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M/C Journal, Vol 20, No 6 (2017)

# North by North

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## Abstract

Seven centuries of cartographic convention has placed north at the top of maps, and by logical extension at the top of the world. This convention has been closely aligned with another, known as the Mercator projection. Devised by the Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator in 1659, this system of map-making has been uncritically handed down through the centuries to the present time and continues to be the cartographic standard in many parts of the world. Mercator's projection not only points northward but exaggerates northern landmasses at the expense of the south. For example, it magnifies Greenland to be approximately the same size as Africa, which is actually fourteen times larger.

The Greenland example is one of many northern amplifications and conceits that belittle the south. The specific contrast with Africa was presented with deadpan humour and devastating effect in a 2012 episode of Aaron Sorkin's *The West Wing*. Cartographers for Social Equity lobby President Bartlet's White House to withdraw all Mercator maps from US schools and replace them with Gall-Peters maps.

The Gall-Peters projection represents with greater fidelity and accuracy the relative proportions of the world's landmasses. The Cartographers for Social Equity fail in their representation but, coincidental or not, five years after the screening of *The West Wing* episode Gall-Peters maps began to be phased in at schools in two American states.

North and south are cardinal directions and polar opposites that refer to exact locations at either end of the globe. Within ice-bound regions, the North Pole defines the Arctic, an old term derived from Latin and Greek to mean north. By contrast, its antithesis—the Antarctic—is a negative term that means opposite to north. It is defined by the South Pole. This linguistic preference suggests that north is the one while south is the other.

Northern primacy and southern inferiority similarly applies to the geographical use of the term "sub", literally meaning below north. Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, is an official term that defines all African regions south of the Sahara. The cartographic sub-Saharan regions embrace around 80% of the African continent, forty-six of Africa's fifty-four countries, and are home for more than one billion people.

In the feature article in this issue of *M/C Journal*, Alice Gaby *et al*. note that the practice of orienting north in maps and other cultural artefacts has the effect of defining all other directions as subordinate to and dependent on the north. Yet to orient, as Edward Said established in his influential treatise *Orientalism*, is to look to the east and not to the north. Europe's objective in the orient, Said argued, is ongoing subjugation through cultural othering, an attitude and ideology that carried seamlessly to North America as the occident's most conspicuous achievement in expansion and manifest destiny.

Medieval European maps did orient to the east—not the north—towards Jerusalem and the birthplace of Christ, but also in the direction of the rising sun, while early Chinese maps oriented to the south. According to Gaby *et al*., the Celtic term for north, *clet̄h*, translates as "north-left"—meaning facing east.

True north is north's most accurate marker, but it is never certain above sea level because of the shifting polar icecaps. Rather, true north remains locked in the icy nether at the bottom of a frozen ocean. It is plotted at ninety degrees north but then terminates and disappears. Every direction at true north becomes south. Except for the relentless insistence of the compass, which indicates that north is further still, back along 72.62 degrees longitude west at the magnetic north.

The potency of the north, therefore, might be said to derive from its telling—its narrative—more so than the provability or otherwise of its existence and location. This takes shape in stories that range from the very old and the epic to those that are smaller and more local. Across millennia, beliefs in the north have guided direction and underpinned human certainties of what is here and what is not. This ontology is central to the understanding of north and its apparent ubiquity.

As metaphor, north registers extremes, for example, in a good deal of contemporary screen culture: in the most northerly settlement on earth in *Fortitude*, which aired for the first time in 2015; in Canada's deep north in *Cardinal*, which premiered in 2017; and among the expanding seasons of Nordic noir from Denmark's *The Killing* (three series 2007-12) and Sweden's *The Bridge* (four seasons to 2018) to the British production of *Wallander* (situated in Sweden, four seasons to 2016), and tracing an influence into the deep south of Australia's *Jack Irish* and *The Code* (Nordic) and Argentina's "eco-thriller" *Cromo*, which screened in 2017 (SBS).

The English writer C.S. Lewis is credited with coining the term "Northernness", which he says was inspired by his reading of *Siegfried and the Twilight of the Gods* as a teenager. "Pure 'Northernness' engulfed me", recalled Lewis, with a "vision of huge clear spaces above the Atlantic in the twilight Northern summer" (King 194). The imputation here is that northernness is of the earth and of the heavens, which Lewis subsequently resolved, unconvincingly, in his concept of human joy and faith.

In the 1960s, the French-Canadian geographer Louis-Edmond Hamelin proposed a new term, "nordicity", as a measure of northernness and polar values. Following on from this work, Daniel Chartier observed in 2006: "contemporary analyses produced in Europe, Scandinavia, English Canada and, more recently, Québec have shown, 'North' is first and foremost a discursive system, whose components, preferred forms, figures, characters, narrative schemata, colours and resonances can be traced historically" (1).

Chartier acknowledges that north is "variable in nature, depending on the position of the speaker [viewer]", while the "concepts of 'nordicity' and 'winterity'" speak to the "idea of North". That is, existing beyond the "theme of winter, ice and frost, beyond the descriptions contained in realistic novels" this "imaginary of North", Chartier observes, "opens a vast critical terrain—a terrain that not only poses problems related to the specificity of the genres and forms in which it appears, but also creates the opportunity for reflection on the links between a territory and the imaginary ..." (1).

Old Nordic sagas tell of a pagan north which initially drew Lewis into northernness. These sagas figure in Lewis's best known work, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. They were also a standard conversation piece at Oxford between Lewis and his close contemporary and friend J.R.R. Tolkien. Among other influences, Nordic myths found expression in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and its prequel *The Hobbit*.

Revealing something of a Mercator preference, Tolkien's setting is called Middle Earth, even though it is located on a northern continent. There are also intimations of a balancing landmass to the south—an equivalent to classical conceptions of the antipodes—projected as a Dark Land.

Between 2001 and 2014, the antipodean filmmaker, New Zealander Peter Jackson, adapted Tolkien's novels to the big screen. The films were so believable in their recreation of Middle Earth that Jackson's locations are now among New Zealand's top tourist destinations with international travellers especially. Operators unashamedly advertise that New Zealand is Middle Earth. Perhaps they have a case. After all, New Zealand was named by the Dutch mariner Abel Tasman (1632-1659) after the explorer's home of Zeeland in the Netherlands, whose capital just happens to be Middelburg.

The appropriation of Nordic legends and stories has a long history. "I am but mad north-north-west", insists the Danish Prince Hamlet in Shakespeare's famous tragedy, which was staged for the first time over four hundred years ago in London. Closer to our own time, "Thor's hammer swung to geography", wrote the Irish poet Seamus Heaney. "Compose in darkness", Heaney recommended, "expect aurora borealis … but no light" ("North").

The duality implied here is the subject of Louise Kolff's consideration of "Scandimania" and of what she calls north's "underbelly" in this issue. As Kolff observes, contemporary Norway and Denmark are rated by their own people to be the "happiest" places on earth. Their *under*belly, which might also operate as code for south, though that is not Kolff's intention, manifests in violence such as the 2011 massacre of 92 people at Oslo and Utøya Island by a right-wing extremist. The mythologising of Scandinavia, Kolff concludes, "may also serve to legitimise a yearning for a simple, benign and progressive whiteness".

Benign or not, yearning whiteness is potentially treacherous in the context of the "extreme" and "black" metal scenes of Scandinavia, as Hoad and Whiting argue in their article: "understandings of 'Nordic' as an exclusory ethnic category marked by strict boundaries" come "into conflict with the Nordic region's self-perceptions as a liberal democracy".

Further, Hoad and Whiting suggest: "Northern Europe's reputation as a 'famously tolerant political community' can … be seen, on the one hand, as a crucial disconnect from the *in*tolerant North mediated by factions of Nordic extreme metal scenes and on the other, a political community that provides the material conditions which allow extreme metal to flourish." Nordicness, they go on to argue, is a "crucial form of scenic infrastructure–albeit one that has been both celebrated and condemned in the sites and spaces of Nordic extreme metal".

For the transatlantic poet Sylvia Plath, the "long blackness" of her north is experienced internally and with greater quietude but with no-less deadly effect: "I shall move north. I shall move into a long blackness. / I see myself as a shadow, neither man nor woman, / Neither woman, happy to be like a man, nor a man / Blunt and flat enough to feel no lack. I feel a lack. / I hold my fingers up, ten white pickets. / See, the darkness is leaking from the cracks. / I cannot contain it. I cannot

contain my life" (*Collected* 182). In "Full Fathom Five", Plath, like Seamus Heaney of a later generation, addresses "old myths" that emerge from "obscurity" into "danger": "Of North, to be steered clear / Of, not fathomed" (*Selected* 17).

It is into just such a condition of "not fathomed" but also not "steered clear" that Ian Maguire's mid-nineteenth century whalers venture "too late in the season and … too far north" in the novel *North Water* (2016). In the "still and dark and cold" of their shipwreck, a mere handful of the crew survive into the Arctic winter, which shows "no sign of life or movement anywhere" (201).

For one of the survivors, Sumner, "it is as if the end of the world has already happened … as if he is the only man left alive on the frigid earth" (288). Yet, like Friday to Defoe's stranded mariner on his desert island (actually a tropical island of abundance), Sumner finds himself not quite alone with Inuit hunters but nonetheless cut off from more familiar associations.

What emerges from these and innumerable other examples is the multiplicity of the applications of north. North can be brutal and hegemonic but it can also figure specifically and within, as the poetry of Plath suggests. In Emma Mead's article in this issue, "Bold Walks in the Inner North", north functions as an actual location and as a metaphor: "the inner north serves as 'true north', a magnetic destination for this stage of life, an opening into an experiential, exciting adult world, rather than a place haunted". Outer north, by contrast, is a place of unpredictable threats, dangers, and violence.

In truth there are many norths and conceptions of north. North is imaginatively signified by the black turtle in China, but also by historic fears stretching back to the Qin Dynasty and the building of a great wall designed to keep marauding northerners at bay and quarantined within their own north country. In Russia, north divides between far north and extreme north. North delimits the hermit kingdom of North Korea, Britain's province of Northern Ireland, and North Sudan, which also goes by the name The Sudan.

North figures as the place beyond the Wall, the Lands of Always Winter, and home to the nomadic Wildlings in *Game of Thrones* (seven seasons to 2017), and as Minnesota nice in *Fargo* (original film and three seasons to 2017). The variety extends to big screen treatments as distinct and different as, for example, Hitchcock's 1959 classic *North by North West*, *El Norte* (1983) set in Guatemala, *Insomnia* (2002) set in Alaska, *The Cave of the Yellow Dog* (2005) set in Mongolia, *Last Cab to Darwin* (2015), a road movie that traverses Australia's north, and a growing number of north-south love stories from Bollywood. North has been proposed as a cinema genre similar to the better-known western, or as what Scott Mackenzie and Anna Westerståhl Stenport call "films on ice", including the theme and trope of *la longue traverse* or journey of death.

North serves to mark the US's most profound and sacred places of wrenching apart and of reunion along the Mason-Dixon Line, while that country's 45th President is determined to draw a new line of separation and exclusion in the form of a wall across the Mexican border—thereby defining north America as distinct from its other, the Latin-south, including Mexico and all of South America.

In his contribution to this issue, Patrick West observes a divide along the Mason-Dixon Line through the writing of Herman Melville. West argues that "Melville deliberately used signifiers … of directionality and place to reframe the overt context of his allegory (Civil War divisions of North and South) through teasing reference to the contemporaneous emergence of Manifest Destiny as an East-West historical spatialisation".

The implications are that while north may define the US's best efforts at higher values—slavery was abolished as a result of the northern states waging war against the southern states—the nation continues to lament and at times celebrate the much sentimentalised figure of Johnny Reb and his lost confederacy. In this frame, West presents Melville as a northern gentleman with a southern bearing.

Living above the 49th parallel produces what the Canadian performer k.d. lang refers to as "Hymns" of melancholy attachment in the song sheets of Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell, and Neil Young, while Margaret Atwood's dystopian *The Handmaid's Tale* (novel 1984, film 1990, television series one season to 2017) holds out the prospect of a northern sanctuary free from the tyranny of a fundamentalist US south.

India proclaims two Norths—the North East and the North to the North-West, which was the country of devastating partition in 1947—while from the point of view of the southern states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu all else in India is north. North Africa terminates at the Southern Mediterranean and shares Egypt with the Middle East, South Sudan is north of Uganda and Kenya, North Korea is south of China.

A massive body of water covers two thirds of the earth's surface, culturally distributed across five named oceans and seven named seas. There is a Southern Ocean in the south and an Arctic Ocean in the north. The Pacific and the Atlantic are contrived as single entities, but for convenience are informally divided around the equator into north and south.

The South Pacific is frequently identified by its more romantic appellation South Seas, which also defines the region known as Oceania, including Australia, New Zealand, and the "love islands" of Polynesia (Smith). It is signified by the colour blue. By contrast, the North Atlantic is mighty and military. It lends its name to the most powerful assemblage of destructive capabilities in human history, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, while doubling as one of the busiest merchant waterways in the world. It is signified by the colour grey.

England divides into south and north, and north again into Scotland and the Outer Hebrides in the North Sea, which are all contained, by an Act of Union dating from 1800, within the United Kingdom. Also included within this act, Wales similarly divides into regions. In the north, the Welsh self-identify as being more authentically Welsh and the protectors of Welsh heritage, language, and culture, while the south is viewed somewhat suspiciously within the orbit and influence of the English. The status of Northern Ireland has been contested back and forth with Eire on sectarian grounds.

England is commonly conceptualised as the England of the south and the east. Sojourners north become "conscious of entering a strange country" (101), observed George Orwell in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937). The shifting of region south to north produces an unsettling affect brought on by the loss of familiarity and visual comfort: "your eye, accustomed to the South" (97) begins to discern contrasts and differences.

For their part, Orwell also observes, "Northerners have got used to that kind of thing and do not notice" the "ugliness" (100) of their everyday worlds. Some even invoke a form of "Northern snobbishness" and explain that it is "only in the North that life is 'real life', that the industrial work done in the North is 'real' work, that the North is inhabited by 'real' people", unlike the "rentiers and their parasites" in the south, which might have presumably included Orwell, though he claimed that he was made to feel most welcome (101).

H.V. Morton's *In Search of England* (1927) proceeds along this well-tramped path of southern-centeredness, as Kevin Foster observes in his article. Ten years before Orwell went in search of Wigan Pier in order to document the lunar-like industrial landscape above Birmingham, Morton quite literally motored by the chimney stacks, slag heaps, and slums and offered little or no commentary as to their presence or significance (Foster).

Accordingly, Morton "does not describe Wigan" or the "north as a whole: he simply overlays them with a vision as they should be", argues Foster, "he invents Wigan and the north that he and England need" (Foster). This invented north exists within what Orwell defines as a specifically English "North-South antithesis which has been rubbed into us for such a long time last" (101). Morton's preferences draw him to well-maintained gardens, manicured lawns, and market towns that exist in numbers just sufficient to spare northerners their regular indignity of living in a "comic no-where land" (Foster).

As he had done in *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), Orwell slummed his way into the north with all the sociological intent of his southern English inclinations and middle-class origins. At the end of his "road", he was supposed to find "Wigan Pier". To his apparent disappointment, the pier existed only in the repertoire of stand-up comics and song and dance acts.

"In fact the 'pier' never existed, except in song and laughter", noted David Sharrock in 2011: "the story goes that day-trippers on the train to Southport, peering out across the blighted landscape in a thick fog, spotted a railway gantry leading to a jetty from which coal was tipped into barges on the canal. 'Are we there yet?' asked a passenger, mistaking the ghostly outline for one of Britain's newly fashionable seaside attractions. 'Nay, lad, that's Wigan Pier tha' cun see,' replied the railway signalman. True or not, the pier became a music-hall staple of George Formby" and gave Orwell his iconic title (Sharrock).

A more resilient style of music and dance than the antiquated music hall of the Wigan-born Formby hit the north of England from America in the early 1960s. The most famous and enduring example of this was the influence of rock and roll on Liverpool's Beatles, who quickly began writing their own songs. A second musical wave manifested in the form of vinyl discs imported from Detroit, Motown, and Chess Records, which translated into a peculiar style and culture known as Northern Soul. In turn, Northern Soul travelled with a North England diaspora to various parts of the world, including south to Colombia and Australia, as Paul Mercieca shows in his article.

The slag heaps of Orwell's north have long since been dressed with turf and lawn, the chimneys have ceased spewing out noxious sulphur dioxide, and the factories are all but devoid of their former workforces with the advent of what Schwab refers to as the fourth industrial revolution. Yet Orwell's persistent negativity remains fixed in the mind. Contemporary "digital self-publishing … conforms to the barbarous north of European literary metaphor", observes Ian Rogers of digital disruption, "Orwell's 'real ugliness of industrialism' governed by the abject lawlessness of David Peace's Yorkshire noir".

Orwell's longer journey north had begun years earlier and much further south than London, in what is now Myanmar (Burma), which he described with more autobiographical verve in the second half of *The Road to Wigan Pier*. "The Road from Mandalay to Wigan is a long one", Orwell explained, "and the reasons for taking it are not immediately clear" (113).

This alternative conceptualisation is central to Devaleena Das's exploration of the global north in her contribution to this issue. According to Das, the global north is both hegemonic and dominating. Following the work of Susan Friedman in *Planetary Modernisms*, Das argues that although "'Global North' and 'Global South' are 'rhetorically spatial' they are 'as geographically imprecise and ideologically weighted as East/West' because 'Global North' signifies 'modern global hegemony' and 'Global South' signifies the 'subaltern, …—a binary construction that continues to place the West at the controlling centre of the plot'".

The specific objective of Das's inquiry is the relationship between northern and southern feminisms. "In general, global north feminism", she argues, "refers to white middle-class feminist movements" as distinct from southern feminism: "in other words, recognising the 'north' as the site of theoretical processing is a euphemism for northern feminists' intellectual supremacy and the inferiority of southern feminist praxis". Das concludes that "women's solidarity is only possible through intercultural and syncretistic negotiation that respects the individual and the community", not the current "imperial cartography of discrimination and oppression" along a north-south divide.

Das notes Australia's paradoxical location within the global south in what foreign policy and security analysts refer to as Australia's geo-political contradiction. This liminal oddity was broached directly in 1991 by Australia's then foreign minister, Senator Gareth Evans. "It is fair to say that we are increasingly coming to be seen no longer as 'odd man out' in this part of the world", commented Evans, "but rather 'odd man in'" (3).

Evans was speaking in Japan as part of the recently convened APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) while courting favour with ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), which had formed twenty-four years earlier in partial response to America's war against North Vietnam. Australia had joined in this war as an American ally in the early 1960s. What had begun as a civil war between north and south quickly escalated into an international conflict with the involvement of the Americans and their allies. Australia had similarly followed the US into an earlier north-south civil war when it sent troops to Korea between 1950 and 1953.

The countries of South East Asia fall within a standard Eurocentric description of the Far East, which came into popular usage in the nineteenth century. The phrase was used to describe European colonies and interests to the east of India, and included China and Japan in the north, all of South East Asia, and the Indonesian archipelago which the Portuguese and then the Dutch for centuries had called the East Indies.

Within this conceptualisation, Australian and New Zealand were considered to be south rather than east. They were part of Australasia or alternatively Oceania. This demarcation between the Far East and the South was confirmed in name—Australia meaning south land—and accorded scientific veracity by the drawing of the so-called Wallace Line in 1859, based on the work of Alfred Russell Wallace who identified distinct biological and ecological zones and a zone transition, temporarily named Wallacea, that separated Asia from Australia.

In a radio speech to the Australian people delivered five months before the outbreak of the Second World War, on 26 April 1939, Prime Minister Robert Menzies offered a corrective to Australia's regular outlook, which centred on British interests and foreign policy. "What Great Britain calls the Far East is to us the near north", Menzies said.

In late 1941, a new Prime Minister, John Curtin, announced a similar separation, citing two global conflicts: "the Australian government's policy has been grounded on two facts. One is that the war with Japan is not a phase of the struggle with the Axis powers, but is a new war. The second is that Australia must go on a war footing" (Curtin). Seven weeks later, the fall of Singapore to Japanese forces on 14 February 1942 confirmed both prime ministers' worst fears about the near north and Australia's new cartography within the influence of the Far East.

Reflecting on this, the poet Judith Wright noted in 1962: "When East becomes North and West is under your feet, / your compass spins frighteningly". Extending the vertigo theme, Francis Maravillas noted that "Judith Wright's pithy description of the experience of vertigo induced by Australia's paradoxical location—as a 'Western' nation on the edge of 'Asia'—is remarkable for its acuity as much as for its prescience" (17).

Australia's "dubious cartography", a term coined by novelist Martin Boyd in 1964, might explain Richard Flanagan's otherwise curious title *Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013), a novel firmly located within the tropics and which never rises above the Tropic of Cancer. It is a story of Australian prisoners of war working on the infamous Thai-Burma railway in South East Asia.

Events in the region would draw Australia ever closer to the near north—the Malayan Emergency 1948-1960, Indonesian Confrontation 1963-1966, Vietnam War 1962-1972—while young non-conscripts ventured further north to London especially. They departed Australia in large numbers to be among the happening scenes of Carnaby Street, Abbey Road, and Kings Road Chelsea, which was *the* street of the swinging sixties. When they needed a breather or had run short of money, they returned to their cheap lodgings, bedsits, and flophouses across Earl's Court, which was colloquially known as Kangaroo Valley.

Ian Britain and Stephen Alomes argued that a significant number of Australians remained expatriated in what might be now reasonably called Australia's Far North, including academics, artists and writers. Freer spirits took an overland trek there or back via the hippy trail through the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan, India, and South East Asia. Their imagined cartography suggested alternative philosophies, coordinates, and place names, such as Marrakech and Kathmandu.

Into the twenty-first century, according to Ryan Daniel's article in this issue, Australia's European Far North continues to set the standard for value in the arts and remains *the* rite of passage for artists. Daniels argues in favour of closer regional ties: "Australia is far closer to Asia than it is to Europe and North America … . Asian populations are expected to continue to increase, with a concomitant increase in economic grown with the rise of middle classes in China and India, especially, creating new markets for the consumption of creative product".

Jill Ker Conway bucked the London trend as a young Australian in 1960 and flew in a contrary north-easterly direction to New York, where she claimed to discover her *True North* (1994), the title of her memoir. Upon arrival Ker Conway instantly recognised "why F. Scott Fitzgerald found it so romantic" (6).

Yet America's great writer of the jazz age had situated his most iconic novel between the two spheres of East Egg and West Egg. These are separated by the wasteland of the Valley of the Ashes. New York might be reasonably conceptualised as true north for a travelling Australian, but for most Americans it is located in the idiom and expression "back east."

The jazz age had "bore" Fitzgerald "up": it "flattered him and gave him more money than he had dreamed of, simply for telling people that he felt as they did …" ("Echoes" 1). By 1931, he looked back with nostalgia and regret that it was now over.

Yet, as Bruce Johnston has argued, jazz remained alive and well in the US. It arrived in Australia with the million or more American servicemen posted here during the Second World War (23-30). The beneficiaries of this cultural influx were the southern cities of Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth.

Yet the American presence was heavily concentrated in Australia's north, and Queensland in particular, where jazz flourished up and down the Pacific coast, from Brisbane to Cairns and beyond. The transient nature of performers persists to the present day, with itinerant musicians moving between the key northern population centres of Mackay, Cairns, and Townsville, argues Peter Mackenzie in his article.

This north country represents the lands of the Australian legend, replete with crocodiles, venomous snakes, poisonous spiders, and wild buffalo, as Claire Brennan notes in her article "Northern Safari". It is the north country of Jeannie Gunn's *We of the Never Never* (1909): "behind the Back of Beyond, in the Land of the Never Never; in that elusive land with elusive name—a land of dangers and hardships yet loved as few lands are loved—a land that bewitches her people with strange spells and mysteries, until they call sweet bitter and bitter sweet" (1).

This is also the north country of Katharine Susannah Prichard's *Coonardoo* (1929), Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia* (1938), and Alexis Wright's *Carpentaria* (2006); of Rolf de Heer and Peter Djigirr's *Ten Canoes* (2006), Warwick Thornton's *Samson and Delilah* (2009), Brendan Fletcher's *Mad Bastards* (2010), Greg McLean's *Wolf Creek* (2010), Ivan Sen's *Goldstone* (2016), and even Baz Luhrmann's *Australia* (2008); and the soundscapes of Yothu Yindi, the Pigram Brothers, Mr Yunupingu, Christine Anu, Seaman Dan, and Kev Carmody.

Australia's north country is tropical and might logically suggest to Australians an alternative cartography and outlook, as Sandra Harding has argued. "More than 2000 years ago, the Greek philosopher Aristotle declared there were three zones in the world", notes Harding, "the Frigid Zone, the Temperate Zone and the Torrid Zone." The temperate zone "was the only place where civilised beings could live" (Harding).

In 2016, the United Nations gazetted the first International Day of the Tropics, noting, as Harding points out, "with almost half of the world's population, more than half of its young people, many of its fastest growing economies, most of the world's biological and cultural diversity, and ecosystems services of global importance, what happens in the world's tropic zone over the coming decades will have global implications."

The tropics suggest a cartography and a perspective that are independent of the hegemony of the global north and of western orientalism. It is a paradigm shift in direction and power. Defined by the Tropics of Cancer in the north and Capricorn in the south, the tropics cover large parts of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Latin

America, Australia, and almost all of South East Asia and India. Each of these has a north, some of which are iconic like the north of Australia, but the orientation tends on the latitudes and not the poles.

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