

language (Gilliam) or kinship (Slocum), or by accepting mistaken identification (Simmons). When they do so they reiterate that most conventional narrative in the field research genre: the outsider gaining acceptance, privileged knowledge, and anthropological authority by becoming an insider.

A few authors consider a more troubling possibility: However disenfranchised they may feel at home, overseas they are representatives of a superpower. Indeed, racial solidarity is most often interrupted by the local politics of class. But having valorized intimacy and equality between researcher and subject, authors minimize the specter of distance and inequity. That they most obviously privilege race and gender when informants are more concerned about class seems a very U.S. gesture, particularly when that preoccupation masks the researcher's inability to grapple with her membership in a global aristocracy. Hence Karla Slocum points to her conversational interviewing technique as a means of establishing equity but does not explain whether it mattered that she was not, in fact, a market woman who had to compete with her informants in the marketplace, nor did she have to survive on the proceeds of her labor there. Like her professional colleagues, she chose to be a participant-observer and could choose to terminate the experiment at will. Cheryl Mwaria links the historic abuse of African Americans by the medical profession with similar abuses in the third world today but fails to note that the transfer of medical experimentation to impoverished nations now benefits people of color in affluent nations. She claims insider status as a researcher because she was pregnant while in the field. But she omits to note whether she delivered her child in Kenya using only the resources available to her informants, or whether she made herself available as a medical research subject, as her informants might have been. Indeed, none of the authors in this collection denies herself the option, that at least one admits to reserving, of the "honorary" White status that citizenship in the world's most militarily powerful nation [affords] U.S. blacks overseas" (Gilliam, p. 176).

Perhaps these anthropologists are persuaded that seeking commonality is a means of encouraging responsibility (Simmons). But given the gulf that separates the global aristocracy from the global peasantry, claiming commonality on the basis of shared victimhood seems disingenuous. At this juncture, would it not be more responsible to pursue our inadvertent complicity, to ask how obscenely affluent people are rewarded for disavowing their privilege vis-à-vis the very others whose deprivation subsidizes that privilege? It is possible that shifting one's source of authority from objective outsider to sympathetic participant-observer does not constitute a substantial revision of the representational and evidentiary conventions of anthropology. Perhaps confronting the limits of participant-observation would push us further down that path.

**Navajo Trading: The End of an Era.** Willow Roberts Powers. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001. 282 pp.

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Thousands of tourists have visited the historically restored Hubbell Trading post, now a National Historic Site, and many "southwestern buffs" (amateurs and anthropologists alike) have read books and pictorial essays on the lives of Navajo traders (e.g., Gillmore and Wetherill 1952; Hegemann 1963). The image of the traditional trading post that flourished on the Navajo reservation over the last hundred years is well known throughout the Southwest. Thus it is refreshing to have a book that brings the story of Navajo traders up to date and focuses on the 1970s, the period that brought about the decline of the traditional Navajo trading post. During this decade, criticism of traders by Navajo activists, suits by legal aid lawyers, and hearings by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) set in motion a series of events that eventually led to the replacement of trading posts by convenience stores and supermarkets.

Willow Roberts Powers draws on interviews conducted in 1998 and 1999 by Karen Underwood and Bradford Cole of the University of Northern Arizona Cline Library Special Collections. She could have focused primarily on these oral histories and the United Indian Trader Association (UITA), the group that helped fund the oral history project and whose members provided many hours of taped and videotaped interviews. However, she decided to supplement these interviews with more Navajo voices and to interview a number of the lawyers and activists involved in the 1970s critique of the trading post system. Hence the book is much more than a eulogy to the colorful and often difficult lives of those Mormon and Anglo families who lived at the trading posts that often became the hub of Navajo communities between 1880 and 1980.

The first half of the book covers old ground, introducing us to the traders, outlining a history of the Navajo people, and examining the role traders had in developing Navajo crafts, particularly weaving and silversmithing. This was the least interesting part of the book, although, on second reading, I began to appreciate the way the Cline Library collection includes the stories of a much broader range of trading families, in contrast to a focus on only one trading post or family as is typical of most books on Navajo traders. We meet the Tanners (four generations of traders who eventually dominated the Gallup, New Mexico, area), the Bloomfields (Toadlena Trading Post), the Stiles (Pinon and Tuba City), the Foutzs (Kirtland, Teec Nos Pos, Red Mesa), and the Blairs (Aneth, Dinnebito). Powers focuses on how these families ran their businesses; she has chosen quotes from interviews that emphasize how traders dealt with suppliers and banks, the leasing system from the Navajo Tribe, and the traders' methods of extending credit (including accepting items like jewelry as pawn). They saw themselves as

providing Navajo families with what they needed, not what they wanted.

Powers conveys the sense that these were small businessmen who purchased their supplies on credit and, as a consequence, were often on the brink of financial disaster themselves. She emphasizes the differences between the trading post system where hard work and frugality brought profits and the Navajo economic system where reciprocity and generosity were the bedrock values, especially of the older generation who still was attached to the pastoral and agricultural economy. Powers suggests that these cultural differences often led traders to cultivate attitudes of superiority and arrogance. There were also early incidents of robbery and trading post burnings. But eventually there was an accommodation, and most traders tempered their attitudes with respect for Navajo ways (pp. 47, 56).

During the 1960s the reservation economic base began to change, with increasing infusions of cash, primarily from welfare and Social Security payments, but also from wage jobs with the railroad and in nearby border towns like Gallup, Farmington, and Flagstaff. Powers does give us a sense of this new cash economy and an account of how new kinds of commercial outlets (like the Fed Mart grocery store in Window Rock and the Navajo Shopping Center, run by the Tanners, in Gallup) were beginning to transform Navajo consumption. However, she does not pay enough attention to the role of border towns and distant commercial centers in drawing income and people from the reservation. She overlooks the important analysis of the regional economy provided by Klara Kelley in the 1970s. By the mid-1960s, at least on the eastern side of the Navajo Reservation, most families had access to a pick-up truck (either their own or that of a relative), so they drove to Gallup or Farmington every two weeks to buy food, clothes, hardware, and, much more rarely, furniture or a vehicle. Trading posts began to be used only for the occasional loaf of bread or sack of potatoes and for those whose unemployment, welfare, and social security payments were mailed to the post so that the trader could persuade the recipients to pay off their credit accounts. Although, as Powers documents, younger traders began to change the way they sold goods (using self-serve shelves and marketing new products like “Hamburger Helper™” and cake frosting), the new cash economy provided increased mobility and access to new kinds of commercial entanglements, from car payments at dealerships to pawn tickets from border-town trading establishments. Despite the fact that some of these arrangements increased debt and dependency, this broader range of choices and lower prices set the stage for the Navajo critique of old style traders and their multipurpose, personalistic businesses: part store, bank, post office, and employment agency. What in one era seemed like a source of economic and social support in another era seemed like exploitation and paternalism.

The second half of the book details the efforts of Navajo activists and white lawyers to rectify what they saw as the abuses of the trading post system. Powers recounts the founding of the Diné bee’iiná Náhiilnah Bee Agha’diit’aahtii

Incorporated (DNA), a legal services organization. DNA lawyers pursued the first suits against the traders, claiming that they were not following the Truth in Lending Act that set forth strict requirements for revealing interest rates, dates of payment, and extension policies, particularly on items accepted as pawn. While DNA lawyers also took on divorce, custody, and vehicle repossession cases, the first director, Ted Mitchell, was intent on targeting trading posts. Mitchell’s methods were much too combative, and he soon resigned, to be replaced by Leo Havens, who continued, along with other DNA lawyers, to press cases that would redress Navajo complaints about the traders. About the same time, a group of activist Navajos, including Peterson Zah, who would later become the President of the Navajo Nation, founded Southwestern Indian Development, Inc. They produced their own survey and report on the traders, concluding that traders kept prices high and their customers dependent.

The high point of the conflict between the traders, on the one hand, and the DNA lawyers and Navajo activists, on the other, was the initial hearings held by the FTC in August 1972. Called in at the behest of two DNA lawyers, the FTC and several Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) officials heard testimony from Navajos, DNA lawyers, and traders about withholding welfare checks, possible price fixing, and violations of the Truth in Lending Act especially with regard to pawn. Powers termed the hearings “political theater, pure and simple,” arguing that they distorted the practices of traders and presumed that they were “guilty of every accusation—dishonesty, fraud, graft, cruelty to customers, stale goods, high profits, low levels of safety, and the patronizing attitudes of ‘a bastard gentry’ ” (p. 191). The resulting report, published in 1973, included a catalogue of abusive trading practices.

The DNA suits and the FTC hearings did not immediately close the trading posts. However, beginning in the mid-1970s and continuing into the 1980s, traders began to retire, smaller posts closed, and small convenience stores (Thriftway and Circle K) took over. Later supermarkets were built in the larger agency towns (Shiprock, Tuba City, Window Rock, and Chinle). In her final chapters, Powers describes the trading posts that remain, including a few run by Navajos themselves. Even these have resorted to a cash basis with self-service shelves.

Although she has taken pains to include all sides of the conflict over trading posts, Power sees herself as more aligned with the traders, viewing the DNA lawyers as “the Ivy League takes on the Wild West” (p. 241). Despite my desire for more analysis of the changing regional economy and its impact on traders and Navajos, I feel Powers is a bit hard on herself. There is much to appreciate in this book, particularly the narrative accounts by traders of their own experiences and the careful historical overview that Powers provides. Though someone conducting more extensive interviews with Navajos or lawyers might have published a different book, I found her study balanced. It provides a fitting close to an important era in the Navajo economy. As

one trader says at the close of the book, "There's a cycle for everything, and the day of the trading post is over" (p. 248).

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**Being Human: Anthropological Universality and Particularity in Transdisciplinary Perspectives.** Neil Roughley, ed. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000. 426 pp.

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In his preface, Neil Roughley tells us that this collection deals with "conceptions of the human in differing disciplinary contexts" (p. v). So, I thought, the works would represent a history of the notions of "human nature" in various scholarly enterprises and not a compendium of current theories, with pertinent data, on this grand issue. I was mostly right about the latter (though Wilfried van Damme's "Universality and Cultural Particularity in Visual Aesthetics" and Michael Carrithers' chapter on conceptions of selfhood are solid empirical contributions), but only trivially so on the former. What history-of-ideas there is here is too truncated to be of much use. Moreover, the "interdisciplinary" pose is just that. For the most part, scholars of different disciplines talk past one another, while those linked by academic ties talk only among themselves. On this last issue the philosophers are especially culpable, splitting hairs on "analytical" matters in a manner (and graceless language) reminiscent of Talcott Parsons. As might be expected, Aristotle and Kant are viewed alongside the (newly studied) evolutionary psychologists. They were surely clever fellows, but a little weak compared to today's Darwinians on data and hypothesis testing.

Besides Carrithers, the anthropologists represented here are Donald Brown and Bradd Shore. All three are worth reading, though Brown's and Shore's contributions, like those of many of the scholars from other disciplines, are too abbreviated. Fuller treatment of their thought can be found in Brown's *Human Universals* (1991) and Shore's *Culture in Mind* (1996). The first six pages of Roughley's introduction are also important, because they challenge the regnant Geertzian "expulsion of 'the human' from the human sciences" (p. 6). Here is the crux of his argument:

Even if one were to accept the claims for . . . incommensurability, there would still be one substantial question about "the human": the question as to what is it about this species which explains it[s] being the bearer of . . . explanatory irreducibility and hermeneutic incomparability. . . . Nobody has so far argued that the ethology of any

other species has to take similar principles into account. A first, basic "anthropological" question for the human and social sciences thus concerns those properties of human nature which ground the *plausibility* of such forms of conceptual and epistemological relativism—independently of whether, and to what extent, some version of relativism can be shown to be true. [p. 6]

On the other hand, absurdities abound in this book. The silliest chapter is psychologist Helen Haste's, with the provocative title, "Are Women Human?" Haste is concerned with dispelling "powerful Western myths of autonomy, individuality and agency, the iconic attributes of masculinity" (p. 175). Since the only ethnographer she cites is Geertz, I must assume that she is unaware that such "myths" are "iconic attributes of masculinity" elsewhere, and, as theorists like Nancy Chodorow and the late Michelle Rosaldo have suggested, may have something to do with being male *simpliciter*, Western or not. Poor old Aristotle is held guilty of Original Sin for "the deep-rooted dualism of Western culture" (p. 177), in which women are defined as "Other"—as if such bipartite schemes did not exist among the Rest. Haste joins the out-of-tune chorus of "radical" feminists in this sarcastic rendition of masculinist ideology: "Man strides out into the wilderness (or the laboratory) and proves his manhood by conquering and harnessing natural forces" (p. 185). For my (mere male) part, I consider such journeys to be rather good things, bringing as they have remarkable advances in science, the opening-up of markets all over the world, and distributions of wealth unparalleled in their extent—even to embittered academics, of both sexes. Those with even minimal ethnographic sophistication will find Fourth World parallels—the *kula*, for instance, which, though open to women, is mostly a male enterprise. So, "are women human?" Yes, certainly, and I for one would have them welcomed into civilizations created by (largely) male attributes, some of which, of course, they share.

Space does not permit a full treatment of the nonsense displayed even in this single chapter. As I have suggested, *Being Human* contains some worthwhile analysis, but it is nowhere near the definitive retort to the regnant particularism and relativism in anthropology.

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Volker Scheid, an anthropologist and practitioner of Chinese medicine, provides a nuanced and thorough monograph,