

Keys to the South

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Apsley, Victoria.

Photograph by Kevin Murray

Thinking beyond the Southern Hemisphere

Apsley is a small Victorian town on the edge of the Wimmera, just before the South Australian border. With a population of 166, there's nothing much to divert a stray tourist on their way to the nearby Coonawarra. But those who do decide to stop and stretch their legs in the broad median strip will discover Apsley's 'claim to fame'. A broken wooden sign proclaims the nearby Eucalypt to be 'The Largest Flowering Gum Tree in the Southern Hemisphere'.

If the visitor stayed a little longer, they might begin to wonder about this claim. They might ask themselves, 'But isn't the flowering gum an Australian tree? Then shouldn't this tree be the largest "in the world"?'

This paper explores the assumptions brought into question by this stray tourist. Why is the Southern Hemisphere the default benchmark for recognition of value in Australia? This Southern Hemisphere operates as a kind of world B division. As the Chinese proverb goes, it is better to be the head of a chicken than the backside of an elephant. But it's lonely at the top. Is this vertical evaluation the only way of considering Australia's latitude? Can Australia be positioned in an alternative horizontal axis that enables relationships with other countries of the South?

In response to this question, I examine three ways of understanding Australia's place in the South: the Southern Hemisphere, the Global South, and the Colonised South. These frameworks are evaluated for the possibilities they open up for cultural dialogue. The paper concludes with a series of Keys to the South, developed to stimulate these possibilities.¹

The Southern Hemisphere

Australia's place in the South seems self-evident. Unlike Africa and South America, Australia is the only settled continent not linked by land bridge to the north. Its pre-eminence across the latitude is evoked in the phrase 'Great Southern Land'. This South is a 'big pond' in which Australia floats alone and proud.

The claim 'biggest in the Southern Hemisphere' seems a fitting ambition for this continent. Googling this phrase in English reveals 3,840 instances on the Internet (by comparison, 'biggest in the Northern Hemisphere' is only mentioned 8 times). The subjects of this claim include cultural activities (Scottish Highland Festival, temple and casino), sports (rodeo, triathlon and marathon) and man-made structures (desalination plant, drive-in and telescope). As an arena for competing against the world, the Southern Hemisphere fits a young aspirational nation.

In broader terms, this 'biggest in the Southern Hemisphere' aspiration can be seen as part of the story of Australia as a nation that is still finding its place in the world.² After being the last outpost of the British Empire, it confronts the challenge of getting to know its neighbours—those to our north in the Eastern Hemisphere, and those alongside us in the Southern Hemisphere. So to what extent does being the 'biggest in the Southern Hemisphere' help or hinder in engaging with our neighbours in the South? To consider this question carefully, we need to distinguish between 'Southern Hemisphere' and 'South'.

The 'Southern Hemisphere' refers to a clearly defined geographical region below the equator. Implicit in this is a vertical hierarchy of 'above' and 'below' which conveniently aligns with the hierarchies of developed and developing, mind and body, macro and micro.

The history of colonialism is coincidental with this vertical mindset. On the other side of the Southern Hemisphere are the centres of the North. Local ambitions in the South are measured by success in the centres—Paris for fashion designers,

New York for businesspersons, Hollywood for actors, London for academics and Milan for furniture designers. The Cuban curator Gerardo Mosquera calls this concentric arrangement 'axial globalisation'.³ In the economy of cultural capital, the elevation of northern centres casts a shadow over the credibility of local cultures. The shame of parochialism is evoked by the alleged remark about Australia's lowly status that emerged during Paul Keating's time as Prime Minister. In 1996, the previous leader Bob Hawke claimed that Keating had disparaged Australia as the 'arse-end of the world'. This comment confirmed popular perception of Keating's elitism and coincided with his decreasing opinion poll figures (see Watson 500).

Within this vertical hierarchy, the Southern Hemisphere offers a sub-division in which Australia has opportunity to play the leading role. Like the Pearly King and Queen of Cockney London, Australia can be seen to internalise the hierarchy which subordinates it in order to re-claim some symbolic credit. The 'colonial cringe' becomes the 'colonial strut'.⁴

But is this southern aspirationalism particular to Australia? With the aid of Google, it is possible to test whether Australia's boast is the most common in the Southern Hemisphere. To search for the equivalent phrase in Spanish produced only 1,530 hits, however the Portuguese had 4,690. A sampling of country references in the three languages, weighted by their frequency, reveals the following table of claims in order of percentage frequency:

Table 1 Percentage claims by country to the 'biggest in the Southern Hemisphere'

COUNTRY	CLAIMS
Brazil	42%
Australia	21%
South Africa	16%
New Zealand	6%
Argentina	4%
Corporations	4%
Chile	3%
Pacific	2%
Other African	2%

Given the population and economy of Brazil, it is no surprise that it has twice as many claims as Australia. While putting us in our place, this table does prompt us to consider Australia as part of a community of nations inhabiting the South. But what do they share in common apart from this aspirationalism?

With these reservations in mind, it is important to consider collaborative uses of the Southern Hemisphere. At an official level, the Southern Hemisphere has provided the framework for at least one network in trade and science. The Group of Temperate Southern Hemispheric Countries on Environment (the Valdivia Group) was established in Chile, 1995. Australia, Argentina, Chile, New Zealand,

South Africa and Uruguay agreed to exchange information about environmental and scientific issues. However, given the global dialogue around climate change, the group does not seem to play an active role and has been subject to criticism for its limited agenda (see Dodds).⁵

Politically, there is no high profile network across the South which matches Australia's involvement in APEC. Other alliances such as the Group of 77, IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) skirt Australia. A 2004 government report on these south-south alliances advocates for increasing trade liberalisation in developing countries. However, there is no mention in the report of Australia's involvement in this growing region (DFAT).

Given the limited benefits of the Southern Hemisphere as a frame for Australia's place in the world, is there an alternative way of positioning Australia in the South? The Southern Hemisphere is only one way of representing the South. South is a direction as well as a place. This South appears anywhere in the globe.

The Global South

Culturally, South is commonly associated with the less civilised past of the world. This has been particularly evident in Italy, with the enduring tension between the north, such as the Lombardy League, and the south, particularly Sicily (see Moe). Such a north-south divide can be mapped onto Europe with different cities containing distinct post-colonial populations—South Asians in London, Algerians in Paris, Moroccans in Spain, Turks in Germany, etc.

In general terms, this divide is an intrinsic part of the global economy. The north-south divide is present in most first world cities—it's the division between those who take taxis and those who drive them. Australia's place in this striated world is no different to other first world countries. We also have Somalis driving our taxis, Indians serving our 7/11s, Filipinos cleaning our offices and Chinese making our products. The South provides the labour that enables the first world countries to pursue growth in new information industries such as design. It is a shadow cast throughout the first world.

Australia has no special place in this South other than as another economy dependent on importing skills and labour from other countries whose material expectations are lower than its own. It doesn't mean that the Global South is irrelevant to Australia—far from it. But it doesn't have anything unique to say about Australia's place in the world.

While compromised by the Southern Hemisphere and excluded by the Global South, there is an alternative southern framework for Australia. There exists an historical alliance between Australia and other countries of the South that goes beyond geography. If you assume that China and Japan were never colonised in the same way that India was, then the colonised world rests roughly below the Tropic of Cancer. This includes countries such as India, Mexico and Egypt.

The Colonised South

Colonised countries have an obvious connection in their shared history as outposts for imperial interests. But between colonial incursions such as the ‘scramble for Africa’, the Spanish conquest of the New World and *terra nullius* in Australia, there are stark differences in the course of colonisation. It is understanding the scope of these differences, within an underlying common condition, which makes the Colonised South a particularly generative framework.

There are stark differences in the relative dispossession of first peoples within the Colonised South. In Oceania and most of Latin America, the settler peoples remain dominant. By contrast, the African nations are now experiencing growing black empowerment.

Yet despite these differences, there are strong historical parallels. Most are countries that have experienced a similar sequence of events—invasion, settlement, state-building and reconciliation. In many cases, state-building has involved overtly repressive measures whose violence is now subject to a reconciliation process. This includes Apartheid in South Africa and military dictatorships in countries such as Chile, Argentina and Brazil. Australia can place the ‘stolen generation’ alongside other collective crimes requiring memorialisation in the South.

The process of reconciliation has been most dramatic in South Africa. Through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Bishop Desmond Tutu invoked the traditional concept of ‘Ubuntu’ to counsel for forgiveness on behalf of victims. The end of Apartheid has seen a program of ‘upliftment’ to improve the conditions of those ‘previously disadvantaged’, including the political dominance of those who had been excluded from white areas.

In a country like Australia, reconciliation is still a largely symbolic exercise. Protests in 2000 such as the march across Sydney Harbour Bridge called on the government to say ‘sorry’ for its policy of the ‘stolen generation’. The official apology offered by the new Rudd government has no concrete reparation attached. It has now become a standard feature of public life that a ‘Welcome to Country’ is made at official public events. This entails an acknowledgment of the traditional owners of the land. Sometimes a local Aboriginal elder is invited to mark the occasion with a welcoming ceremony followed by brief speech. Australia is relatively unique in this practice.

Reconciliation has focused particularly on the rights of Indigenous peoples. This seems relatively straightforward in the case of a country like Bolivia, where the current indigenous president Evo Morales proudly upholds the cause of the Aymara. It is more complicated in South Africa, where there are eleven official languages, none of which belong to the Indigenous peoples, the San and the Khoikhoi.

But the focus on Indigenous rights by itself is not co-extensive with the Colonised South. The connections between Indigenous peoples are often made through a northern metropolitan centre, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, the Musée de quai Branly in Paris, the Prince Klaus Foundation in Amsterdam, the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs in Copenhagen and the United Nations in New York. In Australia, international Indigenous connections are well developed with Maori in New Zealand. While there are strong common issues shared between Indigenous peoples, the danger of limiting the idea of South exclusively to Indigenous identity is that it exempts descendants of settlers from critical dialogue. It is left for whitefellas to be the invisible managers, enabling Indigenous development but not reflecting on their own place in this process. It risks being yet another missionary narrative.

By contrast, the issue of non-indigenous identity is relatively undeveloped. The country with the most developed non-indigenous identity in the Colonised South is New Zealand, where writers such as Michael King have constructed the identity of 'Pakeha' as an acknowledgment of the difference between New Zealanders of European descent and those living in Europe itself (see King). Pakeha is now an official ethnic category used in census and immigration documentation.

Non-indigenous identity may not seem relevant when the primary focus for recognition is the colonial centre. However, when the Colonised South is convened, it opens up the question of the ongoing status of the non-indigenous. There are other 'Pakeha' stories lying untapped across the South, in countries like Australia ('Balanda') and South Africa ('Umlungu') (see Murray). The question of non-indigenous identity offers the opportunity to advance post-colonial dialogue beyond a confessional mode to one that includes an Indigenous voice on an equal platform. There is potential for descendants of the North to acknowledge their inauthenticity while negotiating a place for themselves as guests of the first peoples.

It was in the context of these kinds of untapped dialogues between the Colonised South that the South Project was developed by Craft Victoria in 2003. For a craft organisation, the South offered a stage for the values of egalitarianism inherited from the Arts and Crafts movement. In previous eras, the Arts and Crafts movement had looked at various times to folk cultures of distant lands to invigorate a soulless West—Iceland for William Morris and Japan for Bernard Leach. But to invite cultures into a multilateral conversation, it was important to leave the question of art form open. In Melbourne, July 2004, South 1 launched the conversation with representatives of artists and writers from across the Colonised South.

For Australia, the South Project presented itself as a new chapter in a familiar story. We had spent the latter twentieth century getting to know those with

whom we share the Eastern Hemisphere. Championed by politicians such as Paul Keating, celebrated in Brisbane's Asia Pacific Triennials, and institutionalised in Asialink, Asia offered a brave new frontier in the country's quest to distance itself from the colonial past. And now, in the twenty-first century, we face the challenge of developing relationships with our neighbours in the South.

Much work was done in the lead up to South 1 to develop a context for a gathering of southern cultures. Twelve keys were developed to assist thinking about potential common ties. These keys were specific 'coincidences' between countries of the South and were used to unlock shared issues. These keys remain as indications of the rich potential in developing Australia's position in the Colonised South.

Keys to the South

1. The flightless bird

The prompt for the first key came from the film *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* (2003). Based on the Patrick O'Brian novel, the film celebrates the global adventure pursued by Anglo nations. In the film, Captain Jack Aubrey strays from his mission in pursuit of an enemy vessel around the South American coast. But here he comes up against Dr. Stephen Maturin, the ship's surgeon, whose theatre of heroism is the wounded body rather than the high seas. The doctor is a man of science, eager to gather new knowledge from the world they pass by, particularly the Galapagos Islands and the flightless cormorant he spies from a distance. In gratitude for the doctor's support, the captain promises him time on the islands to study the elusive bird. But a last minute threat forces him to withdraw the offer and they sail off to pursue the enemy. In consoling the doctor, the captain reminds him that the bird that so fascinates him is flightless, and therefore not likely to be going anywhere. The two men share a smile at this good fortune and head off into another thrilling adventure, happy that their world remains secure for the future exploration. Through the device of the flightless bird, the film invokes an image of the South as a passive realm, whose only agent of change comes from the North.

So what happens when you take the view of the flightless bird rather than the venturesome sailor? Flightless birds are almost all located in the South. What they share in common is exactly what keeps them apart: their inability to fly. These creatures seem a fitting symbol for the plight of living in the South. The focus on not belonging to the world above prevents those of the South from noticing each other. This flightless bird metaphor proved the key story for developing the network of schools that is part of South Kids, a children's component of the South Project in partnership with ArtPlay in Melbourne.

2. Foreign trash & local treasure

The second key was developed to identify the cross-fertilisation that had occurred across the South due to trade and colonisation. Some of this is negative. In South Africa, Cecil Rhodes introduced the Australian 'Port Jackson wattle' (*Acacia mearnsii*) to bind together the loose soils of the Cape flats. This tree soon flourished and its roots began to strangle the delicate ecology of the fynbos. There is now a campaign to rid the Cape of these 'aliens' and some artists are assisting by making sculptures from its bark. A similar story occurs in New Zealand, where the Australian possum is a declared vermin and there is a thriving craft industry using its skins and fur. Victorian Indigenous artists like Vicki Couzens have to import their materials from New Zealand to make traditional possum skin cloaks.

Alternative positive exchanges occurred in historical movements such as Mambu that affected Melanesia in the early twentieth century, often disparaged as 'cargo cults' (see Burrige). Here elements of western technology became valued for their magical qualities, rather than practical benefits. In a more constructive way, South African craft has beautifully re-used elements such as telephone wire. This key invokes the interconnectedness between history and nature through countries of the South, and the different values they attach to each other's materials.

3. Gondwana

The idea that the countries of the South were once joined together is a powerful symbol for developing south-south exchange. The Gondwana legacy has provided countries of the South, including India and Saudi Arabia, with a common biological legacy. This is evident in a common genetic base to their flora and fauna. Gondwana evokes the possibility that the pieces of continental jigsaw might be fitted together again, culturally if not geologically.

But its use as a symbol often carries a specific political message. Gondwana can be used to speak for a nature that predates the appearance of humans and as such privileges Western science over Indigenous culture. *Gondwana Link* is an organisation that lobbies for linking together bushland areas across south-west Australia to 'restore ecological connectivity'. It raises the issue whether promotion of nature implicitly denies the rights of local peoples. This issue is particularly acute in Patagonia, where individuals such as the US businessman Douglas Tompkins are buying up large areas of land to preserve them from the threat of development. This is often to the chagrin of local people anxious to make a livelihood out of their land.

4. Southern Cross

The constellation of the Southern Cross has particular resonance for Australia's place in the South. It was forged in the Eureka Rebellion and is now boldly included in the national flag. It is invoked countless times in Australian place naming, most recently in the re-vamped Southern Cross Station in Melbourne. This Southern Cross is like a tattoo engraved indelibly into Australian identity.

But is the Southern Cross used to exclude more than connect with the South? Henry Lawson's poem 'Flag of the Southern Cross' (1887) uses the constellation as a rallying symbol for Australians in their battle to assert themselves against the imperialist world.

Let us be bold, be it daylight or night for us
 Fling out the flag of the Southern Cross!
 Let us be firm—with our God and our right for us,
 Under the flag of the Southern Cross!
 Austral is fair, and the idlers in strife for her
 Plunder her, sneer at her, suck the young life from her!
 Fling out the flag of the Southern Cross!

There seems no question for Lawson that this constellation applies exclusively to Australians. Yet other countries include the Southern Cross in their flag, such as Brazil, Samoa and Papua New Guinea.

The Southern Cross as a key challenges us to consider alternative meanings, such as its pre-colonial history. Classical Greeks identified it in the constellation of Centaurus. In his *Purgatory*, Dante describes the 'four stars/Ne'er seen before save by the primal people.' He invokes the process of precession (the 26,000 year cycle of Earth rotation), according to which the last time the Southern Cross was visible on the horizon of Jerusalem was when Christ was crucified. This eschatological belief helped drive the quest for the New World. The first engraved map of South America was titled *Terre Sancte Crucis* (1501).

While the Southern Cross is clearly identified with colonialism, its place in a common theatre of the night sky means that it is subject to diverse readings. It has a variety of interpretations across Indigenous Australia. The Booyong people in northern Victoria saw the stars as representing a tree that protects Bunya, an opossum. The main character, however, is not the stars, but the patch of darkness at the foot of the constellation known in the north as the 'coal sack'. To the Booyong, this is Tchingal, the ferocious emu that threatens Bunya. The Pointers are two hunters who kill Tchingal and stick their spears in the tree (Johnson).

There are many other points of intersection in the heavens, such as the Pleiades story distributed across the south as narratives of seven sisters. The Southern Cross thus opens the door to alternative stories of the southern skies. How can we look afresh on our world of the South?

5. Lost Tribe

Another mythology of the South that inspired early acts of exploration was the existence of the lost tribes of Israel, dispersed after Assyrian invasion of Israel in eighth century BC. A number of colonists such as Cecil Rhodes claimed descent from the lost tribes as a sign of their right to inherit far reaches of the world. The Mormon missionaries believe that Polynesian peoples are descended from the Nephites, thus rendering them suitable subjects for conversion.

At the same time, the concept of Lost Tribe was also used as a narrative of struggle against colonists. In New Zealand, 1864, the prophet Te Ua Haumene identified Maori with the people of the Old Testament: 'The Maori people were one of the lost tribes of Israel, living in 'New Canaan', and the angel said that they would be delivered from bondage from their Pakeha overlords' (Ihimaera 79). A partner movement arose in KwaZulu-Natal, through the teaching of Isaiah Shembe who founded the African Christian church *ibandla lamaNazaretha*. As the most popular religion in South Africa, *ibandla lamaNazaretha* interprets the Bible within an African context. However, many of its rituals are drawn from Scottish culture (Muller).

The syncretic prophet movements across the Colonised South challenge the simple duality of colonisation that presents Western knowledge as an inevitable instrument of oppression. Identification with the Jewish tribes of the Old Testament was one way in which this knowledge could be used as a basis for anti-colonial struggle.

6. El Niño

As well as historical experiences and narratives that cross the South, there are common threads arising from shared natural challenges. The weather pattern known as the Southern Oscillation produces a climatic cycle at odds with the calendar inherited from the North. The naming of El Niño originates in Peru, reflecting the unseasonal warm weather at Christmas. Rather than regular annual seasons, the El Niño phenomenon creates drought conditions over an irregular number of years.

It can be argued that the concept of 'drought' implies that the weather is exceptional by comparison with the more standardised European calendar. As J.M. Arthur argues,

The ignorance of El Niño and other climate patterns (which are, even yet, not fully understood) has meant that colonial ignorance of the nature of the place where they were has been interpreted by the colonist as a deficiency belonging to the place. Drought becomes then a particularly colonial experience. (Arthur 144)

Unpicking the European calendar is a significant undertaking. At Craft Victoria, a series of Summer Christmas promotions was developed to counter-balance the winter theme of the festive seasons. The first colour, Black Christmas, contrasted the White Christmas of fake snow and reindeer with references to bushfires, flies and night swimming.

7. Antarctica

While southern countries might seem to gather below the equator, from the perspective of Antarctica, they are clustered around a common neutral continent. The Antarctic Treaty (1959) proclaimed the continent available for 'all mankind ... to be used for peaceful purposes.' There is no special claim that nations of the South have over Antarctica. Among the nine largest populations are the US Americans, Russian, British, Japanese and Italian.

Yet despite its neutral status, Antarctica is subject to colonial fantasies. In Felipe Fernandez-Armesto's recent publication, *The Americas: The History of a Hemisphere*, he counters the popular prejudice that the Latin Americas are fated to play second fiddle to their more powerful northern partner. In looking for a horizon to conclude his book, Fernandez-Armesto turns to Antarctica. He writes that soon we will have the technology to 'make the ice bleed with minerals', but 'planned exploitation could help equalise the Americas and crown the reconvergence of historical trajectories in the hemisphere with justice' (Fernandez-Armesto 170). Is Antarctica a way in which the victims of colonisation can themselves become colonists?

An increasingly large number of southern artists have been drawn to Antarctica. One of the challenges faced by artists is the relative rarity of access to the continent, which grants their work an automatic cachet. How to go beyond the rare mystery of Antarctica to create a common theatre of meaning? Today Antarctic art is evolving from nature photography to more politically aware work. The South African artist Thomas Mulcaire has developed a mobile artist residency designed to bear witness to the international nature of Antarctica. As a key, Antarctica prompts us consider the global responsibilities of the Colonial South.

8. Shell

By contrast with the world above, the South is predominantly ocean. Before the advent of monetary currencies, various natural materials were used as forms of exchange. Cowries were used to purchase slaves from Africa (30,000 in the Congo). In Togo at the end of the nineteenth century, 4,000 cowries were worth one German mark.

Shells retain relevance in the contemporary South. Today, the cowries are associated with traditional magic. In South Africa, sangomas wear them in

necklaces. In the Afro-Brazilian religion called Candomblé, shells feature in a ritual known as *jogo de buzios*, when they are thrown to reveal the future.

But despite their non-monetary status in the post-colonial world, shells have a symbolic value as fruits of the sea. One of the most contentious issues in New Zealand at the moment concerns ownership of the country's foreshore. The Waitangi Tribunal is considering submissions about various interests about their right to harvest shellfish from New Zealand's beaches. Traditionally, Maori gathered food such as toheroa, pipi, tuatua and tipa from the beaches. The concept of 'Kaitiakitanga' (guardianship) includes the practice of 'Rāhui', which is a prohibition or ban instituted to protect resources.

This key questions whether there is a way for the South to exempt itself from global capital. Open Source software is one means by which third world nations can escape global monopolies such as Microsoft. It is interesting that the two popular packages of Linux operating system are named Ubuntu and Tango, both cultural expressions that are indigenous to the South. Can the Colonial South think differently about how it exchanges goods?

9. African Renaissance

In the twentieth century, the emergence of the post-colonial voice was particularly evident in France. Negritude writers such as Aimé Césaire created a poetic sensibility specific to the experience of the colonised. Towards the end of the century, Libya and South Africa were vying to be centres of the African Renaissance—Libya for the cultural significance of North Africa and South Africa as an economic driver to the continent.

In South Africa, the concept framed the introduction of African values such as Ubuntu into public life. In his 1996 speech adopting the new constitution, Thabo Mbeki proclaimed 'I am an African'. Mbeki was careful to present a way of being African that transcended colour: 'I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their own actions, they remain still, part of me' (Mbeki). The identity of white African challenges us to consider primitivist stereotypes of the continent.

Academically, there is a critical approach to Western culture claiming an unacknowledged debt to African influences. This is evident in the controversial work of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* and recently in the emergence of *New Southern Studies* (see McKee and Trefzer), which identifies a stronger influence of Senegambian cultures in the American South. Australia, in particular, faces a particular challenge in overcoming its status as a 'white fortress' by looking to recently arrived refugees from Africa as future contributors to the nation's identity.

10. Weft

With concept of the South comes the spatial reorientation towards horizontal connections along the south-south axis. Historically, this opposes the loom of genealogy with the weft of diaspora. While migratory groups most often identify with the people of their source, there are implicit links with those who have migrated to other countries. Particularly strong dispersions across the Colonised South include the English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Italian, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Jewish, Japanese, Greek, Chinese and Indian.

Alongside this historical horizon, the South has seen the recent emergence of a new art movement involving artist collectives. The collective Trama emerged from the economic catastrophe in Argentina at the start of the twenty-first century. Given the collapse of the commercial art market, they found ways to barter art in the local neighbourhood. These groups are associated with a broad Latin American political movement known as *horizontalismo* (see Sitrin), which is aligned with the radical politics of the Zapatistas.

Artist collectives mostly subscribe to a relational aesthetics, which locate the value of art in the way it brings audience together, rather than in the object itself. This framework is celebrated as a form of Marxism for the 'network age' (Bourriaud). Its anti-consumerist values align art with the quest for a way of building community which escapes forces of commodification.

However, there is a caveat with such practices. In championing the existence of art outside the market, relational aesthetics is in danger of limiting its production to those with capacity to engage in purely symbolic practices. Artists in townships and villages are more likely to be dependent on a traditional market to provide for necessities. Their strong ties to family and tribe mean they are unlikely to be as interested in creating a community of strangers as those living in metropolitan centres. This point of view needs to be taken into account in any identification of an art movement as natural to the South.

11. Coca-Cola

Part of the colonial economy was the use of the South as a resource for the food energy necessary to support the rigours of capitalism. This is particularly coffee, chocolate, sugar and spices such as cinnamon. The typical neo-colonial story is the commodification of these substances, most evident in Coca-Cola, which transformed a local Bolivian coca leaf into the world's leading brand. A recent instance of this struggle is in Paraguay, where the local herb stevia has been taken up by China as a new crop to replace sugar, and likely to be a future ingredient of Coca-Cola.

Yet the success of Coca-Cola indicates a hunger particularly in the developing nations to enjoy the taste of the first world. It is a challenge to purely missionary-based approaches to South-South dialogue that seek redemption from

global capital. As a key, Coca-Cola challenges any concept of the Colonised South to include the voice of those seeking to enjoy the goods that those in countries like Australia might take for granted.

12. Open key

The twelfth key was kept open for responses by participants in South 1. Their responses included canoes, coconut palms, the parrot, blue, horizon, string, and verandah. Since then, a number of new issues have been revealed. These include the aesthetics of poverty, from poor theatre to Italian neorealist cinema. These 'arts of necessity' imply that the exigencies of the Third World can nurture a creativity that is missing in the prosperous First. The 'soul' of the South informs the appeal of 'world' cultures, such as 'world music', 'world cinema' and 'world craft'. Like most of the Colonised South, Australia has its own magical realist school of literature in writers such as Richard Flanagan. As yet, these developments lack a critical context. To what extent is 'world culture' a continuation of primitivism? Seeing Australia alongside its more lively southern cousins raises these questions.

Conclusion

As a framework, the Colonised South provides an important alternative to the aspirational Southern Hemisphere and the more generalised Global South. It positions Australia not as lone ranger of the South, but as one of many nations yet to develop common dialogue. It is important that the ground is cleared for this dialogue by questioning ways of viewing the world inherited from the North. Critical self-reflection is essential to ensure that the dialogue is open to all cultures of the South. Elective affinities such as the Keys to the South provide starting points for this dialogue.

The South Project has proceeded to host gatherings in other regional centres—Wellington, Santiago and South Africa. These have been successful in developing a strong network of artists, writers and organisations. The challenge now lies ahead for a broad alliance of projects that might join the dots shared between the countries of the South.

Australia shouldn't make do with 'the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere'. Why not 'the most southern in the first world'? There are many questions left to ask.

Kevin Murray was Director of Craft Victoria 2000-2007 where he initiated the South Project in 2003. He is now a Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne and Monash University. His ongoing inquiry into the 'Idea of South' can be accessed at www.kitezh.com.

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Notes

¹ Much of the material in this paper was gathered from my experience in developing the South Project at Craft Victoria. It should be noted that I am no longer formally involved in the South Project and my comments here do not necessarily relate to the project in its current form. My concern here is to address the broader issue of the South.

² 'Much of Australia's history has been shaped by the contradiction that it depended intimately and comprehensively on a country which was further away than almost any other in the world. Now the dependence had slackened, the distance had diminished. The Antipodes were drifting, though where they were drifting no one knew.' (Blainey 339)

³ 'This structure of axial globalisation and zones of silence is the basis of the economic, political and cultural network that shapes, at a macro level, the whole planet. The to-ing and fro-ing globalisation is really a globalisation from and for the centres, with limited South-South connections ... The world is practically divided between curating cultures and curated cultures.' (Mosquera)

⁴ In an interview with *Time* magazine, Robert Menzies described this as Australia's 'Southern Hemisphere complex' (*Time Magazine*, 31 March 1960, qtd in McQueen)

⁵ The Cairns Group first met in 1986 and consists of Agricultural Ministers of exporting countries—Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, and Uruguay. This group lobbies forums such as the World Trade Organisation to reduce subsidies in markets like the European Union. It was successful in having agriculture as part of the Uruguay round of the World Trade Organisation talks. The Cairns Group is productive, though its purview does go beyond the Southern Hemisphere.