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Review of Bernardin, Graulich, MacFarlane, and Tonkovich, *Trading Gazes*

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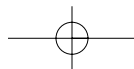
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*Trading Gazes: Euro-American Women Photographers and Native North Americans, 1880–1940.* By Susan Bernardin, Melody Graulich, Lisa MacFarlane, and Nicole Tonkovich; afterword by Louis Owens. (New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 2003. xix + 244 pp. \$60 cloth, \$30 paper)

*Trading Gazes* tests the limits of vision of four North American female photographers at the turn of the century. While challenging patriarchal convention, these women replicated imperial vision. Motives varied: commercial in the case of Grace Nicolson and Mary Schäffer, political in the case of Jane Gay, and social for Kate Cory. While it is difficult to derive insight into indigenous reality from the photographic remnant, the authors demonstrate that photography tantalized viewers by promising knowledge. More recovery work, especially conducted from inside tribal communities, may illuminate the circumstances of indigenous subjects who “vanished” before the camera.

Nicole Tonkovich interprets the companionate relationship between Idaho photographer Jane Gay and Dawes Act policy lobbyist Alice Fletcher from 1889 to 1892. Emphasizing the “banal in an era of spectacular landscape photography . . . captur[ing] men and women engaged in the quotidian,” Gay avoided exoticizing the Indian, thus distinguishing her work from the conventions of expeditionary photography (p. 34). Moreover, Gay’s choice of format—181 photographs within a handmade, two-volume scrapbook—alongside other sources reveals contrary evidence: “divisions among the Nez Perces and the often contradictory positions taken by those [like Fletcher and Gay] who were responsible for the [Dawes] Act’s implementation” (p. 34). Tonkovich proposes that an alternative narrative may be recovered despite an overarching imperial agenda.

Melody Graulich describes Kate Cory’s photographic productivity while resident in the Hopi towns of Walpi and Oraibi from 1905 to 1912. Never marketed commercially, Cory’s photographs are “a visual autobiography filled with reflections—of self and other . . . [d]efin[ing] her experience and her ignorance” (p. 77). Cory’s photograph of a Navajo woman engaged in trading goods overtly illustrates the “trading gazes” of the anthology’s title: the photographer’s furtive glimpse and the return gaze of the irritated subject in front of the lens (p. 78). Such photographs, asserts Graulich, typify Indian resistance while reflecting the asymmetry of European American power; their gazes mediate the quotidian affairs of the people. The bearer of the camera ultimately committed theft—permission was infrequently sought. In this way, photography embodied a much



larger political program: theft of territory, resources, and livelihoods. Indigenous lives fixed by photography were transformed into “antiquities . . . in a perpetual past” (p. 81). For the sake of profit, Indians were excised from modernity, and nostalgia dominated vision. Do Cory’s photographs, as Graulich implies, counter the tendency to fix the Indian (p. 96)?

Best known for iconographic portraits such as that of the Sampson Beaver family, Mary Schäffer toured the Stoney Plains territory between 1905 and 1908 and produced *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies*, “a self-conscious and hybrid text, in turn a comic tourist travelogue, an amateur naturalist’s journal, a parody of the explorer’s record, a disapproving index of civilization’s reach, a sincere celebration of sublime landscapes, a satirical look at the discomforts of camping” (p. 124). Mollie Adams’s diaries, combined with Schäffer’s 1,700 images produced over twenty-five years, evoke the regional incursion of Anglo American settlement, tourism, and commerce. Was Schäffer the liminal figure she imagined herself to be? Do her photographs, asks Lisa MacFarlane, transcend imperial iconography to apprehend “site-specific histories of active historical agents” (p. 149)?

The final essay in the anthology incisively summarizes the fundamental issues embodied by the photographic commodification of indigenous peoples. Using Pasadena collector Grace Nicolson as her epicenter, Susan Bernardin isolates the convergence of factors driving this compulsion: ethnographic commerce, tourism, and anthropology.

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*Red Earth: Race and Agriculture in Oklahoma Territory.* By Bonnie Lynn-Sherow. (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2004. ix + 186 pp. \$29.95)

Linking traditions of social and environmental history, *Red Earth* places race at the forefront of environmental analysis. The struggle for control over the land and resources of Oklahoma Territory involved a diverse mix of indigenes and immigrants—beleaguered Indians, African American refugees, and optimistic whites—who mingled in near-equal proportion in the new territory. Bonnie Lynn-Sherow’s study focuses on the cycle of changes between the first land runs opening Oklahoma Territory in 1889 and statehood in 1907. In such a short span of time, prairies turned into

