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American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Cultural Politics and the Mass Media: Alaska Native Voices. By Patrick J. Daley and Beverly A. James.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/91p228r9>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 28(4)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

2004-09-01

DOI

10.17953

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Cultural Politics and the Mass Media: Alaska Native Voices. By Patrick J. Daley and Beverly A. James. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004. 200 pages. \$35 cloth.

This historical description of the use of mass media by Native Alaskans in their efforts to affect public policy relies on “resistance as cultural persistence,” a concept that arose from an emic perspective of indigenous peoples’ rights. The description of that “insider’s” perspective is available to the reader in the book’s introduction, which restates Gail Guthrie Valaskakis’s view that “the adoption and use of new media by indigenous groups can be understood as a set of cultural practices that reinforce and amplify the group’s own creative roots and dynamism” (4). It is a crucial orientation for the book, since the innovative uses of new media by Alaska’s Native peoples clearly seem consistent with adaptive strategies of many indigenous groups. One need only review the history of media controlled by indigenous peoples around the world, including those within the United States, to find the ongoing nativization of media to forms that reflect the needs of tribal peoples.

Such a notion of local and culture-specific uses of the technologies of media may be surprising to many, given the overwhelming characteristics of the range of mass media intended to serve the needs of modern and post-modern mass society. A belief that “the medium is the message” has dominated the thinking of many media scholars since Marshall McLuhan’s applications of Lewis Mumford’s earlier concepts about the power of technologies to shape human societal, cultural, and even physical forms. If one includes Jerry Mander’s jeremiads against Native uses of television, which preclude any use of that medium by tribal peoples, the thesis of Daley and James’s book seems far-fetched indeed.

Daley and James ignore that scholarship as they document the sometimes uneasy “fit” between the survival strategies of Alaska’s indigenous peoples and the uses of mass media that have emerged to support a far different cultural paradigm, dominated by global economies and national cultures and languages, such as English. As they do so, though, they also reveal the powerful forces of tribal subsistence cultures that continue to provide a valuable human organization for millions of people in “small,” self-sufficient cultures around the world. Despite the inherent threats mass media poses to the cohesion of these cultures, Daley and James show that in Alaska at least, some Natives are able to mount incredibly effective media campaigns on their own behalf when they can project their voices in those media.

The book focuses on media used by indigenous people, such as William Paul’s Alaska Fisherman in the 1920s and early 1930s among the Haida and Tlingit for fishing rights, the *Tundra Times*’ struggle for continued subsistence patterns for all Alaska Natives in the 1950s and 1960s, and recent Native radio and television initiatives intended to communicate Native culture and language in remote regions of Alaska. In each case the authors show that indigenous people were able to control, at least for crucial moments, the media that would help them communicate messages of solidarity among themselves and project surprisingly clear messages of resistance against public policies that

otherwise would have destroyed their “cultural materialism,” a basis of their cultural identity.

Since the group rights of Natives of Alaska have long been poorly defined under the laws of colonial powers, including those of the United States and its state of Alaska, Natives and their allies have had to find creative ways to oppose potentially devastating public policies. Examples of such policies documented in this book include government-supported missionary attacks on specific aspects of Native culture; Project Chariot’s plan to detonate huge nuclear weapons, ostensibly to open a new harbor and mining operations along the seashores Natives use for subsistence; logging, hunting, and fishing laws that dismiss Natives’ subsistence rights; development of the massive Rampart Dam in sensitive wildlife areas where Natives hunt and fish for subsistence; and broadcast media policies that would devalue and marginalize tribal cultural patterns in remote areas. In each case Natives have demonstrated their “resistance as cultural persistence” by gaining control of some of the mass media that empower them to seek their own goals of economic and cultural survival. Through their own agency they have been able to maintain their cultural values as they solidify their legal and moral standing as indigenous peoples in the public debates surrounding these controversial policies for Alaska’s development.

The authors of this book seem to take on this documentation of indigenous struggle through the media with relish. Although the book suffers from many heavy-handed asides intended to include the vast conceptual viewpoints of scholars in media and cultural survival, Daley and James often manage to bring together the practical efforts of Natives with the more arcane perceptions of scholars to produce a dramatic story of cultural persistence. Their “etic,” outsiders’ viewpoint is occasionally enriched by their reliance on texts produced in Native newspapers, broadcasts, and documentaries that provide the badly needed emic viewpoint for their analysis. Those mass-media documents of Native resistance provide a glimpse of the times and of the people involved that few other sources can.

Unfortunately, the writing style is sometimes overly dense, seemingly catering to scholars at the expense of the people the authors hope to describe. Many texts about indigenous people tend to make this same error, perhaps because publishers and scholars seem increasingly to demand that style of writing. Esoteric language continues to haunt too much scholarship that might otherwise be of general interest and even practical use, especially among those on whom the research is conducted. Some sentences seem designed to exclude the general reader with references to cultural symbols far removed from Native Alaska: “Inupiat Eskimo culture—once defended by remoteness—was suddenly trapped between the Scylla of antisubsistence and the Charybdis of nuclear bombs” (100). Ponderous phrasing is all too common throughout the book.

Happily, these problems of style are overcome for the most part by the authors’ attention to the events and personalities of Native Alaska. Since most readers have little knowledge about the details of public policy debates in Alaska, the book is a useful contribution to any study of the state of Alaska and

to media and indigenous studies. Daley and James provide a commendable record of how Natives have found ways to tell their own stories in the mass media. It is a story that continues, of course, one that still features Native efforts to put the mass media to use in struggles to maintain self-determination.

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Don't Let the Sun Step over You: A White Mountain Apache Family Life, 1860–1975. By Eva Tulene Watt with assistance from Keith H. Basso. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004. 360 pages. \$50.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

With *Don't Let the Sun Step over You: A White Mountain Apache Family Life, 1860–1975*, Eva Watt and Keith Basso, after a seven-year collaboration, have created a compelling family narrative, a valuable historical document, and a bold act of cultural translation. For many decades both authors have been translating between the Apache and English languages and Apache and Western cultural frameworks. Eva Watt, an Apache elder and cultural adviser to the White Mountain Apache Culture Center, is also a recognized cultural ambassador who translates Apache views for wider audiences. Keith Basso is an anthropologist who has written extensively on Western Apache ways of speaking. He has developed an approach to Apache history that gives primacy to the meaning imputed to the past within Apache ways of speaking. He has focused on discourse genres such as place names, historical narratives, and now, with the work reviewed here, family stories. What emerges from Watt and Basso's collaboration is a document of considerable ethnographic and historical value that is also an innovative attempt to translate aspects of the form and use of an Apache historical genre for a wider audience.

The narratives contained in this book are Watt's family stories. The book begins with stories about her grandparents and other relatives during the early reservation period and continuing through her birth in 1913. From here she tells stories about her family during her childhood. Her account goes a long way toward disabusing readers of the notion that Apaches during the early postmilitary reservation period lived isolated, dissolute lives. On the contrary, her family traveled all over Arizona—laboring to build highways and dams, working for mining operations, and harvesting crops. To this transient work they brought their own considerable resources: techniques for drawing sustenance from the land and for maintaining relationships among extended family as they traveled considerable distances. In this way they were able to engage with the wage economy on some of their own terms. Watt also relates stories about boarding-school life and about her mother's illness and impairment that necessitated her return to her family's farm on the reservation. She tells stories about herself as a young adult leaving the reservation with several other Apache women to find work in Phoenix, marrying, and ultimately returning to the reservation with her husband and children. The last stories in the book recount the death of several important relatives: her grandmother, mother, and stepfather.