

Imaginative Cinematic Geographies of Australia: The Mapped View in Charles Chauvel's *Jedda* and Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*

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In this essay, we examine the ways in which two films—Charles Chauvel's *Jedda* (1955) and Baz Luhrmann's *Australia* (2008)—construct imaginative geographies of Australia that bring to the fore questions of geography, media, and history. We employ Edward Said's related concepts of imaginative geography and orientalism to discuss the ways in which *Jedda* and *Australia* present Australia's Northern Territory as an "Other" space that paradoxically also stands in for the country as a whole. Both films establish their geographical setting through the depiction of maps and journeys, and, following cultural theorist Michel de Certeau's approach to what he terms "spatial stories" in *The Practice of Everyday Life*,¹ we arrange our analysis of the films along these two axes. Further, we argue that it is through the complex and at times uneasy dialogue between the films' maps and journeys that each film constructs a mediated and historicized imaginative geography of Australia.

Film and media geography are growing fields of research; indeed, in 2006, Christopher Lukinbeal and Stefan Zimmermann declared "film geography" as a new subfield of geography.² Apart from the notable exception of Leo Zonn and Stuart Aitken's work in the early 1990s,³ little has been published on Australian film from a cultural-geographical standpoint. Within the discipline of film studies, analyses of Australian cinematic landscape have rarely drawn on perspectives from cultural/media geography, and this extends to the published criticism and reviews of *Jedda* and *Australia*. Criticism of Chauvel's *Jedda* has broadly focused on questions of assimilation and the stolen generations, the eroticization of Aboriginal bodies, and the representation of landscape,⁴ as well as what Stuart Cunningham, in his monograph *Featuring Australia: The Cinema of Charles Chauvel*, terms "locationism" and nationalism.⁵ Further, film reviews of Luhrmann's *Australia* have focused on its overt nationalistic and commercial intent, its kitsch aesthetic, and, again, its representation of landscape and the stolen generations.⁶ Here, we argue that not only can a media

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geography approach to Chauvel and Luhrmann's films add to existing criticism of *Jedda* and *Australia*, but also that these films are exemplary texts for media geographical analysis in that they raise interesting questions about filmic intertextuality and the relationships among history, geography, and media.

***Jedda* and *Australia*: Texts, intertexts, and historical and geographical contexts**

At their time of release, both *Jedda* and *Australia* aimed to create a contemporary sense of "Australianness" by speaking to current debates over land ownership, race, and assimilation. *Jedda* has an important place in Australian film history because it was the first color feature film to be made in Australia and also the first to cast Aboriginal actors in lead roles.⁷ *Jedda* tells the story of an Aboriginal girl from the fictional "Pintari" tribe who is adopted by Sarah and Douglas McMann, the white owners of Mongala, an isolated buffalo station in Australia's Northern Territory. The Aboriginal women, or "lubras," at the station name the baby girl "Jedda," which, the viewer is told, means "little wild goose." As *Jedda* (Rosalie "Ngarla" Kunoth) grows she is increasingly caught between the white culture Sarah wishes her to assimilate into and the Aboriginal culture she is drawn to but whose language she cannot speak. *Jedda*'s confusion reaches its zenith when Marbuk (Robert Tudawali), a "wild" Aborigine from the (again fictional) "Walla Walla" tribe comes to work at Mongala. Although *Jedda* is as much as promised to the mixed-race stockman Joe (Paul Reynell), who narrates the film, she is fascinated by the sexually potent Marbuk. For his part, Marbuk knows that *Jedda* is from a different "skin" group, and is therefore forbidden to him, and yet he "sings" *Jedda* to him. Abducting her, Marbuk takes *Jedda* and the search party sent to find her on a "wild goose chase" throughout the Northern Territory, with ultimately tragic consequences.

The making of *Jedda* was driven by Chauvel's desire to make a uniquely Australian film: according to his wife and colleague, Elsa, "the idea of the Northern Territory and its Stone Age men was always playing hide and seek enticingly in Charles's mind."⁸ It was an idea that needed a story, and, according to Chauvel, the story of *Jedda* developed as he amalgamated stories he heard about authentic local characters in the Territory while he was researching the film.⁹ *Jedda* was marketed as a "picture that mirrors Australia's great and secret heart,"¹⁰ and, as film theorist Barbara Creed notes, the film was considered to "promote an image of 'Australianness'—of an Australian identity based on the exotic rugged splendor of the Centre and on the wild beauty of its indigenous people."¹¹

A similar motivation pervades *Australia*, and indeed the film's title and Luhrmann's associated advertising campaign for Tourism Australia ostentatiously announce their dual intention to "reveal to the world Australia's romantic transformational and adventurous personality" and to make Australian viewers "excited, passionate and proud, motivating them to want to explore their country more."¹² Compared with *Jedda*'s spare

storyline, *Australia's* is a complex and even rambling narrative of the journey of Lady Sarah Ashley (Nicole Kidman) from "Ashlight House" in southern England to "Faraway Downs" in northern Australia, her subsequent love affair with The Drover (Hugh Jackman) and the landscape of the eastern Kimberley and Northern Territory, and her adoption of a young "half-caste" boy, Nullah¹³ (Brandon Walters), who narrates the film.

Luhrmann's *Australia* is in many respects a re-visioning of Chauvel's classic, and Luhrmann provides a number of surface hints to this: the lead white female character in both films is named "Sarah," the Drover's dog in *Australia* is named "Jedda,"¹⁴ both films employ a mixed-race narrator, and both films approach the question of racial assimilation through the adoption of an Aboriginal (or part-Aboriginal) child by a white couple. The films' geographical settings are also similar, and each uses landscape and geography to make particular appeals to nationality. Both films are set in Australia's "outback," employed metonymically to represent the broader Australian landscape: *Australia's* "Faraway Downs" is in the Kimberley region on the border between Western Australia and the Northern Territory. *Jedda's* "Mongala" buffalo station is also in the far north, given that buffaloes occupy high rainfall regions such as the northern floodplains of Arnhem Land.¹⁵

Further, both films are set, temporally, within two decades of one another. The narrative of *Australia* begins in 1939 (the outbreak of World War II and the release of two of Luhrmann's other cinematic intertexts: Victor Fleming's *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*) and ends after the bombing of Darwin in 1942. Although there are no such specific temporal markers in *Jedda*, the film's action is roughly contemporaneous with its 1955 release and the film itself responds to debates about assimilation that were current in 1950s Australia. Although the merits of Aboriginal assimilation and integration were being contested by the time of *Jedda's* production, the progressive sentiments of *Australia's* protagonists would have been uncommon in the early 1940s. *Australia* retrofits political insights drawn from *Bringing Them Home* (1997), the national report on the Stolen Generations.¹⁶

Cinema has played a significant role in mediating the history of colonization; indeed, *Jedda* and *Australia* are part of a long tradition of films that engage with the notion of the frontier, settlement, and white-Indigenous relations through iconography, music, storylines, and characterization drawn from the western genre. Building on film theorist Andre Bazin's¹⁷ work on *The Overlanders* (Harry Watt, 1946), Peter Limbrick has described "Australian westerns" including *Eureka Stockade* (Harry Watt, 1949) and *Bitter Springs* (Ralph Smart, 1950) as "settler colonial texts" in which white conquest and control of the land is often legitimated.¹⁸ It is worth considering *Jedda* and *Australia* as exemplars of this settler colonial mode of cinema, in which "space and landscape are central narrative concerns" and "The interaction between whites and native peoples is seen through discourses of violent confrontation and disavowal of prior presence, as well as through fantasized modes of rapprochement and reconciliation."¹⁹

Imaginative geographies and the troping of the Australian North

In proposing that Chauvel and Luhrmann's films construct "imaginative" geographies, we do not mean that the films' visions of Australia are entirely fictive or illusory, or something we can dismiss as merely the product of the directors' flights of fancy. In his 1984 essay "Images of Place: A Geography of the Media" — an essay that was instrumental in the development of media geography as a field — Zonn makes an important call for a closer analysis of Australian place images in media and particularly in film, for it is these representations of Australia, he argues, that influence how international audiences perceive the country's geography and demography. As Zonn notes, films often distort or misrepresent the landscape for "aesthetic, economic, or political reasons," and this distortion, he adds, is akin to "the creator tell[ing] a lie."²⁰ Zonn is, and remains, correct in his assertion that images of Australia presented to international audiences tend to portray the country as "a land of physical beauty and vastness, of unique creatures, and of a provocative native culture"²¹ — a tendency both *Jedda* and *Australia* exhibit. Indeed, despite the sharp rise in Australian films set in urban environments since the 1980s, Luhrmann's film only serves to reinforce, perhaps intentionally, the dominant film stereotype of the Australian landscape.

Yet, we wish to argue that Chauvel's and Luhrmann's imaginative geographies of Australia — their ideologically redolent maps and their substitutions of location for reasons of exigence and aesthetics — are not simply erroneous or, worse, deceitful. Rather the films use landscape and geography to make particular appeals to nationality, and, as we said above, to create a sense of "Australianess" that doesn't fit neatly into the categories of truth or lie. In order to highlight the ambivalence or ambiguousness of media representations of place, we have borrowed Said's concept of "imaginative geography," which, as he explains in his seminal work of 1978, *Orientalism*, encompasses "something more than what appears to be merely positive knowledge."²² Representations of space and place are always ideological, always implicated in some form of nation-building or identity-formation, and considering "imagined," fictive, representational, or mythic geographies allows us to see the ways in which representations of space and place are intimately bound up in the nexus of power-knowledge.

According to Derek Gregory, Said's imaginative geographies disrupt notions of truth and falsity in representation. An imaginative geography cannot, Gregory argues, "be counterposed to a 'more true and more real' geography" because even supposedly objective maps are bound up in questions of representation and regimes of truth.²³ For Said, "orientalism" — the West's discursive construction of the Orient as an exoticized, "Other" space, the inverse of Western civilization — is at base an imaginative geography that has tangible cultural and geopolitical effects for both the East and the West, the object and the agent of representation. On the one hand, according to Said, the West's imaginative geography of the East

was an imperial "style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."²⁴ In other words, orientalism's figural appropriation of the East is one that both enabled and sustained the physical appropriation of its spaces by Western imperialism. On the other hand, the West's imaginative geography of the East is also a displaced self-fashioning. At once an assertion of the exoticism of the East and an assertion of the civilizing power of the West, orientalism constructs not only the Orient but also the Occident.

Said's conception of imaginative geography provides a useful starting-point for considering how Chauvel and Luhrmann construct their own imaginative geographies, presenting Australia's North as an "Other" space. Indeed, as Stephen Carleton's research into dramatic space suggests, the far northern region of Australia frequently functions in film, literature, and theater as a frontier space in which the nation's fantasies and anxieties about race and colonization play out in narratives that set white Australians against both Oriental and Aboriginal "Others." Carleton argues that Luhrmann's film is an emblematic example of the use of "the North" as "mythic space, the site of the Australian-Asian international frontier, and the site of the settler-invader frontier within Australia."²⁵ Luhrmann's film does dramatize the Japanese air strikes on Darwin in World War II, and yet the comparison between Occident and Orient and Australia and its North can only go so far, for what is being "orientalized" in *Jedda* and *Australia* is not for the most part a foreign territory, but part of the nation itself.

Jedda's opening sequence provides a telling example of the exoticization of Australia's Northern Territory. Voicing over a series of overhead establishing shots of an escarpment, an estuary, Uluru, and, finally, Mongala buffalo station dwarfed by the Wondoan Hill Formation (see Figure 1), the film's narrator, Joe, says, this is "part of the oldest land in the world [...] A land of buffalo and wild pig. Of great cattle herds and lonely homesteads. Mountains of mystery. Red tombs in Australia's dead heart, which hold the secrets of the Aborigines' Dream Time." In *Jedda*, a film whose original working title was *The Northern Territory Story*, Chauvel introduces his viewer to the Territory as though it were a landscape virtually unknown to both international and urban domestic audiences, a kind of land that time forgot. Moreover, Chauvel presents Australia's North as a landscape that can reflect, like no other, his vision of an ineffable Indigenous culture that permeates the country's core. The landscape Chauvel presents in *Jedda* would have been largely physically unknown and culturally remote to his 1955 viewers, and yet it is one that simultaneously taps into and perpetuates the stereotyped representations of the broader Australian landscape noted by Zonn. *Jedda's* opening scenes hint at a mapping and making-known of this secret heart, and, in its mission to tell the story of the North, Chauvel's film certainly enacts a symbolic if not literal appropriation of Indigenous territories and culture.

Like *Jedda*, *Australia's* opening sequence features sweeping aerial cinematography, a map, and voice-over by a half-Aboriginal character. To a much greater extent than *Jedda*, *Australia* invites the audience to see the



Figure 1. Wondoan Hill Formation near the homestead on Coolibah Station, the shooting location for *Mongala* buffalo station in *Jedda*. (photograph by Jane Stadler)

world as its narrator does and to live the story through Nullah's memory narrative, but because the story he is telling is also Lady Sarah Ashley's story, spectators also see the landscape through her eyes. Historically, the Australian landscape has been conceptualized by Europeans in terms of *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one), based on the perception that Australia was uninhabited prior to European settlement because Aborigines did not "cultivate" the land or construct permanent dwellings.²⁶ This view of the Australian outback as a "no man's land" nullified and invalidated the land rights of its original occupants, their form of culture, and their status as human beings. The troubled issue of where Aborigines belong in Australian land and culture is central to Australian history and to the narratives of nationhood expressed in both *Jedda* and *Australia*.

But what is also interesting here is that in both films, as we shall see, the orientalized North does not simply function as a heart of darkness, a foil for an otherwise "civilized" Australia. Rather, the North represents the nation as a whole. In Luhrmann's *Australia*, this troping of the North is particularly pronounced, and indeed, as Carleton argues, the film becomes a "summary text" in which the North becomes "metonymic for the entire nation."²⁷ According to Carleton, Australia's North has been under-theorized in film studies, and he notes that Luhrmann's *Australia* is simply the latest in a long line of Australian films that could be seen as constituting a "distinctively northern oeuvre."²⁸ In these films, he maintains, "[t]he Northern landscape becomes *über-space*, in a sense: the national scrim onto

which we project our manifold anxieties and fantasies about race and landscape, and our emplacement of the self and its concomitant shadow side, the Other within these national narratives.”²⁹

Much of the continent’s interior is referred to as being “out bush” or “the outback,” but one particular space plays a starring role in Australian cultural imagery and has become a byword for the “Other” space of the North. The “Never-Never” is a fictional, remote, uninhabited region of outback Australia; it is an imprecise geographic locale that cannot be found on any map. The most famous uses of the term date back to the turn of the twentieth century, in Barcroft Boake’s 1897 poem “Where the Dead Men Lie,” Henry Lawson’s 1906 poem “The Never-Never Country,” and Jeanie Gunn’s 1908 autobiographical novel, *We of the Never-Never*. Elsey Station, the book’s setting, was in fact later used as a location for the film adaptation of *We of the Never-Never*, and for *Jedda*.³⁰ The Never-Never is a space with a dual function: it is an exotic, fecund tropical land, yet also a forbidden, drought-stricken, faraway place, a desert wasteland at the red heart of Australia. In both *Jedda* and *Australia* the Never-Never is imagined as a place that is located simultaneously in central Australia and the far North.

Maps, journeys, and representations of the Australian landscape

As our above discussion suggests, in their troping of the North, both *Jedda* and *Australia* turn the process of orientalizing or Othering back upon itself. In this paper, therefore, we are extending the term “imaginative geography” to include the ways in which a nation is reimagined from within.³¹ Further, we suggest that the films construct these imaginative geographies in similar ways, and in particular in two highly mediated ways: via representations of the landscape in maps and representations of mobility in the landscape through journeys.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau maintains that maps and journeys, or maps and tours, are important elements in travel narratives, or “spatial stories.” In Certeau’s analysis, the map and the tour are interlinked but opposing forces in travel narratives; they are, he writes, “two symbolic and anthropological languages of space. Two poles of experience.”³² The map performs an epistemological function: it is a “plane projection [of] totalizing observations” that invokes the autonomous, scientific fixity of the Enlightenment map. The tour, on the other hand, is “a discursive series of operations” that invokes the figurality of the Medieval itinerary.³³ These ontological itineraries, which narrativize travel and that are the precondition of the scientific map, he argues, are gradually erased in the scientific map. The figure of the ship representing the journey that mapped the represented coastline is erased to make way for the “totalizing stage” of the Enlightenment map, a map that forms a seemingly autonomous “tableau of a ‘state’ of geographical knowledge.”³⁴ In travel

narratives, however, the map and the tour combine to create a kind of hybrid spatial practice that “constantly transforms places into spaces or spaces into places.”³⁵ “What the map cuts up,” Certeau states, “the story cuts across”; where the map delimits space, marking out places and boundaries, the tour and the story turn place back into space (which Certeau defines as “practiced place”).³⁶ This “dynamic contradiction” between the boundary-setting, delimiting function of the map and the diegetic mobility of the tour in the travel story ultimately creates and enunciates space by way of an “‘interlocutory’ process,”³⁷ and it is this dynamic and dialogic relation between the maps and journeys in these two films that, we argue, enables them to construct an imaginative geography of Australia.

Maps and films, as Tom Conley has pointed out in *Cartographic Cinema*, are “strangely coextensive.”³⁸ Any film, he argues, can be read cartographically, like a map, as a form of “locational imaging.”³⁹ However, a film that contains a map demands the viewer reflect upon their place in the world and their relation to the geography marked out by the filmic map: “we quickly discern,” he writes, “that ontology is a function of geography.”⁴⁰ Maps foreground not only spatiality but also history and technicity; as Conley writes, they

bring to the image a history that is not cinematic; they are written in codes and signs that are not those of film; yet they are of a spatial scale not unlike that in which they are portrayed. And they can never be assimilated entirely into the visual narrative or other modes of rhetoric of the films in which they are deployed. They are in the films in which they are seen, but they are of other qualities.⁴¹

This alterity of the map within the film, Conley argues, “establishes a point where an effective critical relation can be inaugurated.”⁴² The maps in *Jedda* and *Australia* do just this. They bring to the fore not only questions of space and identity, but also questions of history, and, in particular, the history of representational techniques for showing landscape. According to Peter White and Simon Bourke, maps were a commonly used device in films of the 1950s, and *Jedda*’s map, they argue, functions to establish Australia as an “unknown and exotic space for international audiences, while also making an implicit connection with the Western frontier saga.”⁴³ By extension, Luhrmann’s abundant use of maps in *Australia* not only has the effect of “presenting” — even selling — Australia, but is also a significant element in its pastiche aesthetic. Moreover, these enact a dual address to the world and to the nation: *Jedda* and *Australia*’s maps not only present Australia to the world, but they also make a clear appeal to national identity. That is, the maps in these films do not simply function to establish the setting for each film and mark out the journeys of the films’ characters. They also function politically, inviting the viewer to identify with the film’s imaginative geography and to identify with a particular kind of “Australianness” or

Australian national identity marked by Western practices of governance, nomenclature, trailblazing, and boundary setting.

Cinematic journeys, like cinematic maps, are part of a long tradition of locational imagining. Martin Lefebvre begins his introduction to *Landscape and Film* with the observation that the travel movie was one of the earliest and most popular film genres. Lefebvre points out that cinema “developed at a time when our relation to space was undergoing important changes” including colonialism, the emergence of tourism, and advances in transportation.⁴⁴ The attraction of cinema as a mode of sightseeing in unfamiliar landscapes coincided so closely with modern developments in technology, locomotion, and spatiality that the first tracking shot in 1898 literally involved strapping a camera to the front of a moving train.⁴⁵ Geographers Tim Cresswell and Deborah Dixon argue that in the course of the journeys they feature, travel narratives frequently unsettle the ideological values that are entrenched in locations and in the localized routines and relationships of citizenship, work and home life: “Mobility in film implies more than the unfixing of such staples of time and space; it also points to the transformation and even the dissolution of key social institutions such as family and home, flag and country.”⁴⁶ Here we argue that journeys through the mythical terrain of the Never-Never in *Jedda* and *Australia* construct a space that is symbolic and ideological, communicating myths of nationhood, history and identity in a manner simultaneously grounded in the Australian landscape yet liberated from physical geography.

The “interlocution” between maps and journeys in travel narratives is complex, in that there is always already a disjunction between the map and the territory.⁴⁷ However, this disjunction is further magnified in cinematic representations of maps and journeys because filmmakers need to juggle aesthetic, narrative, pragmatic and financial concerns. Consequently, shooting locations seldom correspond to the places in which films are ostensibly set, and this in turn makes it ever more difficult to place the journey on the map or vice versa. For example, in *Australia*, with the help of matte backgrounds and CGI, the seaside town of Bowen in Queensland ‘acts’ as a location double for war-era Darwin. Furthermore, to accommodate the poetic licence taken with the landscape, cinematic maps may take liberties with cartographic facts. This adds layers of complexity to attempts to understand the geography of cinematic journeys. This complicated dialogue between map and journey, as we will see, plays out in different ways in *Jedda* and *Australia*. First, we will examine the “wild goose chase” that takes Jedda, and those who track her, all over the Northern Territory, ultimately constructing a mosaic of narrative settings. This also establishes an approach for how to read *Australia*’s pastiche, which self-consciously builds on the precedent set in earlier Australian films such as *Jedda*. For Luhrmann it is no accident that his landscapes “reinvent” the geography of the North, whereas for Chauvel, the disjunctive editing between far-flung locations was an aesthetic choice, but also a matter of necessity when footage was lost.

Jedda's "wild goose chase": Articulating the map and the journey

Jedda's single map is incorporated into the film's opening title sequence, and begins as a close-up of the Northern Territory (see Figure 2a), showing Alice Springs surrounded by Aboriginal shields and spears and a kangaroo on the pathway of the Stuart Highway leading up toward Arnhem Land and joining Alice Springs to the coastal capital, Darwin. The camera reframes to reveal a map of Australia, minus Tasmania. Red text is then superimposed on the map, attesting to the Aboriginal identities of the lead actors and the effort to which Chauvel went in order to cast them (see Figure 2b). *Jedda's* map is a fairly straightforward one and, apart from the two figural elements—the Territory's fauna emblem of the red kangaroo and the spear-and-shield motif—it contains no geographical fabulations, apart from some laxity in rendering the river system of the Northern Territory. In short, putting aside the glaring omission of Tasmania, it looks like a stock-standard though rather bare map of Australia. What is interesting about the *Jedda* map is the way it marks out the Northern Territory through the use of color and figure. Overall, the map presents Australia as an almost undifferentiated "wide brown land," devoid of any distinguishing feature bar toponyms and state borders. Only the Northern Territory breaks the monotony of beige, colored as it is in a rich ochre, with rivers in blue, Arnhem Land in green, and Alice Springs in red. Moreover, the ochre dots marking the border of the Territory hint at Aboriginal dot painting⁴⁸—an interesting juxtaposition considering that this element is employed only to mark out the state borders inscribed by white settler geopolitics.

The apparent simplicity of the map elides the richness of Chauvel's imaginative geography; it is when we attempt to trace *Jedda's* journey on the map that the film landscape's relation to conceptions of the North and the nation emerge. We are informed that Marbuk is likely to take *Jedda* "back around the swamp, up through the red mountains, and across into the Hidden City," an area that is "taboo country" for his tribe.⁴⁹ As Figure 3 demonstrates, this means that as the protagonists push north to Arnhem Land, following the waterways running east toward the coast, they move simultaneously and inexorably south into the red heart of the desert continent. The impossibility of this north-yet-south trajectory evokes the concept of "antipodean inversion" that so fascinated early European explorers. Antipodean inversion refers to the Eurocentric perception of unfamiliar features of the southern hemisphere as perverse and characterized by inexplicable difference from northern norms of nature: "black swans, rivers running inland, wood that will not float, birds that will not sing or fly."⁵⁰ Indeed, antipodean inversion supports the logic of *Jedda's* journey. The Northern Territory river system is pictured as Joe's narration informs the audience that "Traveling by waterway [MARBUK] hoped we'd lose his tracks. He moved down river to the country of his own tribe," rafting

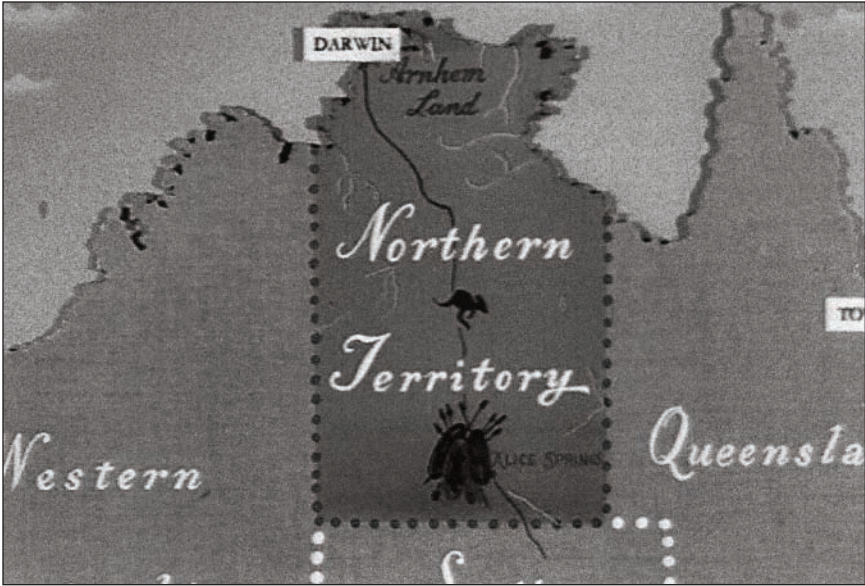


Figure 2a. Northern Territory map, as seen in *Jedda*. (© by arrangement with the licensor, The Estate of Charles Chauvel c/- Curtis Brown (Aust) Pty Ltd.)

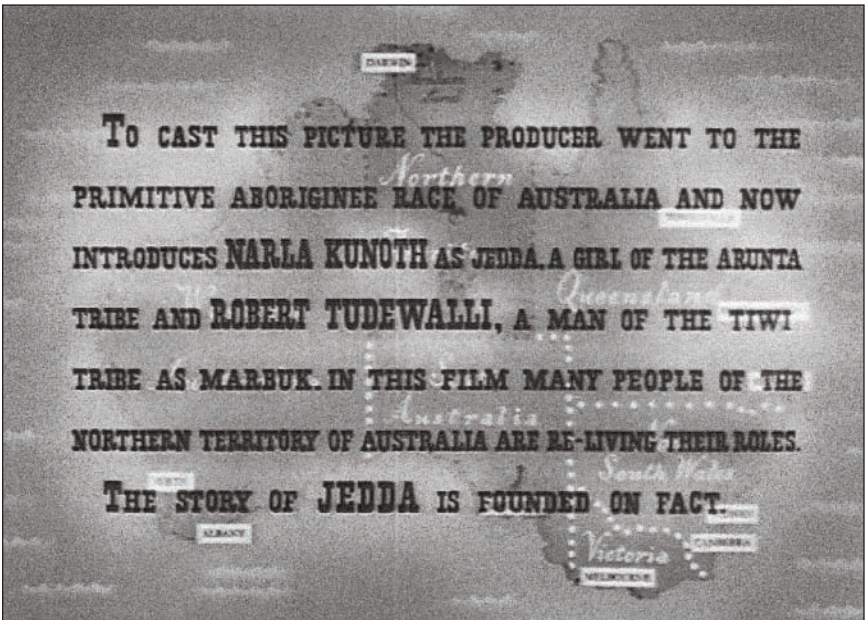


Figure 2b. Map of Australia, as seen in *Jedda*. Note phonetic spelling of Aborigine, Ngarla and Tudawali. (© by arrangement with the licensor, The Estate of Charles Chauvel c/- Curtis Brown (Aust) Pty.)

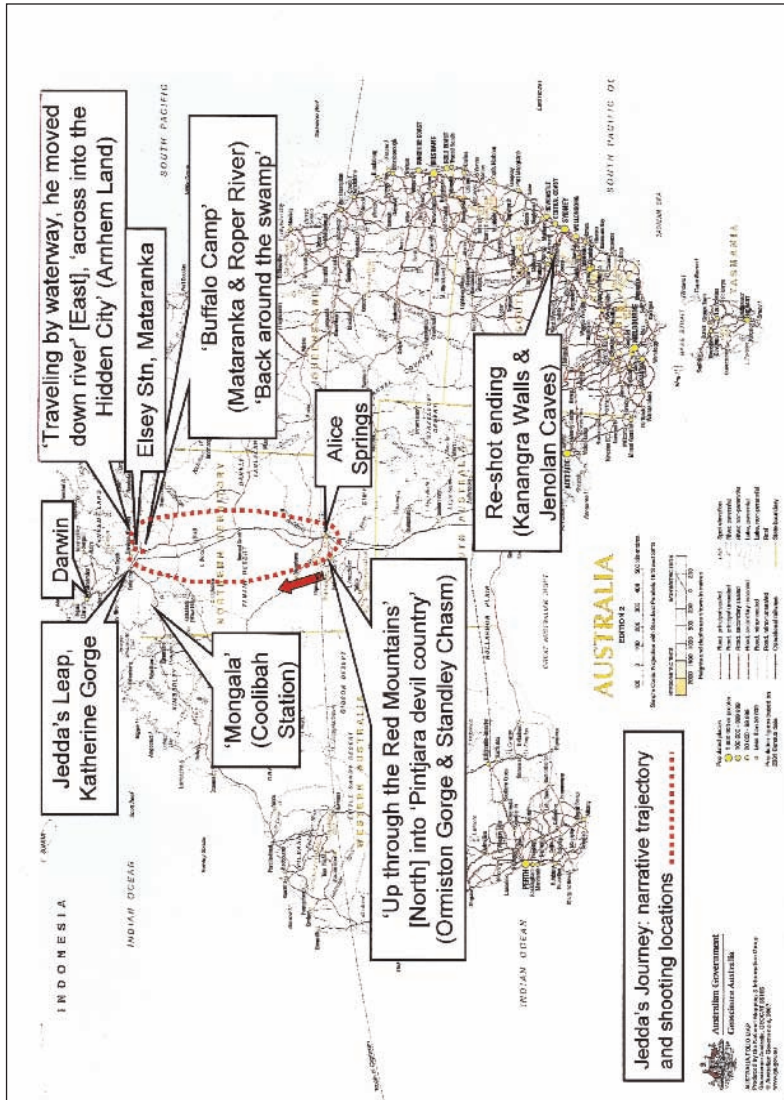


Figure 3. Jeddah's Journey and selected shooting locations. (map © Commonwealth of Australia - Geoscience Australia (2009), locations and journeys added by the authors)

through picturesque pandanus palms, paperbark trees and waterways filled with reeds and water lilies. Since Australian rivers draining into the great artesian basin run inland, it seems almost plausible that traveling “down river” would take the fugitives south into central Australia; however, the Roper and surrounding waterways drain east into the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The film’s diegetic logic dictates that the journey pushes away from white-owned stations into the wilderness, ending prematurely at Katherine Gorge (Nitmiluk), where the original death scene was shot, and through which Marbuk and Jedda travel on their raft.⁵¹ As the fugitives gain ground the landscape becomes wilder, less cultivated, and more dramatic. According to Creed, Jedda’s journey with Marbuk “is clearly intended to bring about the de-whitening of Jedda;” it is a “journey of rebirth in which she learns the ways of her people.”⁵² The “red mountains” that echo with Marbuk’s mad laughter are filmed in Ormiston Gorge and Standley Chasm, known in the diegesis as “Pintjara devil country.” These towering ochre rock formations are in the Red Centre, west of Alice Springs, and it is here that Marbuk degenerates into insanity after being cursed by his tribe and exiled to the Hidden City.

The Hidden City⁵³ is a destination which is unknown, isolated and taboo, yet it is also imagined as a space where the heroine’s mettle is tested and her dreams are realized so that she may find her proper place in the world, her spiritual home. Jedda wishes to go walkabout, to learn the ways of her people, and to sleep beneath the stars, just as she wishes for a physical passion that seems lacking in her chaste relationship with Joe. Although her journey is doomed, these dreams are fulfilled along the way. While the location of the Hidden City toward which Marbuk travels remains unspecified in the film, the shooting locations for scenes where Jedda is abducted and where she encounters Marbuk’s tribe are near Mataranka along the Roper River in the vicinity of Elsey Station – precisely where *We of the Never-Never* was written and later filmed.

Here, the Top End and the Red Centre are mapped onto each other in Jedda’s journey; as xenomorphic spaces of freedom and exile these geographic regions are conflated despite the different types of exotic landscapes found in the green tropical river regions near the coast and the arid central red desert regions of the Territory. This is precisely why Cunningham argues “MARBUK’s tribe lives ‘nowhere’ (the film has a half-realised generic notion of a Hidden City, developed more in earlier scripts), far away from any contact with whites.”⁵⁴ Cunningham goes on to write:

The flight of Marbuk and Jedda from white law is framed by showcased scenic grandeur in the Northern Territory. But this locationism ultimately advances the narrative because it provides a fitting spectacle where grand passions can be played out, beyond the tidy white world of lace curtains and grand pianos....Overpowering scenes of Marbuk’s seduction of Jedda, the dissolution of their ‘marriage’ at the hands of black law, and their final tragic end are enacted against breathtaking locations.⁵⁵

This geographically indeterminate cinematic landscape is especially open to figurative interpretations, producing a narrative understanding and a world-view informed by the land's imagined relationship to identity, emotion, belonging and exile. Here, the concept of "geography as epistemology"⁵⁶ refers to the way cinematic landscapes invite audiences to view "meaning or knowledge as something which emerges organically from a physical location rather than as a product of the signifying systems of a culture."⁵⁷

Cunningham uses the term "locationism" to describe Chauvel's commitment to location shooting, noting "locationism engages with Chauvel's nationalist desire to make 'Australia a film star.'"⁵⁸ The filmmaking practice of locationism involves "a reversal of the standard sequencing of pre-production. Generally, actors, ... the story and its characters, are chosen and formulated first. Then the selection of locations follows. For *Jedda*, the Chauvels reconnoitred the Northern Territory 'in search of a story.'"⁵⁹ This attempt to retrofit a narrative to pre-selected locations results in a mosaic effect in which fragmented images of spectacular landmarks combine to form a picture of the territory through which *Jedda* travels, but it is a picture in which none of the parts make sense alone or as a sequential itinerary. There is a stronger relationship between the maps and the journeys in *Australia*, but in some ways this results in a more imaginative disruption of geography because Luhrmann announces his divergence from the real via the obtrusive use of CGI to embellish the dramatic possibilities of the landscape, even as he carefully maps out the relationship between locations for the audience.

Presenting Oz: imaginative maps and imagined journeys in *Australia*

Where *Jedda* presents just one static, extradiegetic map of Australia, *Australia* features four map images woven into the film's diegesis in addition to the maps that provide the backdrop to its final credits. These four maps we will call Nullah's map, the Carney map, the Faraway Downs map, and the newsreel map. The first, Nullah's map, appears fewer than five minutes into the film. Up to this point, the action has been narrated by Nullah as his grandfather, King George (David Gulpilil), teaches him to catch fish at the billabong by using a "magic song." We see Nullah witness the murder of Lord Maitland Ashley, Lady Sarah's husband, and we see Nullah's flight to Faraway Downs on the back of "Capricornia,"⁶⁰ Lord Ashley's prized filly, whereupon he hides in the water tank to watch Sarah—escorted by The Drover—arriving at Faraway Downs for the first time, intent on selling it and returning with her husband to England. As Nullah watches Sarah, whom he calls "Missus Boss," striding purposefully towards the homestead, he observes: "She's not from this land. This land my people got many names for. But white fellas call it... Australia." As he speaks, the aerial image of Faraway Downs morphs into a map with 3D

drawing of the Faraway Downs homestead literally straddling the white broken line designating the Western Australia/Northern Territory border.

This pictorial map, as we shall see, is at odds with the other major map in the film – the Carney map – and with the actual geographical location of House Roof Hill (see Figure 4), where the Faraway Downs scenes were filmed. House Roof Hill is on Carlton Station near Kununurra in Western Australia, and is more than 30 miles west of the Northern Territory border. Moreover, on this introductory map we begin to see elements of an imagined and an imaginative geography, elements that coincide with the journey the characters take. As the camera zooms out and tilts down, the globe spins away from the camera, revealing the state line running along the ground away from the audience like the broken line in the middle of a highway speeding under a car. Following the dark line of the Victoria Highway below Faraway Downs towards the east into the Northern Territory, we see in relief a range of reddish bumps to the east of a mountain range. North and slightly east of these bumps, we see a deep gorge in the central north of the state, and above this gorge is a lighter patch, labeled “Kuraman Desert,” which in turn is south east of Darwin. These pictorial map locations, fleetingly visible in the real time of the film, begin to mark out the general northeasterly journey the characters will make as they drove [herd] cattle to Darwin through the unnamed red mountains, narrowly avoiding the trap of the gorge, across the “Kuraman Desert,” and north west to the Territory’s capital. Within six seconds, the map comes to rest on a full image of the nation, the right and the left of the globe sheering off into star-lit space. On this map can also be faintly made out other pictorial images, such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge (which opened in 1932), Adelaide’s churches, and Coolgardie’s goldmines, adorning the country’s other states. Just as Nullah says “Australia,” the word itself, in retro font, scrolls across the map, in one move naming both the country and the film.

“But,” Nullah continues, “this story not begin that day,” and he takes us back in time and half a world away to Sarah’s backstory, which takes place, as Nullah tells us in “Engl-land,” a “land far, far away.” Again, as Nullah speaks, the globe spins and we speed toward Europe, seeing the Nazi Swastika symbol over Germany and the “Ashlight House” estate where Sarah resides. After a brief scene explaining her trip to Australia, we return to the map, which takes us back past the land of the rising sun toward Australia as Lady Ashley flies to fetch her husband. Darwin is marked on the horizon with a ship in the harbor and the Territory Hotel rising from the coast beyond Mission Island where children wave at the plane from a palm-fringed beach.

Australia’s second map is one that hangs on the wall of Lesley “King” Carney’s establishment. In this scene, which occurs about eight minutes in to the film, we are introduced to King Carney (Bryan Brown), the cattle baron of the North. As his map shows in imperial pink, Carney’s holdings comprise the Kimberley area of north Western Australia and the western half of the Northern Territory. At the very center of Carney’s land is the



Figure 4. House Roof Hill, Carlton Hill Station. Location on which the Faraway Downs set was constructed for *Australia*. (photograph by Jane Stadler)

land he wishes to claim: Faraway Downs. Unlike Carney's homogeneous pink tracts, the Faraway Downs inset on the map is presented in color, and depicts the homestead well to the west of the State line (not sitting upon it as in Nullah's map), below the Ord River with an Aborigine standing on one leg on a ridge straddling the state border. Carney's territory surrounding Faraway Downs is branded with his "CCC" logo, indicating the Carney Cattle Company brand literally stamps the mark of Western capitalism on the land. Carney's map also depicts the threat of the Asian other, as the rays of the 'rising sun' insignia we previously saw in Nullah's map shine down upon the coastline, again designating Japan's threatening presence on the northern horizon. This "rising sun" imagery pays homage to maps in *The Overlanders* that show Japanese forces coming south, thereby prompting a big overland cattle drive. This is an important historical and cinematic reference point for Luhrmann's film.

The third map appears in the Faraway Downs homestead and speaks directly to Carney's capitalist-expansionist map, for Nullah uses it to show Sarah how Carney's men have been stealing her best cattle by pushing them across the river and onto Carney land. Although the viewer never sees the map in its entirety, it is a still closer pictorial view of Faraway Downs Station, bounded by a river. This map details the station buildings, the billabong where Maitland Ashley was killed and where the fat cattle were driven onto Carney land, and House Roof Hill complete with King George perched on top standing on one leg. This is the only map within the film that does not depict the encroaching rays of Japan. Indeed, even the fourth map image, which is part of a newsreel that later plays to a packed house in Darwin's open-air Pearl Picture Gardens, repeats even more

graphically the motif of Japan's spreading rays. In the Faraway Downs map, the threat is more local: the homestead is surrounded on three sides by the encroaching menace of Carney land. Faraway Downs is again distinguished from Carney land in its pictorial detail. The homeliness of Faraway Downs is in stark contrast to the cleared and fenced expanses of Carney land. Moreover, the depiction of Aborigines in the billabong and, again, on House Roof Hill, marks Faraway Downs as, at worst, a place where a traditional Indigenous presence is tolerated or, at best, a place where white settlers and Indigenous owners exist in relative harmony. This map draws a clear, albeit highly problematic, distinction between Carney's destructive capitalism, which sees land purely as resource, and Lady Sarah's more benevolent form of custodianship, which the viewer is led to see as being more "in tune" with Indigenous attitudes to land. Indeed, this map contributes to the general sense in the film that Faraway Downs—and, by extension, the whole of the North—is a kind of magical place that can awaken this spatial awareness in those, like Sarah, who are attuned to it. Once these four maps have done the work of establishing the space and time of the action, the main journey can begin. The cattle drove from Faraway Downs to Darwin commences immediately after the newsreel map.

Australia is all about journeys and storytelling. It starts with Nullah announcing "Grandfather teach'um me most important lesson of all: tel'um story." The film concludes when King George addresses the protagonists and, implicitly, the audience, saying "You have been on a journey." He then puts his arm around his grandson and continues "now we are heading home to my country, to our country," a statement which could just as easily refer to Aboriginal land rights as to King George's tribal territory in Arnhem Land. There are several journeys in *Australia*, and they relate in uneasy ways to the maps that feature in the film. With the exception of Sarah's one-way trip from the UK to Australia—itsself an unforeseen homecoming—the journeys in *Australia* are cyclical. They are circular journeys of discovery and homecoming, from the map of the nation on the spinning globe that opens and closes the movie, through seasonal cattle musters and droves to Darwin, to expectations that Nullah's walkabout will ultimately lead back to the Kimberley. Here we focus on the repeated journey between Darwin and Faraway Downs and the crossing of the Never-Never (see Figure 5). Just as Jedda's journey is, quite literally, a journey through the Never-Never, in *Australia* Sarah's journey takes her through the Kuraman Desert, which is narratively located in "Never-Never land."⁶¹

In her work on Australian road movies Hilary Harris describes a persistent "discourse of negation" in representations of the desert in Australian cinema, "where the desert is not-home, not-civil, not-productive, not-even-of-this-time, that is, not-modern."⁶² This view of the Australian landscape seen through the eyes of white travelers is mirrored in *Australia*'s representations of the Kuraman and in the English landowner Lady Sarah Ashley's initial impression of Faraway Downs in the dry season. The initial drive from Darwin to Faraway Downs is imagined as crossing a barren expanse of desert the color of sun-bleached bones, overexposed to

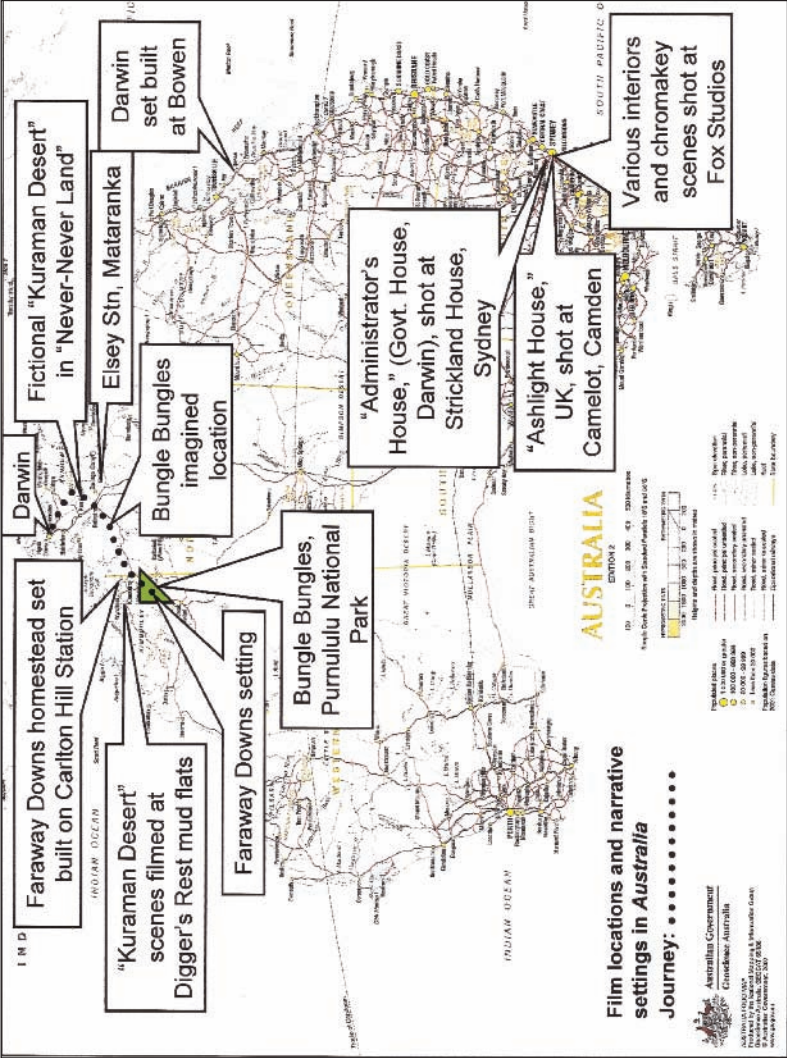


Figure 5. Journey and selected shooting locations in Australia. (map c 2009, Commonwealth of Australia-Geoscience Australia, locations and journeys added by the authors)

communicate a sense of searing heat and glaring light. The place of Aborigines in this landscape is also seen from Sarah's perspective when a 'native girl' suddenly emerges from nowhere, runs alongside the truck to tempt The Drover with a kiss, then vanishes just as quickly into the dusty nothingness. When Sarah arrives at the station and buries her husband she looks out over the arid landscape and remarks to Carney's lackey, Neil Fletcher (David Wenham), that she can't understand what her husband saw in the country. Fletcher replies that the land has a strange power.

Later, at the beginning of the drive, Nullah's voice-over tells us "When Missus Boss first came to this land she looked but she didn't see. Now she got her eyes open for the first time." At that moment, through Sarah's eyes and through Nullah's memory, we see one of the natural wonders of Australia, the majestic range of striped rocky red outcrops shaped like giant beehives called the Bungle Bungles (see Figure 6). The landscape is both awe inspiring and dangerous: it is here that the noble drunkard Kipling Flynn (Jack Thompson) loses his life and Nullah narrowly escapes plunging off the edge of the Purnululu Plateau as the cattle stampede through an eroded natural arch, fleeing from fires set by the villainous Fletcher.⁶³ When Sarah, The Drover, and Nullah return to Faraway Downs in the final act, the trip home through the desert is shot in the gentle light of the golden hour, rather than during the heat of day and the station is represented as a welcoming and beautiful homestead, orderly and productive. Such representations are grounded in historical attitudes to the land and are important in constructing identity in a way that serves powerful cultural and social interests,⁶⁴ legitimating white land ownership and the sovereignty of the pioneer settler.

Jedda, Australia, and the mapped view of the island continent

In our analysis of the far North of Australia as a region representative of the nation, we have argued metonymic uses of landscape naturalize cultural attitudes and values and affirm dominant narratives of history, identity, and entitlement. In yet another metonymic use of diegetic space, Faraway Downs Station is described as becoming "an island" in the wet season, cut off from the rest of the country (from civilization) by flooding caused by monsoonal rains, and thereby reproducing in miniature the island continent of which it is a part. The image of Faraway Downs as an island unto itself therefore enhances the significance of both the station and the nation as exotic locales and intensive spaces of belonging. Paradoxically, it also enforces the sense of exile and isolation that derives from Australia's convict history and its geographic remoteness and has pervaded representations of European settlers in the Australian landscape.

Both *Jedda's* and *Australia's* maps invoke a politicized geographic knowledge even as the films themselves take liberties with the placement of landmarks, but both also have figural elements relating to the characters' journeys. They are somewhere between being objective-scientific maps and



Figure 6. Bungle Bungles, Purnululu National Park, where the cattle stampede at the beginning of the *Drove* in Australia. (photograph by Jane Stadler)

subjective-experiential itineraries, and in each film the relationships among history, media, and geography play out in interesting ways as the mapped view gives way to the cinematographic view of the landscape and its people. The images of maps and aerial cinematography showing unpopulated landscapes in *Australia* and *Jedda* are different modes of envisioning the land, but each epitomizes a form of scopic control, offering vision, knowledge, and power through a “mapped view” of the spaces in which these films are set. As film scholar Ross Gibson writes:

Designed during the insurgence of the European bourgeoisie ca 1840-60, the camera still produces the type of image which, like painting of that time, served to locate the viewer in a situation where s/he could feel the scopic control over an entire scene....The camera is a tool for constructing a viewing-individual centred in a spectacle which is posed as complete and colonisable.⁶⁵

There are similarities between the omniscient view offered in maps and the bird’s eye perspective of an extreme long shot; however, where aerial cinematography presents the land as a spectacle, maps perform a more pragmatic function, charting landmarks and pathways significant to travelers.

Further, the troping of the North in these films is a form of antipodean inversion, but it is one that is particularly apt when considered in the light of Australian geographical history. As Regina Ganter suggests, “If we turn the map upside down and start Australian history where its documentation properly begins – in the north – the kaleidoscope of Australian history falls into a completely different pattern....Instead of a White Australian past in the north we see a history of ‘mixed relations’” among Indigenous, Asian, Islander, and European communities dating back well before Anglo-Celtic settlement of the continent.⁶⁶ Turning the map upside down allows us to see that Anglo-Celtic settlement “did not take place on a historical *tabula rasa*,” but rather on a continent whose “map was literally dotted with

Dutch names," such as Arnhem Land, and whose "histories abound" with tales of inter-cultural contact with Macassan traders and Muslim Asians by way of the Torres Strait.⁶⁷ The image of Australia is therefore bound up with and reflects the history and politics of mapping, naming, and colonization.

As literary geographer Martin Leer has argued, Australia's unique status as the "island continent" means that its image has, and continues to be, a particularly compelling instrument in the construction of a national identity. "The cartographical image" of Australia, he writes,

has great evocative power. It is displayed even more prominently in Australia than in most other countries as an official or semi-official icon of nationhood. In notional and perhaps even concrete terms, the map enters into an Australian's sense of nationality and even personal identity more deeply than statistical, political or ideological definitions of what constitutes Australia and the Australian.⁶⁸

For white Australians, as Leer has argued, the "essentially poetic process of a settler culture" claiming and imagining the landscape involves "'scaping' and shaping the land physically and conceptually."⁶⁹ As we have shown, this process of "coming to terms" with Australia, and "putting the continent on the map"⁷⁰ continues to this day in the use of maps and journeys in the imaginative geography of Australia's cinematic landscape.

Notes

1. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
2. Christopher Lukinbeal and Stefan Zimmermann, "Film Geography: A New Subfield," *Erdkunde* 60, no. 4 (2006): 316.
3. See Leo E. Zonn and Stuart C. Aitken, "Of Pelicans and Men: Symbolic Landscapes, Gender, and Australia's *Storm Boy*" in *Place, Power, Situation and Spectacle: A Geography of Film*, ed. Aitken and Zonn (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994), 137–61; Aitken and Zonn, "Weir(d) Sex: Representation of Gender-Environment Relations in Peter Weir's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *Galipoli*," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 11 (1993): 191–212.
4. See Jeremy Beckett, "Sarah McMahon's Mistake: Charles Chauvel's *Jedda* and the Assimilation Policy," *Bulletin of the Olive Pink Society* 5, no. 2 (1993): 15–18; Creed, "Breeding," 209–30; Barbara Creed, "Jedda, Négritude and the Modernist Impulse in Australian Film," in *Impact of the Modern: Vernacular Modernities in Australia 1870s–1960s*, ed. Robert Dixon and Veronica Kelly (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2008), 63–72; Marcia Langton, *Well I Heard it on the Radio and I Saw it on the Television...: An Essay* (Sydney: Australian Film Commission, 1993); Benjamin Miller, "The Mirror of Whiteness: Blackface in Charles Chauvel's *Jedda*," *JASAL Special Issue* (2007): 140–56; and Bruce Molloy, *Before the Interval: Australian Mythology and Feature Films, 1930–1960* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1990), 101–64.
5. Cunningham, *Featuring*, 162.

6. Due to the relatively recent release of *Australia*, little scholarly research has yet been published the film. However, in his article on Luhrmann's film, Stephen Carleton does begin the work of linking media geography with film studies, indicating a growing rapprochement between the two. See Stephen Carleton, "Cinema and the Australian North: Tracking and Troping Regionally Distinct Landscapes via Baz Luhrmann's *Australia*," *Metro Magazine* 163 (2009): 50–55.
7. Aboriginal actors were cast as two of the lead characters, Jedda and Marbuk. However, Jedda's beau Joe, the articulate stockman who narrates the film, is a white actor in blackface playing the son of an Afghan man and an Aboriginal woman.
8. Elsa Chauvel, *My Life with Charles Chauvel* (Sydney: Shakespeare Head Press, 1873), 116.
9. According to Chauvel, the story of Jedda's adoption was based on stories of "lonely, childless, white women in the Interior taking young aborigine [sic] children under their wing, and endeavouring to raise them as they would their own white offspring." Charles Chauvel, *Eve in Ebony: The Story of Jedda* (Sydney: Columbia Pictures, 1954), 2. The story of Jedda's abduction, on the other hand, was based on stories associated with the Aboriginal resistance fighter Namarluk, who is most famous for battling intruders (both White and Japanese) on his tribal lands. However, Marbuk was less inspired by Namarluk's documented status as resistance leader and fugitive than, as Chauvel puts it, tales he'd heard that Namarluk "frequently abducted a pretty station lubra, [and] took her far into little-known territory" (*Ibid.*). The link between the character Marbuk and the historical figure Namarluk is also made within the film itself, for Constable Tas Fitzner, who in *Jedda* played the policeman tracking Marbuk, had allegedly been responsible for Namarluk's arrest. Chauvel intentionally cast people who, acting out their everyday roles, would "portray the story properly" and convey an authentic sense of the history and character of the region. Stuart Cunningham, *Featuring Australia: The Cinema of Charles Chauvel* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin), 162. Another instance of Chauvel's "authentic" casting is the half-Aboriginal youngster Billy Farrar, who was cast as young Joe in *Jedda* because "his grandfather was head musterer to Costello, who blazed trails from Queensland to the Kimberleys for the Duracks and other great pioneers." "*Jedda is YOUR Film*," *Dawn* 3, no. 9 (1954): 11.
10. Susanne Chauvel Carlsson, *Charles and Elsa Chauvel: Movie Pioneers* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press), 162.
11. Barbara Creed, "Breeding out the Black: *Jedda* and the Stolen Generations in Australia," in *Body Trade: Captivity, Cannibalism and Colonialism in the Pacific*, ed. Barbara Creed and Jeanette Hoorn (New York: Routledge, 2001), 209.
12. See "Tourism Australia's Destination Campaign by Baz Luhrmann," Tourism Australia, <http://www.tourism.australia.com/content/Destination%20Campaign/Transformation/Bazstrategybrochure.pdf> (accessed August 30, 2009).
13. Nullah's name has a number of possible connotations, the most obvious being *nulla nulla*, an Aboriginal word for a wooden club. However, Nullah's name also carries connotations of *terra nullius*, and is perhaps even a reference to the Aboriginal character Nulla Nulla in Bert Bailey's 1910 film, *The Squatter's Daughter*. Indeed, a poster of Ken Hall's 1933 remake of Bailey's silent film can be seen in Luhrmann's film in the Pearl Theatre.
14. Not coincidentally, Jedda the dog is shot and killed just as Nullah is taken to Mission Island.
15. While Carlton Hill Station is in Western Australia and Coolibah Station, the shooting location for Jedda's home at Mongala, is in the Northern Territory,

they are surrounded by remarkably similar terrain and they share much the same location in the imaginative geography of the Top End. Each homestead is built at the base of an escarpment and each shows the architectural and aesthetic sensibility of white landholders of the time, including rudimentary outbuildings and quarters for stockmen and Aboriginal workers. Faraway Downs was constructed between the Ord River and House Roof Hill, though some interior shots were filmed in Fox Studios in Sydney. Similarly, many of *Jedda's* interior shots were filmed in Sydney studios with painted backdrops in the style of Indigenous artist Albert Namatjira, evoking the landscape near Alice Springs. Coolibah Station was also seriously considered as the location of Faraway Downs in *Australia*. According to the Film and Television Association Northern Territory (FATANT) newsletter, in August, 2005 Bazmark Productions sent location scouts throughout the region with a brief to locate a "station homestead with established gardens with views of an escarpment....[O]nly one station matched the brief, Coolibah Station near the Victoria River Crossing 160km from Katherine." *FATANT Newsletter*, August 2005, 2.

16. Following on from policies of Aboriginal protection and segregation in the early years of settlement, assimilation policy – which endorsed the removal of children of mixed descent for the purpose of giving them a European education in missions, government institutions, or foster homes – was implemented in the Northern Territory in the 1930s. Historically, assimilation was formally abolished by the Commonwealth Government in 1973 in favor of self-determination and belated recognition of the value of preserving Aboriginal languages and culture.
17. Andre Bazin, "The Western, or The American Film *par excellence*," in his *What Is Cinema Vol. II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 141–142.
18. Peter Limbrick, "The Australian Western, or a Settler Colonial Cinema *par excellence*," *Cinema Journal* 46, no. 4 (2007): 68–95.
19. *Ibid.*, 88.
20. Zonn, "Images of Place: A Geography of the Media," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia* (South Australian Branch) 84 (1984): 44, 40.
21. *Ibid.*, 44.
22. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 55.
23. Derek Gregory, "Edward Said's Imaginative Geographies," in *Thinking Space*, ed. Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (London: Routledge, 2000), 335.
24. Said, *Orientalism*, 3.
25. Carleton, 53.
26. *Terra nullius* is the product of a Eurocentric view, self-evident to "people who could see no evidence of civilization or progress in the 'discovered' region" and who believed the territory "was providentially reserved for English acculturation." Ross Gibson, *South of the West: Postcolonialism and the Narrative Construction of Australia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 8, 9.
27. Carleton, 52.
28. *Ibid.*, 55. Carleton includes *Crocodile Dundee* (1986), *Yolngu Boy* (2001), *Japanese Story* (2003), *Wolf Creek* (2005), *Ten Canoes* (2006), *Lucky Miles* (2007), *Rogue* (2007), and *Australia* (2009) in his list of recent "Northern" films.
29. *Ibid.*, 53.
30. See Barcroft Boake, "Where the Dead Men Lie," *Where the Dead Men Lie and Other Poems* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1897), 140–142; Henry Lawson, "The Never-Never Country," *When I Was King and Other Verses* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1906), 40–43; and Jeannie Gunn, *We of the Never-Never* (London: Hutchinson, 1908). *We of the Never-Never*, which is set at Elsey Station

- where Jeannie "Mrs Aeneas" Gunn lived in 1902–1903, was later adapted for the screen (Dir. Igor Auzins, 1982).
31. The concept of "internal orientalism," which David Jansson has applied to the American Deep South, offers insight into the way Indigenous and Asian inhabitants of the Northern Territory are placed in relation to Australian national identity. See David R. Jansson, "'A Geography of Racism': Internal Orientalism and the Construction of American National Identity in the Film *Mississippi Burning*," *National Identities* 7, no. 3 (2005): 265–285.
 32. Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 119.
 33. *Ibid.*
 34. *Ibid.*, 121.
 35. *Ibid.*, 118.
 36. *Ibid.*, 129, 117, 123.
 37. *Ibid.*, 126.
 38. Tom Conley, *Cartographic Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 1.
 39. *Ibid.*, 2.
 40. *Ibid.*, 3.
 41. *Ibid.*, 4–5.
 42. *Ibid.*, 3.
 43. Peter White and Simon Bourke, "The Grammar of Cinema: Typography in Australian Films of the 1950s," *Metro Magazine* 129/130 (2001): 244.
 44. Martin Lefebvre, *Landscape and Film* (New York: Routledge, 2006), xi.
 45. Mark Cousins, *The Story of Film* (London: Pavilion Books, 2004), 25–29.
 46. Tim Cresswell and Deborah Dixon, *Engaging Film: Geographies of Mobility and Identity* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 11. See also Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
 47. See John Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping, and the Geo-coded World* (Routledge: London, 2004), 94–95; Christian Jacob, *The Sovereign Map: Theoretical Approaches in Cartography Throughout History*, trans. Tom Conley (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2006), 14; and Peta Mitchell, *Cartographic Strategies of Postmodernity: The Figure of the Map in Contemporary Theory and Fiction* (Routledge: New York, 2007), 17, 23–24.
 48. There is also a strong link between indigenous art and cartography. According to Christopher Tilley, Aboriginal paintings "refer simultaneously to mythological events and topographic features. They both record in visual form a narrative of dreamtime events and present a 'map' of a particular area of land." Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), 51.
 49. The journey is described as a "long journey into Arnhem Land" in publicity material for the film, yet critics such as Creed refer to Jedda's "journey into the interior" (Creed, "Breeding," 216). Narratively, it is impossible to estimate the distance this week-long journey covers as Jedda and Marbuk travel by foot and raft through crocodile ridden waters, arid gorges, and tropical wetlands. The journey is spatio-temporally challenging to map because it leaps hundreds of miles in various directions from scene to scene within a very compressed narrative timeframe. Geographically it is over a 1,243-mile round trip from the abduction at the buffalo camp near Mataranka to the Standley Chasm area and back to Arnhem Land.
 50. Gibson, *South* 10.
 51. The death scene at the end of the movie was originally filmed at a place now known as "Jedda's Leap" in Katherine Gorge, Nitmiluk National Park. When

- this footage was damaged, the final scenes were re-shot at Kanangra Walls and the Jenolan Caves in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, New South Wales.
52. Creed, "Breeding," 216.
 53. The "Hidden City" almost certainly refers to a distinctive landmark resembling urban structures. Deeper in the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve, North-East from Elsey Creek and Roper River, is a rock formation known as the "Ruined City of Arnhem Land," where eroded sandstone towers resemble ruined buildings. This could well be the "Hidden City" that Marbuk aims to reach; however, a number of "Lost" or "Ruined" city formations are dotted across the Northern Territory.
 54. Cunningham, *Featuring* 162.
 55. *Ibid.*
 56. Cunningham, "Australian Film," *Australian Journal of Screen Theory* 5–6 (1978): 37.
 57. Graeme Turner, *National Fictions: Literature, Film, and the Construction of Australian Narrative* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1993), 34.
 58. Cunningham, *Featuring* 26.
 59. *Ibid.*, 157.
 60. Luhrmann here pays homage to Xavier Herbert, whose 1938 novel, *Capricornia*, takes prime place alongside Gunn's *We of the Never-Never* (1908) in a canon of "Northern" Australian literature. Both "Capricornia" and "The Never-Never" have become bywords for the Northern Territory. Indeed, Luhrmann explicitly states his indebtedness to Herbert's novels *Capricornia* and *Poor Fellow My Country* in *Australia*'s credits, and the film provides an intertextual reference to the latter work in the "Poor Fellow" rum his characters drink.
 61. Luhrmann's choice to name the desert in the heart of the Never-Never the "Kuraman" may not be accidental. In his review of *Australia*, "Gone with the Wind: An Australian Fiasco" in *The Monthly* (February 2009: 30–36), Peter Conrad rightly observes that there is no desert between Kununurra and Darwin. Indeed, the nearest desert is the Tanami, southeast of the Bungle Bungle in the central desert region of the Northern Territory. Conrad says the only place he can find called Kuraman is an island off Borneo. However, the name strikingly resembles that of the Karaman people, whose tribal lands, according to anthropologist Norman Tindale in his 1974 *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*, covered the region near Mataranka and Elsey Station. Elsey is where Gunn wrote *We of the Never-Never* (and it is a location in *Jedda*). The Kuraman is described in *Australia* as "Never-Never land," and its bleached expanse is depicted on Nul-la's map and in the credits as being in the vicinity of Elsey Station. The name of the fictional desert is imaginative, but geographically appropriate.
 62. Hilary Harris, "Desert Training for Whites: Australian Road Movies," *Journal of Australian Studies*, 86 (2006): 99.
 63. The maps at the beginning and end of *Australia* showing the island continent on a spinning globe relocate the Bungle Bungle northeast of their actual location so that they appear to be between Faraway Downs and Darwin, in the pathway of the cattle drove. The natural arch formed by an eroded beehive is pictured on the map, and is clearly visible in the CGI footage of the cattle stam-pede through the Bungle Bungle.
 64. Harris, 109–110.
 65. Ross Gibson, "Camera Natura: Landscape in Australian Feature Film [1983]," in *Australian Cultural Studies: A Reader*, ed. John Frow and Meaghan Morris (University of Illinois Press: Urbana, 1993), 218.
 66. Regina Ganter, "Turn the Map Upside Down," *Griffith Review* 9 (2005): 167.
 67. *Ibid.*

68. Martin Leer, "Imagined Counterpart: Outlining a Conceptual Literary Geography of Australia," *Australian Literary Studies* 15, no. 2 (1991): 1.
69. *Ibid.*, 4–5.
70. *Ibid.*