

assembled documentary footage from his own life to shed some light on questions concerning a multiracial child and family dynamics in a midwestern suburb. But without an analytic engine, the film's strength seems to stop at these insights and personal resolutions. For a social scientist dealing with difficult issues of racial identity, social conflict, or family dynamics, the film may not do enough to build on concerns and interpretations, or to articulate the next level of questioning or inquiry that is needed. As a colleague who saw the film commented, it would be great to have Warnock-Graham as a guest presenter in class, to debate, and to interview, but the film by itself did not present enough topical material for her needs. Alternatively, various audiences have connected well with the film and praised its poignancy. Educators in diverse fields, from teacher preparation to family studies to nursing to urban anthropology, may find that the film serves both to introduce students to issues of race and family dynamics, and to increase their awareness of the subtleties of culture in different contexts.

Additionally, as a film, *Silences* occupies territory between a documentary, self-discovery, and a research study. It exemplifies how close analysis in a personal narrative can serve to illuminate larger issues. It is evident that the filmmaker has treated his participants with care and regard. Through his interview and editing style, Warnock-Graham builds an authentic story. For those who work completely out of academic settings and might be considering film-based approaches to research, his fluid storytelling raises other kinds of questions such as research design, informed consent, and differing interpretive frameworks.

A Ituvatuva Ni Vakadidike E Sawau: The Sawau Project DVD

Directed by Guido Carlo Pigliasco, University of Hawaii at Mānoa, 2005. Produced by the Institute of Fijian Language & Culture/Ministry of Fijian Affairs, Suva, Fiji Islands.

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In a shower of orange pixel sparks, the opening credits of *A Ituvatuva Ni Vakadidike E Sawau: The Sawau Project* DVD roll across the screen, first to warn that "unauthorized duplicating, lending, [or] broadcasting is prohibited," and then to assert that the project itself is "an indigenous response to the protection of cultural heritage in Beqa." Distributed on DVD to members of the Sawau tribe, and shown in limited academic contexts, *The Sawau Project* was conceived as a strategy for repa-

triating ownership of Sawau cultural heritage back to its place of origin on the island of Beqa, Fiji. Its specific focus is on reclaiming and generating documentation of *vilavilairevo*, or Sawau firewalking. The project addresses both the inability of current intellectual property rights law to protect communally owned indigenous forms of cultural expression, and the need for indigenous peoples and their allies to negotiate and promote alternative forms of protection that acknowledge the complexity of collective responsibilities to traditional culture. Representations of firewalkers have been widely circulated, appropriated, and commodified, but the Sawau tribe now lays claim to the *vilavilairevo* as their own to control and perform. Filmed, photographed, and produced in collaboration with Felix Colatanavanua, a Canadian-educated filmmaker and cousin of Tui Sawau, the Paramount Chief of the Sawau tribe, the project brought together Sawau elders, community members, and *vilavilairevo* practitioners to assert their intellectual property and communal rights to the ritual. The project is intended to be open-ended, and subsequent versions of the DVD will be created as new material becomes available.

The Sawau Project DVD grounds its navigational architecture in the geography of Beqa itself, contextualizing cultural traditions as inalienable from their originating landscapes. The initial menu presents two choices. The first is an introduction to the project, consisting of a montage of still images and video of Beqa locations, Pigliasco working with community members, and contemporary and archival firewalking performances. The second navigational choice takes the viewer "to Beqa," where a story-map menu of 11 locations floats over a satellite image of the island, leafy green against the sea foam and dark blue water of the Pacific. The first place on the list is Dakuibeqa. Clicking next to the place name initiates a simple animation in which the name itself zooms toward its geographical location on the island. A new video begins. The first part is a five-minute montage of villages, people, and the *vilavilairevo* being performed for public audiences, narrated by Elder Nemani Nabure in the *Bauan* language. The second part has producer Colatanavanua narrating a 15-minute English segment (the only English piece on the DVD) that documents the long commute that *vilavilairevo* performers make from Beqa to Fiji to perform the ceremony for tourists throughout the week. Villagers gather in the morning to watch the performers depart to "take their firewalking show to the tourists," and then the group travels the long distance by boat and bus from Beqa to the Shangri-la's Fijian Resort and Spa to perform the *vilavilairevo*.

As described in the DVD's video introduction, mass-mediated representations of the firewalking ritual have

been prominent in the world's introduction to Fijian culture. While Sawau customs and traditions have "become blurred due to external influences," the Ministry of Fijian Affairs has also iconized the ritual as a symbol of Fijian culture. As a result, *vilavilairevo* is now commodified for tourists in hotel performances and as images on T-shirts, postcards, and other souvenirs. Created with the intention of initiating "the repatriation of the ceremony to its point of origin in Beqa Island," the *Sawau Project* emphasizes that increasingly, for many indigenous people, the desire for repatriation is, fundamentally, the desire for control over representation (Jennifer Kramer, "Figurative Repatriation: First Nations 'Artist Warriors' Recover, Reclaim, and Return Cultural Property through Self-Definition," *Journal of Material Culture*, 2004: 161–182).

The DVD therefore includes video recordings that have been returned to Sawau for use in the project. At Soligaya, on Beqa's eastern shore, the viewer watches a video made in 2003 of a farewell performance for the Australian High Commissioner. This project's credits acknowledge that the video was made available to the Sawau tribe by the Film and TV Unit of the Fijian Ministry of Information, Communications and Media Relations. The tribe was also given permission to use film footage recorded at the western village of Rukua, documenting the royal visits of Prince Charles and Prince Andrew. The inclusion of these excerpts in the *Sawau Project* facilitates the reconnection of *vilavilairevo*'s representations to Sawau culture, oral narrative, and the land, thereby contesting the many decontextualized representations that now circulate in commercial and national initiatives. Within a historical dynamic that privileged the colonizer as documentarian and representative of the colonized, this project signifies a postcolonial reversal, allowing the Sawau tribe to reappropriate images of the *vilavilairevo* that situate and represent its relation to their colonial history on their own terms, "restoring its position in history by retelling its own stories" for their own communities.

While potential for the final product to meet the community's goals for repatriation and control is uncertain, the project reflects the centrality of the *process* of media production in generating articulations of Sawau indigenous intellectual property rights and access protocols. The right of collective ownership of the right to practice the *vilavilairevo* is enforced by customary law, and depends on norms and sanctions that come from within the community [Guido Carlo Pigliasco, "Visual Anthropology and Jurisprudence: The Sawau Project," *Anthropology News*, 2007:65]. Therefore, bringing Sawau people together to reinforce their knowledge and practice of these customs is a significant

step toward reclaiming intellectual property rights and "repatriating customs and values," goals at the heart of the project.

Narrator Ro Mereani Tumitanisiga describes how the *Sawau Project*'s particular research process was grounded in the group's rediscovery of Sawau history, and interpreted anew by reestablishing their history's connection to place. A literal illustration of this takes place at Namoliwai, where they explore landscapes known to be the origin of the *vilavilairevo* legend. Mr. Samu Vakyruiwala, a firewalking priest, leads the group over rough terrain, through deep water, and up steep slopes until they find a place where flamelike flowers hang from vines. A pond's dry bed marks the place of the legend's origin.

The viewing experience would have been elevated if the filmmakers had used a tripod while filming. Like many community-based media productions, a heavy focus on process can come at the expense of video production quality. However, for the most part, this project was not meant for me. Faye Ginsburg describes a similar dynamic in her assessment of South Australian *Pitjantjatjara* media-makers, whose work may be "judged by [its] capacity to embody, sustain, and revive, or create certain social relations" (Faye Ginsburg, "Embedded Aesthetics: Creating a Discursive Space for Indigenous Media," *Cultural Anthropology*, 1994, Further Inflections: Toward Ethnographies of the Future:365–382). More than the final product, the beauty and value of these media are *extratextual*, "created by the cultural and social processes they mediate, embody, create, and extend" (Ginsburg: 370).

This system of evaluation extends to the digital medium chosen by Pigliasco and Colatanavanua for the project. Unlike an Internet-based archive aimed at more universal access, the DVD limits access to the virtually repatriated material by enabling community leaders to control distribution of the disc. Even the choice not to translate *Bauan* narratives limits the knowledge communicated. Unlike an ethnographic film, the nonlinear archive can be continually added to without disrupting the original intention or content, therefore remaining dynamic and supportive of the ongoing process of knowledge generation and documentation. While these extratextual attributes make this project largely unavailable for general classroom use, Pigliasco's scholarly explorations of the DVD's intellectual property and technological implications constitute an important contribution to the study of indigenous media history, theory, and production.

The Sawau Project illustrates the complexity inherent in the mass-mediation of cultural heritage, as well as the revitalization and assertion of indigenous rights to self-representation in a postcolonial and national context. It

also highlights a shift away from visual and media anthropological practices that present media technologies as outwardly communicative, to the use of media and digital technologies by anthropologists interested in collaboration with communities that is inward looking and protective. Whether the *Sawau Project* can maintain its momentum and *extratextual* significance within the community—dependent on factors such as the passing of Fiji's Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture Bill, an unstable national and tribal politics, dynamic tribal politics, ongoing technology maintenance, and training, continued funding, and the sheer will of local project stewards—will remain to be seen.

Preaching from Pictures: A Japanese Mandala

Produced and directed by David W. Plath, 2006, 119 minutes, color. Distributed by the Asian Educational Media Service, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 805 West Pennsylvania Avenue, MC-025, Urbana, IL 61801, <http://www.aems.uiuc.edu>

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Preaching from Pictures succeeds in acquainting the viewer with an unfamiliar place, milieu, and archaic visual didactic technique. Using the intricately drawn contemporary Buddhist painting of the *Kumano Kanjin Jikkai Mandala* ("Mandala of the Ten Worlds") as the focal piece of discussion, it interweaves snippets of the social and religious worlds of the residents of *Edo* (the former name for Tokyo), Japan's early modern capital city. *Edo City* was the seat of power for the *Tokugawa Shogunate* from the early 17th to the mid-19th centuries, and preeminent among some two hundred and fifty castle-towns built by *daimyos* and *samurais* during an extended period of peace. With a population approaching 1 million, it was probably the largest city in the world of its time.

Great strides in material prosperity not only saw the rise of urban social classes, but also a flourishing of novel modes of religious expressions. In *Edo*, we are told, "all of Japan was replicated" in terms of religious pilgrimage practices. For instance, the notion of *utsushi* ("mirror" or "reflection"), where miniature replicas of distant Buddhist and Shinto shrines or structures were built, enabled pilgrims to metaphorically worship Mount Fuji without having to leave *Edo*.

The *Tokugawa Shogunate* commissioned panoramic silk screens picturing the history, gaiety, and splendor of *Edo's* hierarchical social fabric. But in contrast to the *Shogun* paintings' this-worldly focus, the *Jikkai Mand-*

ala refracts the arc of life through the Buddhist lens of karma, linking the here and now with the afterlives to come. This is visually illustrated by the painting's powerful symmetry in its depiction of time and space. Nonetheless, these pictures were mute, and required explication by itinerant preachers, which in this case were *bikunis* (nuns) from the *Kumano* sect. They preached and recited at roadsides and various public spaces of *Edo*, and even beyond the city boundaries into the countryside. In essence, the *Jikkai Mandala* drew ideas from *Tendai* Buddhism and *Shugend* mountain ascetics. It beckoned viewers and listeners to observe their minds (*kanjin*) by contemplating on the ten realms (*jikkai*) of existence, which include six courses of rebirths and four levels of enlightenment.

Aptly, the centerpiece of *Preaching from Pictures* is a fascinating exegetical tour of the many human figures, bodhisattvas, demons, and other sentient beings that populate the *Jikkai Mandala* by an unseen female narrator. We are told that a central motif linking all of these disparate entities is *kokoro* ("compassion")—a heart with a right attitude will generate right actions, which will avoid the sufferings of the underworld. Drawing from Confucianist elements, the *Jikkai Mandala* also incorporates filial piety into its visual narrative of right action. The account is juxtaposed with short commentaries on daily life in *Edo*. In keeping with the sober tone of the *Jikkai Mandala*, the narration is terse and reflective, and is accompanied by minimalist Japanese music and Buddhist chants. This portion of the DVD lasts around 37 minutes.

A more substantial portion is found in an interactive section that is organized along three interlinked clusters. The first is a series of dyadic conversations (approximately 80 minutes) with American experts on Japanese history and Japanese religions. These are organized under the key headings of "religious practices," "karma," "life cycles," "Edo's energy," "filial piety," "pilgrimage," and "*bikuni*." Each conversation is around 11 minutes. Under this cluster, a contemporary 17th-century text taken from a puppet drama known as the "*Etoki sermon*" is read aloud in Japanese, enhancing the aural sense of the Mandala's visual power.

Another section allows for a closer look at the images of maps, scripts, paintings, and photographs that have been editorially cut into the conversations. Finally, all the key terms used in the conversations are listed and explained in a glossary cluster. This arrangement, in effect, allows easy intertextual navigation into portions that may interest the viewer.

Using the *Jikkai Mandala* for preaching and proselytization purposes by *kumano* nuns fell out of fashion in the 1920s. We are told that one of the contributing