

Review Essay

'That photo in my heart': *Remembering Yayayi* and self-determination

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What was self-determination? As debates about the future of small Aboriginal communities continue to rage in the public domain, the era in which Aboriginal people were encouraged to leave centralised missions and settlements to pursue relatively autonomous futures on their ancestral lands appears as a distant past. Self-determination as a bipartisan policy approach can arguably be temporally located between 1972 and 1996, a period in which anthropological research involving Aboriginal communities flourished, driven by the optimism of the times, but also particularly by the legislative requirements of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*. A decisive shift in policy away from self-determination was declared by John Howard on coming to power in 1996, and was broadly followed by successive governments, both Labor and conservative Coalition. Particular moments in this policy shift have triggered much passionate debate among anthropologists over the past and future of remote communities and anthropology's engagements with them (Altman and Hinkson 2009; Sutton 2009). With the initial intensity of those debates now behind us, we might expect to see some differently inflected late-career perspectives, especially from anthropologists who were deeply immersed in fieldwork in the 1970s and 1980s, the height of self-determination's optimism. *Remembering Yayayi* is one such timely contribution; a film that brings focus to an iconic place of self-determination's enactment, a film that by virtue of its methodology also circumscribes the Indigenous affairs landscape of then and now in understated but interesting ways. *Remembering Yayayi*, as its name suggests, is a film about memory. It is also a film about a place and a field of government-supported activity that no longer exist. Methodologically, it is a film with a complex temporality that enfolds images shot in different eras and diverse ways of seeing. *Remembering Yayayi* thus stimulates thinking around the ways the work of anthropologists can contribute to interpretations of the past and inform future focused policy-making. It also provokes reflection on what the medium of film might bring to such debates that the written word cannot.

Remembering Yayayi is a collaboration between anthropologist Fred Myers, filmmaker Ian Dunlop, filmmaker and editor Pip Deveson, who has worked alongside Dunlop over many years, and members of the Pintupi community — most notably Marlene Nampitjinpa Spencer. Instigated as part of an Australian Research Council linkage project between the Australian National University, National Museum of Australia, New York University and Papunya Tula Aboriginal Artists, the film follows

Myers' repatriation of Dunlop's 1974 footage to Pintupi communities four decades after the film was shot, and brings into the frame Marlene Nampitjinpa Spencer to comment upon scenes in which she often appears as a teenage girl. The resultant film is a palimpsest, drawing sequences of Dunlop's film into the present, transposing those sequences through the addition of translations as well as the recent responses of Nampitjinpa, often in the company of Myers. *Remembering Yayayi* is thus a complex outcome of a series of editorial decisions taken by Deveson, who assembled the final film, in consultation with Myers — which sequences of Dunlop's film footage to include? What kind of interlocutory attitude would the anthropologist who was present then and now adopt? Which (if any) participant's perspective would be granted prominence and provide the film's coherent voice? What do the filmmakers contribute to the current debates about the past and future of remote communities?

One faces considerable challenges at the outset in writing about 'self-determination'. The term has been deployed in respect of such a variety of phenomena and circumstances that the quandary of its usage might be seen to mimic anthropology's erstwhile conundrum of 'culture'. As a broad bipartisan policy approach, 'self-determination', or 'self-management', as it became better known following the Fraser government's coming to power in 1975 (Sanders 1982), has been interpreted by some as sharing much with the 'assimilation' policy that preceded it, involving, if anything, an intensification rather than a loosening of governmental power, albeit directed to an alternative set of ambitions for Indigenous subjects (Cowlshaw 1998; Altman and Rowse 2005; Batty 2005). Supporting 'difference' rather than 'integration' was the narrative at the heart of policy programs that nevertheless enveloped remote living Aboriginal people in a web of new kinds of administrative controls and responsibilities. Since the 1990s advocates of the shift to 'normalise' Indigenous policy have overlooked this interpretation of self-determination as a form of 'soft-assimilation' and sought to discredit 'the failed project of self-determination' as if its enactment had straightforwardly amounted to a handing of power to Indigenous people. Identifying self-determination as a failed experiment in Aboriginal control is crucial in justifying a new era of intensified governmental intervention. It is beyond the scope of this review essay to deal with the complex layers of this wider landscape in any detail, but they necessarily provide vital context for *Remembering Yayayi* and will re-emerge in the discussion that follows.

The Pintupi hold particular iconic status in the Australian history of self-determination — widely held to be the last to come in from the desert, the people for whom life at the government settlement of Papunya was the most difficult. The people who from this place of despair unleashed extraordinary powers of cultural expression and were acclaimed internationally for launching one of the most significant art movements of the twentieth century. They are also the subjects of one of anthropology's most cited ethnographies of an Australian Aboriginal community, Myers' (1986) *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self*. Both art and anthropological narratives closely follow the trajectory of Pintupi who left Papunya as soon as they were able, in an attempt to get distance from the sickness, fighting, drinking, deaths and paternalistic controls of the

settlement. They were headed for their ancestral lands deep in the Western Desert, but in the first instance stopped partway at Yayayi and established an outstation, with the aid of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs which drilled a bore and secured water supply. Aside from a humble vegetable garden and one roomed 'store', Dunlop's footage reveals the landscape of Yayayi as a nondescript spinifex plain, dotted with make-shift shelters assembled from tree branches, tarpaulins and corrugated iron.

The film begins abruptly, opening on a scene in which several people are walking through the desert. A young woman jokingly throws something at another. A man carries a box, a woman carries a billycan; they all gravitate towards a fire. A woman's voice comes in, 'There's me . . . that red one [girl wearing a red jacket and skirt]. 'Right there' confirms a male voice. The film cuts, the voiceover continues and we encounter the two people attached to those voices, watching the desert scene via a laptop computer. Folded towels and white sheets indicate they are in a hotel room. Marlene Nampitjinpa Spencer continues speaking, identifying the people in the framed images, her brothers and close kin. Another cut and we see Nampitjinpa in close up headshot, addressing Myers who is nearby but outside the frame.

We didn't know. We didn't know photo — you know? That was when we were young. We didn't know what was going on with this one. We don't know. [She turns to address Pip Deveson behind the camera] Until they brought these photos (film) to there [indicating the direction of her community, Kintore] — we've seen these photos. It is only now that we are finally seeing these images — history, old days. And me too there. And my mum — all our family — we went hunting [she smiles]. This is now — I've seen 'em — first movie. I've never seen any movies you know with my family.

Myers' voice comes in at this point to provide the film's only contextualising overview; he tells us Marlene Nampitjinpa was born in the desert and her family were among the first Pintupi brought into the government settlement of Papunya in the early 1960s. Ten years later, with government support, this family and others left the settlement and established an outstation at Yayayi. Myers was there as a PhD student when Ian Dunlop turned up, hoping to track the fortunes of people he had met in the desert ten years earlier, just before they were relocated to Papunya.

We never learn whether Dunlop did in fact reunite with those persons, but the next shot shows Pintupi men instructing the filmmaker, who we hear but do not see, on the kin terms by which he should address each of them, with Myers mediating the interactions. This performance of adoptive kinship indicates Dunlop's status in the Pintupi camps as more than a passing visitor, but he does not speak Pintupi and so is dependent upon the anthropologist's assistance. Myers appears often in the footage, quiet, pensively focussed, notebook in hand or back pocket, sucking hard on a cigarette.

Myers' voiceover continues: a year after Dunlop's one month stay at Yayayi two Pintupi men travelled with Myers to visit the filmmaker in Sydney, where together they translated the footage. In 2006 Myers took the footage to Kintore and Kiwirrkura, where he hoped to meet up with a close male informant. On arrival the man in

question was not there, but they went ahead with a public screening in the Kiwirrkura town hall, and Myers tells us there was great excitement at seeing the footage.

Following a chance meeting with Marlene Nampitjinpa at Kintore, Myers invited her to watch Dunlop's sequences and we see scenes of her extended family gathered around Myers' laptop, transfixed, caught up with the work of identifying people. We then observe Myers showing the recording of this screening session to Dunlop and suggesting to him that it would be very productive to get Marlene to talk about the Yayayi footage. Enter Marlene Nampitjinpa, who makes a compelling screen presence. Her radiant face, the intimacy and delight with which she responds to the images of herself and her kin four decades on, activates Dunlop's original footage in powerful ways. She narrates the footage to Myers: 'I'm walking in the early morning to mum's place.' This contextualisation lays the ground for the rest of the film, which comprises thematically organised sequences assembled from a judicious selection of Dunlop's footage, presented in the viewing company of Nampitjinpa and Myers.

EYES ON THE PAST

Ian Dunlop's film reels sat in the Film Australia archives for three decades, primarily because he did not think the footage was very good. Perhaps in this self-criticism lies some awareness that the film shot at Yayayi reveals stark social distance between cameraman and his subjects. In this sense Nampitjinpa's entry into the frame as mediator is an inspired move. The effect of her voiceover and her deeply affectionate engagement with Dunlop's images is powerfully transformative. The distance of his observational camera is breached, but importantly, not erased. While having our own attention guided by what Nampitjinpa sees in Dunlop's footage, we are also conscious of the camera's intrusion into a semi-private domain, we are aware that the camera and its holder are visitors and that a gulf of communication lies between filmmaker and subjects. 'I hope we didn't wake you', Dunlop warmly greets Nampitjinpa's father, who walks towards the camera, eyes averted, tucking his shirt in. Watching on from another time and place Nampitjinpa laughs tenderly, 'Getting ready — Daddy — for meeting'.

Scenes of life glimpsed through the lens of a panning camera take on a thoroughly different hue once translated, narrated and made relationally proximate by an intimately placed commentator. Rather than the cool, authorial voiceover that conventionally establishes viewers' orientation to images in classical observational ethnographic films, *Remembering Yayayi* adopts Marlene Nampitjinpa's perspective. Sequences that in their initial shooting were devoid of emotion become humorous — 'Look', she urges Myers, 'They're trying to get me to take the bucket of water from her (cousin's) head, but I'm ignoring it'. 'Look, my little brother is about to pop out of that humpy and follow me'; and he does — 'he followed me everywhere', she and Myers laugh. The pleasure of Nampitjinpa's interaction with these images is infectious; a pleasure the audience is easily led to share.

But the nature of Pintupi experience, and the complex distance between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants in this landscape, means that *Remembering Yayayi* is no simple feel good nostalgic journey. The film's complex temporality emerges early on, as Nampitjinpa reflects upon the living arrangements at Yayayi: 'We used to live in tents. The simple days, poor things, we lived like this, in a tent. No house. But we live[d] a really good life'. Her comments imply a subtle but contradictory judgment of both past and present ways of living, matters to which I shall return below.

IMAGES OF SELF-DETERMINATION

Outstations are the symbolic heartland of self-determination. Clustering around the image of the outstation is a set of related ideas: Aboriginal people regaining capacity to act according to their own aspirations and imperatives, in respect of places that provide sustenance and intergenerational anchorage for identity, authority and responsibility, at a cultural and spatial distance from mainstream Australia, and equally at a distance, it was imagined, from mainstream practices of governance. But was this the case? How did the ideas of self-determination come to fruition on the ground? How did Aboriginal people experience their capacity to act during the period?

Dunlop's images of Yayayi are revealing on these questions. The film follows much activity and movement between Yayayi and Papunya and beyond, activity often in pursuit of food and/or money. We see scenes of ritual activity, hunting, distribution and cooking of game, production of boomerangs and paintings, people congregating to receive welfare payments and lining up to purchase food and supplies from the temporary store. We also see young women attending school, men attending tense meetings with Papunya's community adviser to discuss the ramifications of grog running, fighting and domestic violence, and interaction with visitors over the production and purchase of art.

Significantly, the camera emerges early as a presence which people of Yayayi are highly conscious of. Nampitjinpa remarks of one scene that 'hundred people' were staying out of sight in a humpy, hiding from the camera. A man instructs his family who are seated behind a windbreak, out of the camera's line of site, 'Keep talking', he tells them, 'so they [the camera] can pick it up'. 'I'm just standing here for money', he smiles and laughs. All of this talk goes on in Pintupi and thus works as a kind of public-private commentary, as Yayayi residents reflect among themselves on their novel experience as filmic subjects. There are echoes here of so many other transactions between colonised peoples and photographic recording equipment (see for example Ginsburg 2002; Bishop and Prins 2003). Translations provided by Myers and his Pintupi interlocutors to a long sequence of two men filing boomerangs reveal the absence of interaction between filmmaker and subjects — 'when is this bloke gonna stop filming?' One asks the other. 'The camera is coming towards us'. He takes up his tools again. A woman emerges from the camp's shelter and quietly berates the men, 'That

noise is driving me crazy'. Her husband warns her that she is being filmed. Two girls look on, bored. The protagonist of this sequence, Anatjari, looks bored and tired, as if he is going through the motions of filing a boomerang which was completed to his satisfaction some time ago. The camera pans to the second man, also working a boomerang with a rasp while a third man watches on, his face expressionless, zoned out. Subtitles let the audience in on the Pintupi perspective, encouraging us to find humour in these misses in cross-cultural communication. Later we learn that a (at that time) substantial sum of \$600 is to be paid to the people of Yayayi for their participation in the film. The question of financial returns for cultural production emerges as a key theme of the activity followed by Dunlop's camera.

Given the iconic status of the artworks produced by a number of men living at Yayayi, the scenes of negotiation over the work of painting hold particular fascination. Dunlop himself notes that it was serendipitous that the day after his arrival a convoy of Toyotas brought Bob Edwards, head of the Australia Council, Peter Fannin of Papunya Tula Artists and Roy Monks of Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Alice Springs into the camps on a purchasing visit. The painting men have an agenda; they are keen to press 'the boss', Bob Edwards, to provide them with a truck. Tensions over the claims of painting men living at Papunya and those at Yayayi are apparent. Community advisor Jeff Stead asks Peter Fannin to explain to the men what is being promised:

'There are more painters at Papunya than Yayayi, so first of all it [a truck to be purchased from a grant application] goes mostly to Papunya, and then Papunya helps Yayayi. Then later on, we'll try to get — [turns to Bob Edwards] What will we do there? We'll put an application in will we? We'll put an application for the second vehicle'. Jeff Stead clarifies, 'Maybe next year'.

Myers adds further explanation: 'That vehicle [over which people at Papunya will have primary control] is gonna come first . . . Then we'll have to chuck in from here to get another one — make it come fast, you know?' Well-read anthropologists will watch these interactions cognisant of their weight — Myers' 1988 essay 'Burning the truck and holding the country' reveals the stress and fallout at Yayayi over access to vehicles, a pressure that continues in small communities to this day (Gerrard 1989; Altman and Hinkson 2007) and frequently undermines larger community development goals. The negotiations over vehicle fundraising are presented here without commentary; the frame is cut and we observe Nampitjinpa and Myers watching the footage, Nampitjinpa intently focused on identifying each of the congregated men by name.

We also witness the scrutinising of artworks by those charged with taking them to market:

Peter Fannin: 'Oh I like this one', picking up a large boomerang and inspecting it carefully. 'Eh — whitefella's been here again!' Nervous laughter erupts among the assembled Aboriginal men. Fannin gestures to a section of planed wood on the head of the boomerang — 'We can use the rasp, but you've got to scrape them off again. You scrape that one off later on, and next time I'll buy that one.' Roy Monks provides

the justification, 'Otherwise, when take 'im to Alice Springs — they say whitefella make 'im; got rasp marks all over it.' Fannin picks up another artefact: 'Yeah, that's good, because that's made like a proper chopping one. Do you like that one?' [handing it to Monks]. 'Yeah that's good'; he takes up the boomerang and appraises it. Addressing its maker, 'When you [sic] father make 'em, he have 'em bit of a twist on the end though, eh? So it goes like that and twists on the end? Perhaps you do the same thing? Otherwise it's not real.' The maker of the boomerang looks at the ground and nods without speaking.

Dunlop's camera follows Fannin as he interacts with another man — 'How much do you want for this one?' 'I'm wanting thirty dollars', the man replies with a nervous giggle. The white men confer. Roy Monks addresses another Aboriginal man who is acting as broker, 'you ask Anatjari if twenty-five dollars is ok? Otherwise, can't afford it — gets a bit much.'

Other men stand around with their canvases, waiting their turn for a moment of negotiation. This is public business. One announces in Pintupi, 'I want to tell this story for that important whitefella. I want these whitefellas to take the proper story!' The next scene shows the white men departing in a tarpaulin-covered trayback Toyota, presumably taking the artworks they have purchased off to retail outlets in Alice Springs.

Throughout the film we witness some marked similarities in Pintupi responses to the camera and to the visiting 'white bosses' of painting business. At one level the scenes of cross-cultural interaction at Yayayi enact what Ginsburg following Gaines has compellingly described as 'unequal looking relations' (Ginsburg 2002: 39). The authority of the white observer is a presence that elicits particular performances and from whom Pintupi seek acknowledgment, recognition, financial return. Money is the prism for most transactions between Aboriginal people and whites, it is a key mechanism of power that hovers over this scene — from the art dealers' control of the terms of sale and directions on how to produce saleable traditional art, to the community advisor's threats to withhold wages from those who drink and fight, to a local Aboriginal leader's attempts to explain the distribution of money on paydays, to the reluctant performances for the camera that promises to pay significant returns.

Strikingly, while Myers (2015) has recently written of the pervasive embrace of ideas of 'black power' at Yayayi, we witness Pintupi as shy, tentative, deferential in their transactions with whites over money and resources, in discussions over authority and decision-making for the community, and in relation to the roaming eye of Dunlop's camera. Frustrations are often voiced and expressed through body language, but Pintupi styles of engagement guard against direct confrontation. A complex form of indirect communication that has been observed across many Aboriginal communities is in action here; it exposes the style of communication of non-Aboriginal people as graceless and provocative, in some cases rude and aggressive, by comparison. This gulf in cultures of communication — something more substantial than not sharing a language — is a crucial element of the unequal power relations that structure this scene.

Unsurprisingly, Myers is located very differently to the other non-Aboriginal participants and indeed it is his interactions that bridge the distance. Like the Pintupi, he appears before the camera, vulnerable to its recording powers, intimately engaged with Yayayi's residents, in Dunlop's footage as well as the new footage shot by Pip Deveson. But he is also involved in the other side of these transactions; we watch Myers documenting a painted board in his notebook, eliciting key elements of the picture from its maker and giving his views on art marketing strategies to the visiting art men. He well embodies the ambiguous insider-outsider status of the anthropologist.

The film also reveals traces of Yayayi's ceremonial activity. We observe the camera adopt its all-seeing perspective on a scene in which seeing is otherwise carefully managed. Senior men call the children into place with the women, in preparation for the public parade of an initiation group from the bush camp where they have been secluded. A man yells to the women and children, 'Look that way!' (away from the men). The camera pans across the camp and zooms in to watch the men emerge at a distance and arc around the public space of the outstation. The camera is located at a further remove than the women and children; it takes in the entire scene and tracks the men's movement. The initiates at the centre of the group, shielded by leafy foliage, are 'presented' to the women and children before the group retreats to the bush.

THE IMAGE-WORK OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Images have always done vital work in bringing about and making visible changing governmental and public perceptions of Aboriginal people. Iconic images have come to stand for entire policy eras — for self-determination's land rights movement Mervyn Bishop's photograph of Gough Whitlam pouring red earth into the hands of Vincent Lingiari constitutes such an image. The backstory to that photograph identifies anthropologist WEH Stanner as having suggested the gesture to Whitlam (Dexter 2008). If such images capture highly significant moments — performed or accidental — and galvanise emotional responses whenever they reappear, they also narrow the frame of how we understand the wider processes that enfold those moments.

Anthropology has its own long history of image making, with the production of films an integral part of research in Australia from as early as Haddon's 1898 expedition to the Torres Strait. Through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies and Film Australia supported significant film activity (Bryson 2002), with anthropologist-filmmaker teams, including Nicolas Peterson and Roger Sandall and Howard Morphy and Ian Dunlop recording the enactment of rituals, hunting and distribution of game and production of material culture.¹ Capturing on film so many aspects of cultural life was integral to anthropology's salvage project (Gruber 1959); it was also part and parcel of anthropologists' enthusiastic pursuit of the cultural renaissance encouraged in the self-determination era (Ginsburg 2002). As Grimshaw and Ravetz observe, many films produced in this period were 'predicated on principles that posit a separation between data and analysis — between practice and theory, participation and observation, fieldwork and interpretation' (2015: 8).² As

indicated in my discussion thus far, the footage Dunlop shot at Yayayi conforms to this model. Dunlop's camera was deployed to record activity; the camera/filmmaker adopted the position of observer of, not participant in, that world. However, as we have seen, the translations for this footage reveal a more complex set of engagements in play.

What *Remembering Yayayi* brings about quite decisively is a resignifying of Dunlop's footage, enacting a transformation that sees Marlene Nampitjinpa morph from teenage subject, to senior woman subject, observer and commentator in the finished film. Taking up Dunlop's sequences *about* the Pintupi, *Remembering Yayayi* performs something of a paradigm shift, allowing Nampitjinpa's eye to newly establish perspective and narrative terms for the viewer. In the process the finished film becomes an exploration not only of memory and loss but also of transformations in the lives of Pintupi, as well as within anthropology in the intervening period. On this latter point, in place of anthropological authority, *Remembering Yayayi* presents Aboriginal woman and anthropologist seated side by side in conversation. Indeed to a large extent the voice of the anthropologist is silenced in favour of the voice of an Aboriginal woman, who leads the interpretation of the scenes at Yayayi. Rather than an open-ended exploration *between* Myers and Nampitjinpa, the kind of dialogic model proposed by some for a decolonialised and reinvigorated anthropology (see for example Crapanzano 1990), the filmmakers have strategically narrowed the scope of *Yayayi* to follow what Nampitjinpa sees, to tell a story that speaks clearly to the politics of our times.

I was present at an informal presentation of this work-in-progress two years before its completion, and while watching *Yayayi* I could not help but imagine a series of quite different films that might have resulted. One version would have given more prominence to the voices of Dunlop and Myers alongside Nampitjinpa, to draw out the three distinctive subject positions and their ways of seeing the scene of Yayayi, now and then. Such an approach would have resulted in a clearer articulation of the different vantage points and the tensions that quietly contend with Nampitjinpa's narrative. Another version would have brought some of Myers' close male interlocutors, the men to whom he was apprenticed as a PhD student, into the frame. What themes might have emerged in their discussion of the footage? How would the men who led the departure from Papunya have gauged the weight of time between the recording of Dunlop's images at Yayayi and the present?

Throughout, Myers himself remains a largely neutral participant, gently going along with Marlene's narrative. No posing direct questions to her, no revelation of his perspective on the scene. Towards the end of the film there is a small but crucial moment of disconnect between them. They have stopped watching the footage. Myers is thinking out loud and suggests to Nampitjinpa that soon after the time of the filming Yayayi became very small. 'Your father died . . .' Nampitjinpa pauses and slumps forward slightly, allowing the table to take her weight. 'After Yayayi'. She corrects herself, 'He died at Yayayi'.

Nampitjinpa is by now clearly exhausted, overcome by the weight of all those images:

I seen 'em all. That's [the film] touched me. All the men. That photo in my heart. You know? Really touched me. I can see 'em, you know? Happy people. I'm looking like [it's] real, you know? Maybe they're all still . . . happening, you know? Today. Still happy. Sitting and talking story. Like that I'm listening. All my inside. Inside my heart. Should be there — you know — all of these men.

FM: Those people lived a good long life.

MN: Yuwa [nodding]. And why they gone too early? Those Winters were the hard time. Eating wrong things. White man's food. And eating rubbish food. Maybe they're living — no vegetable. Must be they'll . . . should be staying in bush. Drinking from rubbish food — no — you know — water. They . . . used to live in the bush. With the water rockhole — swamps. And soakage water. [deep breath and turns to face camera] 'You know this is my story, how much . . . they really touched me this video. All the man, all the woman and people. When I was a young girl in Yayayi.

Nampitjinpa's emotional reflection collapses together the outpouring of grief triggered by encountering these images of her dearly loved deceased father and other close relatives, with a larger sense of loss; a lament for the poor health of her people. Myers' observation that the men in question had lived good long lives elicits Nampitjinpa's agreement, but she quickly moves on to name the harsh, health ravaging practices of post-settlement life. She enacts a process of remembering that Edward Casey (1987) has written of, in which memory is not simply a calling to mind of some past event but rather *a mediation of world*. Retrospectively the time of Yayayi can be seen unambiguously as a time of optimism for Pintupi; Yayayi was a place made out of their determined departure from Papunya, an interim camp on the way to a hopeful future at Kintore. But four decades on this return to country has not delivered the good life. For Nampitjinpa, herself a health worker, the images provide a provocative point of comparison with the present. She draws attention to the 'lively people', 'really good people' of Yayayi, the people who came to work early in the morning and worked for the community, who ate good food, subsisted on kangaroo and cooked without oil or butter. But the magnetic lure of self-destructive drinking was also evident; her father admonished people that they would 'go to Hell chasing the grog'.

CONCLUSION: AFTER YAYAYI

In a discussion of the film following a screening at the National Museum of Australia in April 2015 at which Dunlop, Deveson, Myers and Spencer were present, we learned the largest and most constant audience for *Remembering Yayayi* are dialysis patients being treated in Pintupi-controlled renal services based at Kintore

and Alice Springs. One man who had both legs amputated following kidney failure, reportedly sits and watches the same footage of himself walking around as a young man, again and again.

These harsh realities of the present occupy the unspoken space of the film's final moments. Nampitjinpa's grief brings into focus the period *after* Yayayi. While the Pintupi fulfilled their dream of establishing a place to live in their ancestral country at Kintore, they could not escape their dependency on state-governance and shop-bought foods. It is unclear whether her lament is directed to recent history or subconsciously also enfolds life *at* Yayayi. When Nampitjinpa suggests her people should have stayed in the bush, does she refer to the post-Yayayi period in which Pintupi have increasingly gravitated to Alice Springs, or to the entire post-contact period? None of this is clearly articulated, but suggestively hangs in the air in *Yayayi's* closing scenes.

The striking filmic aesthetic of *Remembering Yayayi* performs this cycling back and forth through time, never quite settling into place or perspective. It is an aesthetic that appears to enact the Pintupi experience of self-determination. While much anthropological and historical writing on the era hones in on new areas of activity, new discourses and new movements that took shape leading into the 1970s, *Remembering Yayayi* allows us to glimpse some of the complexity of what was occurring on the ground. In the interactions between Pintupi and the art men and community advisors who mediated their governance and participation in the market we witness the persistence of structured modes of engagement established in an earlier era. Against heroic celebrations of self-determination as a new era of autonomy, *Remembering Yayayi* offers up subtle glimpses of what Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) might identify as self-determination's time-knots. The modes of expectation, ways of seeing, structures of inequality — colonialism's legacies carried forward — constitute a counter-logic that would prove near impossible to dislodge. Equally compelling is the sense that Marlene Nampitjinpa's eyes appear not to be drawn to these matters, but remain firmly fixed on her kin.

In a film with relatively little dialogue my reading will by no means be apparent to viewers not already familiar with these circumstances. But beyond its high level of appeal to Pintupi and anthropologists, *Remembering Yayayi* stands to contribute potent material to public debates over how we assess the self-determination era and the implementation of its policies. The multiple cameras and eyes at work in this absorbing, intergenerational production have given us a wide frame with which to ponder these issues.

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NOTES

- 1 See for example, Sandall's *Ngatjakula: A Walbiri Fire Ceremony* (1977), *Making a Bark Canoe* (1969), and Dunlop's extensive Yirrkala Film Project, including *Dundiwuy's House Opening* (1971), *Djungguwan at Gurka'wuy* (1976).
- 2 Exceptions to this approach in Australia include filmmaker Kim McKenzie's collaboration with anthropologist Les Hiatt, *Waiting for Harry* which took an enlarged view of process.

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