

# Preface

There are a few good reasons to conduct scientific research. One is merely to find out for yourself how things work. I am interested in how the inside of the Earth works: how its evolving, churning deep interior has shaped the planet we live on now, and how it made it possible for us to live on it in the first place. I believe there is an inherent worth in the creation and growth of knowledge about our environment, and I also argue that the only way we can understand ourselves—let alone the rest of the universe—is in the careful, steady, progressive analysis of our surroundings. Without committing to these means, the end cannot be achieved.

As important as science is for its own sake, however, there is no gain to be had if this understanding is not passed on. Scientists do not publish their research simply to have it challenged, improved, and checked, but also to have it read and—hopefully—ingested into the wider canon of knowledge. Therefore, all we scientists must strive to teach and reach out to anyone who has an interest in that which we are ourselves often extremely so interested. I therefore would like to warn the reader of this thesis that there may sometimes be digressions into the more arcane of points regarding observing and interpreting the Earth; but as I apologize, I also eulogize, because without these digressions we would struggle to make any progress at all.

It is with some thanks to Springer, therefore, that I end this preface. I am grateful that the body of work presented in this thesis—some of which is available in other forms already—can be presented to a wider audience together and somewhat coherently. I hope it is of some use to the reader.

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