds.[71]

Yet even this important decolonial work does not always question the underlying conceptual patterns in global sociology that keep in place already normative northern vantage points. The unvarying emphasis on binary north-south axes usually takes for granted the methodological predominance of the north. An influential case-in-point is Jean and John Comaroff's apparently south-leaning *Theory from the South* (2012).[72] While the work productively defines the 'global south' as an 'inherently slippery, inchoate, unfixed' sign always in creative flux, it nonetheless sees modernity as singular and hence, paradoxically, as emanating from a still-predominant, technologically superior 'Euro-America'. As also in world-systems theory, this concentrically arranged 'one, uneven' world is conditioned to marginalise southern perspectives.

In historical studies, too, the south tends largely to be taken as a northern projection, defined in relation to Euro-America.[73] Peter Beilharz's *Thinking from the Antipodes* (2015), for example, builds on Australian art historian Bernard Smith's important definition of the antipodes not as a place but 'a spatial and cultural relationship'. Yet Smith's understanding, and Beilharz's after him, nonetheless tacitly privileges the unequal north-south underpinnings to that relationship.[74] Relatedly, David Johnson's *Imagining the Cape Colony* (2012) considers the eighteenth-century concepts of the nation, community, and resistance through which the region was understood.[75] But his account of the Griqua people's resistant appropriation of these ideas does not ultimately contest the predominance of European thinking in local Cape politics.[76]

A comparable, as if involuntary, gravitation shapes even Sujit Sivasundaram's *Waves Across the South* (2021), a history that explicitly sets out to readjust north-south heuristic axes. Sivasundaram emphasises Indigenous creativity and resistance within a broad swathe of revolutionary littoral cultures from across the modern empires of the southwest Indian Ocean, the South Pacific, and the Tasman Sea.[77] Yet the book's fault lines of encounter run between 'Western imperialism' or civilisation and these southern locales. Aspects of imperial experience are forged in the oceanic south, yet the drivers of trade and commerce still operate axially from the north.

As in historical and sociological studies, so, too, literary: critical perspectives from the south tend to lack institutional backing and status. Southern writers are included in global affiliations only to the extent that they conform to outside definitions and expectations.[78] For Pascale Casanova, the process of *littérisation*, the means of achieving visibility in the world republic of letters, assigns a different status to the so-called 'disinherited' provinces, the territories south of the equator.[79] While Jahan Ramazani's *Poetry in a Global Age* (2020) considers how border-crossing poetry theorises its own transnational movement, the book's idea of the global is identified with reference to the Anglo-American north.[80]

This insistent northern focus of literary theory and historiography is, on one level, understandable. The historical biases of language, discipline, and influence are not easily disrupted.[81] Though it was in part written under southern skies, by a southern-born writer, *Southern Imagining*, too, is undeniably located within and shaped by northern conceptual traditions. The study cannot ignore that the main institutions of knowledge about the wider world are located in the northern hemisphere. Moreover, as the new technological and media networks build on those laid down in the colonial era, with every new

innovation, the world's unevenness is reproduced and further overdetermined. The online world that many of us now inhabit for much of the time is interpretatively weighted towards the already-dominant hemisphere.

Southern spaces have, without doubt, produced great thinkers, navigators, discoverers, and scholars, yet in the official annals, their names do not feature, and even if they were known or, at least, better known, they would not carry equivalent value. Up to today, southern histories, individuals, techniques, and products gain recognition and comprehensibility only through arriving in the north. Northerners, meanwhile, remain habituated to seeing themselves in the driving seat of world history, commanding the vantage point from which 'the rest' is judged.[82] Or, as Olga Tokarczuk observes in *Flights*, travelling Europeans miss in far-flung places like the green islands of Aotearoa a clear point of geohistorical focus, the sense of a 'real' or recognisable place to arrive at.[83]

All in all, an asymmetric north-south force field continues to shape global vectors of knowledge production and dissemination, including Global South thought. Few to no northern systems are equipped to respect the south's epistemological elusiveness. To address these asymmetries, however inadequately, *Southern Imagining* inclines to the most powerful imaginative resource we have to hand—writing on and from the south that turns northern presumption on its head, for which the so-called margins of the world are consistently present, immediate, and vividly thought and lived.

## Outline

As a study in southern perception, *Southern Imagining* might in a previous time have concentrated on bringing the far hemisphere's seeming strangeness into its interpretative purview. It might have begun with northern encounter narratives and 'eventual' responses from southerners.[84] But, in so far as the book also sets about reversing such perspectives, this would not have been a promising way to begin.

Instead, *Southern Imagining* works athwart ideas of singular worlds and crosscuts the northern sightlines that have always been projected onto southern lands. Some chapters follow the parabolic pathways that European travellers took into the south, around the southern capes, routes that went there and back again. Others consider both latitudinal and hemispheric lines of travel that emerge from the south and radiate within its spaces. The readings zoom in on these pathways at their critical turning points and places of resistance, the moments of tension and redirection that some experienced as rebirth and new beginning.

Chapters on Indigenous perceptions of southern environments bracket the book. Empire has meant that the lands, oceans, and living creatures of the south are generally imagined not through local words and ideas but by using concepts from elsewhere that must be adjusted and revised when applied to southern things. Against these northern imports, the framing chapters (2 and 7) prioritise southern ontologies over imperial temporalities, while striving always to respect their difference and separateness. Though at times necessarily brief and provisional, my readings explore how the most vital perspectives on the south are to be found in the artefacts, songs, legends, and, later, written narratives and poetry that Indigenous and southern-born cultures have produced.

This approach does not deny the consequences of colonial history or the fact that any citation of Indigenous knowledge in an unequal world can come across as extractive. Indigenous cultures everywhere have been and remain violently and exploitatively entangled in northern formations. My readings try to recognise this. They understand that any sharing of knowledge under such conditions runs the risk of seeming appropriative. And they attempt to address southern Indigenous cosmologies and languages always in a spirit of quietness and integrity, seeking to listen and to observe. At no point do my assertions of southern hereness intend that the remote south be somehow incorporated or reincorporated into the Global North. Rather, I suggest that the north find ways of acknowledging and learning from the south's simultaneous presentness and remoteness within the planetary spacetime we all share.

Between the bookend chapters, the others build a chronological arc of writing about and of the far south, largely but not only in English. Chapters 3 and 4 engage with northern writings that have been formatively open to the wonder and difference of the south and to perceptions of commonality that link across the hemisphere. Meanwhile, the settler literature covered in chapter 6 and the contemporary Indigenous writing in chapter 7 find ways of capturing the south's distinctiveness, taking pains to stretch imported norms of perception in order to better adjust to its differently tilted environments.

At the heart of the book is a chapter on journeys to Antarctica, so that the South Pole becomes, not inaptly, the centre around which the rest of the book turns.

Chapter 2, 'Shared Skies: Speaking and Singing the South', looks at indigenous southern legends of the skies and the seas that were used to map countries and to navigate the wide ocean. For Indigenous inhabitants of the south, the lands where they lived, whether island or inland, littoral or latitudinal, were *here*. Their perceptual habits fitted the shapes of this world, their languages

matched its features and contours. Under the subheadings 'Words', 'Stars', and 'Ocean', the chapter ponders Indigenous words and stories that interact with southern spaces and asks how Indigenous cosmologies might suggest modes of southern reading. The chapter closes with a discussion of Polynesian modes of navigation using the stars, for which southern skies were centred and centring, not other or different.

'Reading the South—Camões's "Audacious Passage"', chapter 3, begins the consideration of the south as the far end of the earth that Europeans began to chart from the fifteenth century onwards. We observe how the work of geographic worlding undertaken by Spanish and Portuguese navigators drew on previous maps and writings to turn the south into a knowable global object. The chapter takes as its case study Luís Vaz de Camões' *Os Lusíadas* (*The Lusíads*), outlining how this 1572 epic about Portuguese navigation around Africa to Asia created and interpreted the other hemisphere for Europe—as, too, Alonso de Ercilla's more or less contemporaneous *Araucana* relayed the history of the conquistadores in South America back to Spain. Even as Camões, for his part, contained the south's strangeness within the shapely ottava rima of his poem, he also captured its uncontrollable spirit in the invented myth of the fearsome Adamastor who presides over the Cape of Storms.

Chapter 4, 'Writing Southern Seas', considers how the early to mid-nineteenth-century writers Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Darwin, Herman Melville, and Mary Shelley, all in one way or another grappled with Camões' challenge of finding a symbolic language through which to give meaningful form to the vast south. Like him, they wrote back through the history of southern exploration, captured most notably in the journals of Captain James Cook (1769–76), while the later writers also took Coleridge's own *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as a model. The readings further develop the idea of writing as navigational and cartographic, a way of shaping the beyond by projecting figures upon it, one of which is the parabolic arc that Camões first traced in his epic. Their work begins to build important perceptions of lateral connection across the hemisphere, vividly captured in Charles Darwin's observations of similar patterns of evolutionary change that manifest across the far-flung southern continents.

Outer edge, limit case, the ne plus ultra—the Antarctic continent not only shapes its own climate but has also impinged on all forms of southern imagining. Chapter 5, '"Silent Vastness", the Farthest South', considers imaginings of Antarctica as the definitive south. For Southern Ocean-facing countries, the remote proximity of Antarctica distinguishes their own far distant location

and, hence, at least potentially, their interconnection. The chapter opens with the February 2022 discovery of Ernest Shackleton's ship *Endurance* on the bed of the Weddell Sea, a moment that reverberated with connotations of the south as inaccessible and fantastically distant. Similar associations ramify through the responses to the icy continent in the works of Chris Orsman, Bill Manhire, Beryl Bainbridge, and Jon McGregor. In their readings, the truth of the extreme south appears endlessly to recede before the attempt to describe it, in the manner of an asymptote, as a closing reading of Jenny Diski further considers.

From the early decades of the nineteenth century, Europeans in large numbers emigrated to far southern lands. Chapter 6, '"Breaking the Solemn Monotony": Settler Cartographies', explores how settler writers—southern arrivals and the southern-born—experienced the southern lands and landscapes that had become home, yet to which they ambiguously belonged. The featured authors, both novelists and poets—Olive Schreiner, Blanche Baughan, Katherine Mansfield, Judith Wright, and Janet Frame—all articulate an existential unease about inhabiting southern spaces, yet at the same time express a conflicted but intense desire imaginatively to embrace their native land. Their writing seeks ways of expressing centredness, even if with borrowed tools, as Janet Frame perhaps does most successfully. The writers reach beyond the nation for a more mobile and interconnected sense of place, each building in their work a new compass for reading the south.

In counterpoint, the penultimate chapter 7, 'Keeping South', turns to contemporary southern perceptions from within the south, especially Indigenous views of the sky and the land, as expressed in a mosaic of texts from southern Africa, Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand. The chapter centres how the south is thought and reimagined on its own terms in the present day. Authors like Alexis Wright and Terry-Ann Adams, for example, tune into local and regional cultural vocabularies to address their sometimes dystopian but always symbolically charged southern contexts. The readings amplify the latitudinal, comparative work of previous chapters by surveying the motifs the writers develop for thinking or imagining the south as here and now.

In the closing chapter, 'Southern Tilt', I take personal experiences of southern starscapes and oceanic horizons as frames through which to consider, finally, what these studies from the so-called far edges of the world might teach about reading from the outside in and about understanding our planet in its entirety, as comprising *both* south *and* north. I ask what we are able to see in our imagination when we keep toggling the world's axes and flipping its poles.

Across its length, *Southern Imagining* questions how northern words have named southern things to the exclusion of the south's own indigenous vocabularies and, hence, perspectives and knowledges. Each chapter endeavours to work with, around, and through this overwriting by extending wherever possible the terms of southern linguistic and literary reference.[85] However, that the book's predominant focus is Anglophone is incontrovertible and introduces limitations of which I have been constantly aware. The Anglophone zones of southern Africa, Australasia, and Antarctica make up the main field of concern, in spite of the many interlinguistic and comparative countermeasures I have taken.[86] My awareness of never quite being able to unthink the biases of my disciplinary training has dogged my steps from the moment I first began to parse my way through this project. I have attempted to live with the delimiting consequences by working wherever possible against the grain, drawing insight from some of the writers' own confusion, bafflement, and transport, as we find, for example, when a canonical northern poet like Coleridge considers the south. Time and again, I have found that it is in entanglement and contradiction that a southern aesthetic may suddenly, elusively but vertiginously, like a revolving binary star long ago observed but then forgotten, glimmer back into view.

## Southern Curves

As any project of southern imagining means working with a counter-normative polarity, a closing note may be helpful on how *Southern Imagining* sets about doing southern thinking. Throughout, as I anticipated, the readings strive to rotate us around and through curvilinear southern space, making its angles and inclinations dynamic and present. Texts from both the north and the south draw interpretative lines in relation to which more southerly or farther south perceptions of the planet become possible. These lines are the parabola, the asymptote, and the lateral or south-south link-up.

With its rotatory, out-and-back-again movement, the parabola is a predominant figure in the book, one that correlates with how we perceive curving motion through space. As we see in chapters 3 and 4, the boomerang shape of the journey into and back from the south, around the southern capes, not only captures something of the reversal and estrangement that southern travel entailed for northerners but also builds a changing turn into the text and hence into the experience of reading it. The reader arguably becomes involved, through their reading, in the different turn or spin of the hemisphere: the

parabolic movement of 'doubling the point' conditions us to a more southerly awareness. It is felicitous that the word 'parabola' shares a root with 'parable', meaning to see and to set side by side. As in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* or *Moby-Dick* that trace transformative southern journeys, a parable allows unexpected parallels and surprising new meanings to come to light.

Northern associations of the far south with such parabolic routes date from the early days of European sail, and underpin late eighteenth-century South Seas travelogues, foremost among them the spectral journey of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. The turning route around the great Capes of Good Hope and Horn encoded a process of thinking into southern space that transferred from travelogues through poetry into fiction, gathering up and interlacing other tropes of extremity and switchback. Joseph Conrad's maritime memoir, *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906), too, is dominated by images of gale-battered ships turning around the two stormy capes.[87] And in his iconic novel of the sea, *The Narcissus* (1897), the parabolic journey 'to the southward', from Bombay to London, with the 'resplendent curve of the Milky Way' overhead, once again takes the ship through a complete metamorphosis, as if retracing that curve. Boarded by 'merciless' seas off the Cape, the crew's fight with the storm transforms them irreversibly from one state to another:

> from that time our life seemed to start afresh as though we had died and had been resuscitated. All the first part of the voyage, the Indian Ocean on the other side of the Cape, all that was lost in a haze, like an ineradicable suspicion of some previous existence. It had ended—then there were blank hours: a livid blurr—and again we lived![88]

In Jules Verne's *Antarctic Mystery*, which appeared in the same year, the shape persists, at least residually. Though the *Halbrane*'s intention is to sail as far south as possible on the trail of Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, the crew finds that they have nonetheless turned: 'from the western longitudes . . . into the eastern longitudes': 'we had left the South Pole behind'.[89]

A line that approaches a given curve into infinity—the asymptote gestures at another key feature of southern experience. Especially in chapter 4, on polar journeys, we find not reversal but endless movement towards a limit that is never reached, the traveller (and hence the reader) never quite seeing or locating what they have set out to find. An asymptotic line of infinite and perhaps fatal approach unmistakably begins to intrude upon Verne's same polar adventure tale, for example. This farthest south appears to repel human intrusion: 'it is not permitted to us to venture so far in these latitudes', as the Boatswain

says.[90] Mirroring the failed attempts of Cook and others to reach the southern continent, Poe and Verne both relay the awareness that polar adventures bring a new conceptual blur into play, another form of orientation in space, and a new figure through which to emblematise limitlessness.

Returning from the pole, the lateral link-ups in chapters 6 and 7 bring us back to parabolic lines, looping journeys, and transformative turning pathways across and around the hemisphere. But the difference from earlier chapters is that these journeys often begin and sometimes end in the south, and take their bearings from the archipelagic dispersal of the southern lands and islands. Whereas the navigators in the first half of the book, especially those from the north, sometimes found themselves missing the goals with which they embarked, stumbling instead on surprising and wonderful new trajectories of travel, the routes traced now are southern first and last, immersed in southern environments. Accordingly, the readings sweep across austral spaces in wide arcs, bringing different parts of the hemisphere into conjunction and, sometimes, dialogue.

The smaller bounding and jumping curves that surface in particular in chapter 7, show clearly how the continents and even hemispheres might be imagined as side by side, parabolically, rather than as opposites. As in the biographies of Olive Schreiner, Janet Frame, or Witi Ihimaera, among others, though the writers' career trajectories lead away from the south, they eventually curve back there, as is in the nature of the boomerang whose shape they take. Together, these writings weave chains of association between seemingly far-flung spaces, so encouraging the kind of constellated thinking through which the far south might, little by little, emerge under its own lights.

But whether parabolic, asymptotic, or chain-linked, most of the readings that comprise *Southern Imagining* are unmistakably navigational, bearing out their counter-normative purposes with, at times, dizzying effects. Each reading might be imagined as the experience of sailing from a familiar bay, rounding the headland, and then turning south—facing into a dimension where the constellations are upside down, and even the most trusted bearings operate otherwise. The book's extensive footnotes, with the multiple axes of further reading they offer, intentionally intensify this vertiginous quality.[91] But it is at the same time offset and stilled with the inclusion of south-facing photographs at the start of each chapter and throughout the impressionistic closing one. The photographs are offered as points of orientation south, as reminders of where we find ourselves, and where—deeper, lower, higher, farther—we are headed.

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