UCLA

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

The Fourth Eye: Māori Media in Aotearoa New Zealand. Ed. Brendan Hokowhitu and Vijay Devadas.

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/613025i8

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 38(4)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Gauthier, Jennifer L.

Publication Date

2014-09-01

DOI

10.17953

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

The book's bibliography alone is worth the cost, with up-to-date sources from books, journal articles, published and unpublished papers, presentations, and cultural resource management reports on Connecticut archaeology.

My only critique of this volume involves the author's attempt to sandwich so much of history into this last chapter. Yet I understand why: Native people are very much still here, and a book that abruptly ended in the seventeenth century would not establish that Native presence has a long and continuing past and present. Many people today subscribe to the myth that Native peoples vanished when Connecticut was settled, thinking that the Indians all died off from either conflict or disease. Jean O'Brien's 2010 book *Firsting and Lasting* critically deconstructs this mythology. Indeed, Natives are still here. As the reversal of the Schaghticoke Federal Recognition award demonstrates, our political leaders need to recognize this fact instead of wasting time and tax dollars disputing it.

Laurie Weinstein
Western Connecticut State University

The Fourth Eye: Māori Media in Aotearoa New Zealand. Ed. Brendan Hokowhitu and Vijay Devadas. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. 312 pages. \$82.50 cloth; \$27.50 paper.

In the summer of 2003 I traveled to New Zealand to conduct archival research on Māori cinema. I was lucky enough to spend an afternoon with Barry Barclay, indigenous cinema pioneer and father of Māori cinema in New Zealand. In his little beachside "shack," as he called it, nestled into the Hokianga Harbor, he generously shared with me his thoughts about his work and the relationship between indigeneity and media. I was new to the field then—it wasn't even really a field at that time—and unfamiliar with much of the history that Barclay spoke about. I would have loved to have this collection to read before I went on the trip and began my research.

In this wide-ranging collection, "Māori media" means both media representations of Māori and media made by Māori. It attempts to map out a developing field of intellectual inquiry as well as a specific historical conjuncture. Theoretically well-informed by scholars from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, the essays make thoughtful contributions to the growing body of work in indigenous media studies. The best of this research is infused with the spirit of cultural studies as it has been practiced by scholars in Great Britain, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Like much of that work, this collection

lies at the nexus of cinema studies, indigenous studies, postcolonial studies, anthropology, sociology, history, and political science.

The collection is grouped according to three loose themes: part 1 focuses largely on media representations of Māori, part 2 on theories and practice of media production by Māori, and part 3 on Māori television specifically. The editors' introduction is rich in historical detail, setting the stage for the subsequent chapters and also working through the complexities of defining key terms such as *indigenous* and *indigenous media*. Making reference to other indigenous cultures such as the Mohawk of Kahnawake, Quebec and the Dene of Northern Canada, the editors highlight the specificity of New Zealand as a bicultural nation whose relationship with its indigenous people is theoretically guided by the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi and its subsequent reinterpretations and applications.

The essays in part 1 vary in depth and scholarly import. One of the most interesting contributions is coeditor Devadas's discourse analysis of media coverage of the 2007 "anti-terror raids" carried out against indigenous activists. In this chapter, Devadas argues that the media created a racialized moral panic around these Māori citizens, and in particular Tame Iti, a long time campaigner for Māori rights. The author theorizes the concept of biopower by using the work of Michel Foucault, Stuart Hall, and Edward Said. Biopolitics involves the strategic management of the population achieved through disciplining the life processes of groups of individuals—who, for the benefit of the nation as a whole, are defined as needing to be controlled. Through close readings of news stories and photographs, Devadas concludes that by conflating indigenous sovereignty with terrorism the mainstream media constructed Māori activists as a threat that needed to be neutralized. Also thought-provoking, and particularly timely, is Jay Scherer's chapter on the commodification of Māori culture to construct New Zealand as a distinct global brand. Focusing specifically on the "Ka Mate" chant used by the national rugby team, the All Blacks, Scherer suggests that the multinational media-sport complex has co-opted the haka, a uniquely indigenous traditional performing art that is chanted with actions, and has reframed it as a marker of New Zealand national identity. His argument is reminiscent of what many scholars have observed about the changing place of myths of "The North" in Canadian identity, as seen most recently in the symbol chosen to represent the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics games and Canada's unique identity to the world: a stylized version of an Inukshuk, an Inuit structure—or more accurately, the inunguat symbol.

Part 2 of the collection is eclectic, featuring two chapters on the work of Barry Barclay; a chapter on the pioneering 1860's Māori newspaper, *Te Hokioi*; and coeditor Hokowhitu's contribution on theorizing indigenous media. The latter chapter makes a valuable contribution to existing scholarship on this

Reviews 165

topic, addressing such issues as appropriation, strategic essentialism, and the media's role in decolonization. Drawing upon the work of Homi Bhabha, Jurgen Habermas, Michel de Certeau, Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon, and foundational indigenous media scholar Faye Ginsburg, the chapter asserts the political, cultural, and aesthetic significance of indigenous media. Hokowhitu also makes connections between the Māori struggle for control of their own media representations and that of the Inuit in Northern Canada. In concluding his chapter, Hokowhitu offers a series of caveats regarding an uncritical embrace of government support for indigenous media. His critical perspective is useful in the contemporary moment. The two chapters on Barclay's work attest to the growing recognition of his influence around the world. Despite several references to Merata Mita, Barclay's colleague in pioneering Māori media, her work is not featured in its own chapter. This omission is unfortunate. Her films and her philosophy of indigenous media deserve more attention in the field.

In 2004 the Māori television service was provided free of charge to all homes in New Zealand, an occasion for celebration in many quarters. Three short chapters in part 3 approach this media phenomenon from differing perspectives, which ultimately offer a somewhat schizophrenic picture of Maori television. Chris Prentice's essay reflects on the distance between representation and reality and also points out the tensions between the market logic of the medium and the goals of cultural preservation. Using Jean Baudrillard's notion of simulacrum, she argues that rather than search for "truth" in televisual representation, it might be more strategic to embrace the simulation and examine how it fits into the larger set of political, economic, and social challenges facing Māori in New Zealand. The final two chapters concern Māori TV's annual coverage of ANZAC day and reality-style television shows, contributing close textual analyses of two types of broadcasts that function to simultaneously consolidate and question New Zealand national identity. These essays complement the more theoretical chapters in their intense focus on specific televisual texts and the messages they send.

Overall, this collection offers a wealth of new information for scholars of indigenous media studies. Strongly rooted in a broad range of media, postcolonial, and critical theory, the essays are insightful and penetrating. Although their depth and scholarly import varies, as a whole the contributions are well-written and well-supported by cultural artifacts and media examples. Perhaps most valuable are the overarching questions that underpin the text as a whole: What does it mean to be Māori today? What does it mean to be a New Zealander? What role does Māori culture play in defining a unique New Zealand identity? How do we define success in the realm of indigenous media? What is the proper role of the state in helping to develop and support this type of media production? While the collection specifically examines these

questions in the New Zealand context, much of the work can be applied to other settler nations as well, specifically Canada, Australia, and the United States. The National Film Board of Canada and Screen Australia have helped to promote indigenous audiovisual production in these nations, bringing worldwide acclaim to such indigenous artists such as Zacharias Kunuk and Warwick Thornton. Of course, government support for filmmaking is virtually nonexistent in the United States; this collection reminds Americans that we are far behind when it comes to valuing the creative output of our indigenous media producers.

Jennifer L. Gauthier Randolph College, Virginia

Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation and Reconstruction. By Stacey L. Smith. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013. 344 pgs. \$39.95 cloth.

In 1892, an Arizona man wrote to the agent at northern California's Round Valley Indian Reservation. The man explained that in the 1850s or 1860s he had acquired an indentured servant, a Yuki woman from Round Valley named Betty, and that although Betty had continued to live with him in Arizona, she now wanted to return and hoped to acquire an allotment on the Round Valley reservation. Historian Stacey Smith's *Freedom's Frontier*, a political history that places California Indian unfree labor within the context of unfree labor in the United States during the Civil War and Reconstruction eras, helps us to understand such stories.

California Indian historians have long known about the presence of indentured servants and unfree Indian workers like Betty. For example, Albert Hurtado, Michael Magliari, and anthropologist Robert Heizer have detailed the Act for the Government and Protection of the Indians that legalized California Indian indenture, plunging into the dusty recesses of county archives to emerge with elusive sources to better understand unfree California Indian labor. In comparing California Indian unfree workers to other bound California laborers during the antebellum and Civil War eras, Smith argues that, if not outright slavery, unfree labor existed even though state laws had outlawed the practice of chattel slavery—as laws also did in the northern United States. The debates concerning unfree labor in California resulted in providing only uneven levels of freedom for California Indians and other laborers. Indeed, the author argues that the debate over unfree labor led to the creation of laws that prohibited Chinese immigrants from entering the United States. Although

Reviews 167