Introduction

Susan Gardner

> What does one do with *[Waterlily]?* … I don't know what publisher would want to bother with such a specialized subject, but it would be valuable from the standpoint of social history, I'd think.—*Ella Deloria to Margaret Mead,* September or October 1948

> I have written a novel. It is not an ethnography so I don't want you to read it. I don't want it published.—*Ella Deloria, in conversation with Beatrice Medicine*

The novel you are about to read is not the version that Ella Cara Deloria (1889–1971) hoped to publish. It is less than half the length of her original manuscript, which she completed in 1947. During the mid-1940s, Deloria, then in her early fifties, was toiling on three manuscripts at once: *Speaking of Indians* (an explanation and defense, addressed to Christian readers, of traditional Lakota culture), a still-unpublished ethnography of the Lakotas, and *Waterlily,* which she described in a letter to Margaret Mead as being "about a girl who lived a century ago, in a remote camp-circle of the Teton Dakotas [Lakotas]." "Only my characters are imaginary," she wrote. "The things that happen are what the many old women informants have told me as having been their own or their mothers' or other relatives' experiences. I can claim as original only the method of fitting these events and ceremonies into the tale…. [I]t reads convincingly to any who understand Dakota life…. And it is purely the woman's point of view, her problems, aspirations, ideals, etc." (September or October 1948).

She worked at the three manuscripts when she could, since the income from her freelance work for Franz Boas, Ruth Fulton Benedict, and Margaret Mead—trailblazers in the establishment of cultural anthropology as an American academic discipline—was precarious. Often, indeed usually, she did not know when or from whom her next paycheck would arrive. She was seldom certain of being able to pay her rent on time. Some South Dakota winters, she could only afford to heat one room. Any untoward circumstance—the need to nurse her dying father, to pay for an operation for her sister, to help fund her brother's and other relatives' education, to survive a bank or crop failure, flood or cyclone, any ill health of her own necessitating hospitalization (for respiratory or kidney infections and blood transfusions, even for dropping an iron on her foot), or breaking her glasses—temporarily bankrupted her.

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Deloria added to the manuscripts in small apartments in NewYork City or New Jersey, in her brother's rectory or rented space in South Dakota or Iowa, in hotel rooms, and in friends' houses. Sometimes her base was an ancient car. "If I could live in a hut and have not bills—you'd be surprised!" (E. Deloria to Benedict, 24 June 1942). Her life was migratory, like that of her people traditionally, although her travels were governed by the grant and proposal deadlines of the North American academic year rather than by seasonal, cyclic time. Her household was as meager as it was portable—once she wrote that she only possessed six items of "alienable" property. At that time, those items did not include those most essential to her later professional work: a succession of old or borrowed cars and her typewriter.

Of the three manuscripts, only one, *Speaking of Indians* (dedicated to the memory of Mary Sharp Francis, her "beloved teacher and a great missionary"), was published in her lifetime—in 1944, by the Missionary Education Movement/Friendship Press. She had no illusions about its scientific value, writing to Mead some years later that her aim was to interest Episcopal laypeople in learning more about Indian peoples. What she considered her great work—an ethnological manuscript variously titled "Camp Circle Society," "Dakota Home Life," "Dakota Family Life," "The Dakota Way of Life"—remains unpublished.[1]

All three books were difficult for her to write because the genres and audiences available to her were culturally inappropriate for what she was trying to accomplish. Each narrative was composed for a different audience (missionaries, anthropologists, the reading public for popular romance fiction—all white outsiders to her original culture), yet each tells the same story about the essential humanity and valid life-ways of the people known collectively as the "Sioux" (Dakotas, Lakotas, and Nakotas). Deloria's familiarity with these audiences was as thorough as it was stifling; she knew what they expected and that she could not offer them all of what they wanted, or even all of what *she* wanted. The one audience who would have understood most of what she had to say—her own Dakota people—would not have wholly approved of her publishing her ethnological manuscript; some Dakotas would not even approve of her *knowing* what she knew, an anxiety she repeatedly voiced.

Ella Cara Deloria was an outstanding Dakota Sioux scholar and cultural broker in one of the best-known American Indian intellectual families. Her Dakota grandfather, Saswe, was a traditional healer and visionary who converted to Christianity late in life. (Her white grandfather, Brig. Gen. Alfred Sully, was a career Indian fighter.) Her father, the Reverend Philip Deloria, became a Native Episcopal missionary to the Standing Rock Sioux reservation while also maintaining the family tradition of political advocacy and cultural preservation. Her brother, the Reverend Vine Deloria Sr., also an Episcopal priest, was the first Indian to direct that denomination's Indian mission work, eventually resigning in protest against its racist policies. Her nephew the late Vine Deloria Jr. (emeritus professor of history and religious studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder) was one of the most famous and provocative American Indian intellectuals of the last four decades. Her other nephew, (Philip) Samuel Deloria, is director of the American Indian Graduate Center Inc. in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Deloria family's tradition of cultural translation and interpretation continues with Miss Deloria's great-nephew Philip J. Deloria, professor of history at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Ella Deloria was the only woman directly related to these remarkable

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men to leave her mark on the family's public tradition of cultural brokerage.

Most of Ella Deloria's lifework still remains unknown, unpublished, and unanalyzed. Whatever she created—translations and interpretations of Sioux oral traditions; *Waterlily;* an unpublished manuscript of Dakota legends intended for a younger audience; historical pageants produced between 1920 and 1940 for Indian communities; YWCA fieldwork surveys, reports, and programs for "Indian" festivities; *Speaking of Indians;* "The Dakota Way of Life"; and her professional letters—was written "only so that my people may live!" *(Waterlily* 116). Her scholarship was based on what Sioux people told her in conversations and in more-formal interviews. Her oeuvre is thus collaborative cultural remembrance; out of her interviewees' many voices came her texts. All of her writing employed and revised Euroamerican narrative forms—fictive, dramatic, and scientific. Although she never transcended the rhetoric of Indian "progress" (chiefly through Christianity), she constantly struggled with it. Over the course of her working life (which also included stints on public lecture circuits and working for museums), she developed a shrewd ability to encode strategies of dissidence within Euroamerican narrative forms.

Waterlily first saw publication four decades after Ella Deloria completed it. Until the book's 1988 publication, Deloria had been best known for her career in ethnology and linguistics, partially funded through Columbia University, the American Philosophical Society, the Bollingen Foundation, the Viking Fund, the National Science Foundation, and the Doris Duke Foundation from the late 1920s to the mid-1960s. Now *Waterlily* has become the success that Deloria wished for, not to mention a profitable one. In the past twenty years, the University of Nebraska Press has sold over 6,300 hardcover copies and 89,000 in paperback. Moreover, in 1996 the Quality Paperback Book Club promoted *Waterlily* in its Native American Firekeepers series. The novel now reaches audiences that did not exist in Deloria's lifetime. In mainstream universities, women's and gender studies courses have adopted it, as have several in American Indian studies; during the 1990s, there was no other novel by an American Indian woman about several generations of women's experiences before the closing of the frontier on the northern Plains. Several tribal colleges—Lower Brule, Sitting Bull College, and Sinte Gleaska University—have also taught it, extending her audience to Native students.[2]

Today *Waterlily* is revered by Sioux (and other Indian) scholars as an early form of American Indian "literary nationalism." Criticnovelist Craig Womack advocates criteria an American Indian literary work must meet to achieve artistic and intellectual sovereignty. In his view, early Creek novelist Alice Callahan's *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* is severely lacking: "What are the minimal requirements for a tribally specific work? … Callahans's failures might suggest that a sense of Creek land, Creek character, Creek speech and Creek speakers, Creek language, Creek oral and written literature, Creek history, Creek politics and Creek government might be potential considerations in our growing understanding of what constitutes an exemplary work in national tribal literature. Oh, and did I forget to say? It also has to tell a good story" (21–22). No Dakota would articulate a similar critique of *Waterlily.*

A significant body of literary criticism and intellectual history by American Indians has now taken shape, most notably where Deloria's work is concerned. Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, Philip J. Deloria, Carol Miller, Kelly J. Morgan, Robert Allen Warrior, Craig Womack, and Jace

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Weaver have contributed considerably, as have Chadwick Allen, Maria Eugenia Cotera, Janet Finn, Alice Gambrell, Ruth J. Heflin, Roseanne Hoefel, Elaine Jahner, Julian Rice, and Kamala Visweswaran. Feminist scholarship, in particular, has analyzed Deloria's status as a tribeswoman in academe: transitory, marginalized, ill-paid, and yet irreplaceable to the scholarship and reputations of the stellar linguists and cultural anthropologists for whom she worked.

All of these scholars have recognized that "The Dakota Way of Life," *Speaking of Indians*, and *Waterlily* tell the same story, each modulating in a different genre the information Deloria gathered from roughly 1927–37, when she was funded by the Committee on Research in Native American Languages, based at Columbia University and headed by Franz Boas, the doyen of American anthropologists at that time. More precisely, "The Dakota Way of Life" is the source for the other two books—their urtext. Preceding and infusing that text are the voices and memories of the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota people whom Deloria interviewed.

Rather than recapitulate the history of *Waterlily's* composition that I published in 2003,[3] I comment here on the novel as an acceptable and "safe" means of transmitting and disseminating Deloria's ethnological research. Deloria struggled all her professional life with having to squeeze Sioux narrative styles and values into a Euroamerican epistemological framework; she had, in effect, to square a circle. Her venture into fiction liberated her from many of the representational constraints enforced by the anthropological discourse of her day. It also enabled her to speak about the Sioux without them knowing it and without feeling she had betrayed their confidentiality.

Deloria lacked formal academic qualifications in ethnonology or linguistics. Her bachelor's degree from Columbia University was in physical education. She described her anthropological knowledge as coming mostly from reading, from special training by Boas, and "from attending his and Dr. Benedict's classes in folklore, beginning anthropology, linguistics, methods of research (Boas) and ethnology (Benedict). No statistics, no physical anthropology at all" ("Autobiographical Notes" 10). For these scholars "salvage anthropology" was a mission—to collect just about anything and everything from "primitive" peoples whose life-ways and very selves were perceived as "dying out." The method Boas taught "consisted of examining cultures in depth, establishing their history through language, art, myth, and ritual and studying the influences that shaped them in their distinctive environments and in contacts with neighboring cultures" (Lapsley 56).

Deloria's supervisors praised her as an ideal participant and observer, an "insider/outsider" (tribes)woman in academe. It was a deeply conflictual position. Their glowing recommendations testified to her exceptional value to mainstream institutions rather than to Native people (as is the case today). When Deloria began working with Boas, she served him as a linguist, and it was from linguistic funds that she was normally paid. She also taught in Boas's Lakota classes. As Boas began to turn the day-to-day work of the Columbia anthropology department over to Ruth Benedict in the early 1930s, Deloria found her fieldwork largely defined by Benedict. In short, her research agenda was defined by others' projects.

However, Deloria's mission, although it began in the Boasian tradition, turned out to be

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different. She always felt that if she could explain Indians to white people and white people to Indians, the future of Indians might be less rocky and discriminatory. Like any other American Indian writer one can think of, she was writing for her people's survival, not composing their obituary. She became her people's biographer. Always, she was speaking with her informants, many of whom she also regarded as kin. But however she attempted to organize her ethnological manuscript, it kept escaping the boundaries set by scientific "objectivity." Hers was a conversational anthropology, and many autobiographical comments (spanning several generations of her family) disrupted the linear scientific narrative expected of her. She was not an analyst. She was a storyteller.

During the years Deloria was associated with the anthropology department at Columbia—an exciting, quasi-incestuous, and quarrelsome den, intellectually stimulating, often feminist, and radical in politics—women were among its most brilliant students and its most exploited faculty. Feminist psychologist Hilary Lapsley, in *Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict: The Kinship of Women*, describes women's position during the 1920s:

> Highly qualified women still tended to be corralled off to teach at undergraduate women's colleges, given research opportunities on "soft" or no money, or sidelined into certain professional areas judged suitable for women's talents…. There were always a few eccentrics and wealthy women "amateurs" who tried to rock the boat, but the reality was that there were few women in positions of institutional power in graduate schools or professions to provide mentoring and patronage. For the most part, women in the twenties relied on older men of liberal leanings … even though these same men were liable to treat them as potential wives, probable dilettantes, and sources of free labor. (54)

Moreover, Lapsley writes, although Boas encouraged women's entry into anthropology, "he favored men when making recommendations for jobs and relied on women's willingness to work for little or no remuneration. His desire to advance anthropology meant that he exploited any source of available labor. Having a male mentor might be considered wonderful for women who generally lacked recognition from men, but it could also mean forming a daughterly attachment that continued unbroken far beyond young adulthood" (60).

When Benedict began her association with Boas, she was still married (although unhappily), which at that time meant that there was no obligation to pay her (or any married women in any profession) a living wage. When she first applied for a position at Barnard College of Columbia University, Boas instead recommended the single Gladys Reichard. Eventually Benedict's husband's death, and his will (unsuccessfully contested by his sisters), made her financially independent.

When Boas retired in 1936, Benedict became acting head of the anthropology department, "though she was still paid substantially less than the other associate professor, archaeologist Duncan Strong" (Lapsley 256). Even as acting chair, she could not enter the all-male faculty dining room (Banner 378). Her own experience of discrimination inspired her to find ways to support "women, homosexuals, and Jewish students," lending them money (as she did with Deloria), books, and even her car on occasion (Lapsley 226). Her will established the Ruth Valentine Fund (named for her companion at the time of her death) to support women scholars without familial or other private sources of wealth, a fund for which Deloria would have cause to be grateful. Nonetheless, it was not until a year before her death in 1948 that Columbia made Benedict a full professor, and she was not immediately awarded Boas's position.

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Margaret Mead's career was with the American Museum of Natural History, and museum jobs, according to Lapsley, "were not of high status; they were seen as especially suited to women who were unlikely to win scarce academic jobs." Her supervisor in 1926, Clark Wissler, "had been known to remark that museum tasks resembled housekeeping" (166).

While an undergraduate at Columbia, Deloria had convinced Boas that she really did speak Lakota (he quizzed her). When he visited her at the Haskell Institute (a federally run Indian boarding school) in 1927, twelve years after losing touch, he taught her his way of transcribing the language diacritically; their reconnection was therefore timely and exciting for both of them. She disliked her position at Haskell, teaching physical education to Indian women students. Acting on impulse (although Boas had cautioned her not to), she resigned her position before Boas could guarantee her an income—a considerable risk. But on Christmas Day 1927, Deloria wrote to him, "[I] want you to know that I would rather do this work on the Dakota than anything else." She never regretted her decision.

More insight into Deloria's financial position can be gleaned from the history of the Committee on Research in Native American Languages. Established by Boas in 1927, it folded through lack of funds in 1937—existing in the crucial decade when Deloria worked with him. Funded through a Carnegie Corporation grant administered by the American Council of Learned Societies, it was "one of the few sources of funds for linguistic research in the 1920s, since the field had not yet established a strong academic base. Boas used it to foster and sustain linguistics before its place within the academic world was ensured" (Leeds-Hurwitz 124).

The committee did not insist on formal academic credentials, although it was wary of missionary linguists. Its cofounder, linguist Edward Sapir, insisted, "The field of possible candidates for research should be carefully and honestly canvassed. We *must* have first class quality in our work at the outset, or we may queer ourselves with the linguistic world and fail to get a renewal of our five years' grant.… We must take our research people where we find talent and interest, regardless of our traditional anthropological vested interest" (qtd. in Leeds-Hurwitz 125;emphasis in original).

To economize, the committee decided only to fund investigators' field expenses rather than provide a salary. But some, including Deloria, had no other employment and could work all year round, so a few exceptions were made by creating research-assistant positions, which were not to pay more than $100 per month, roughly equivalent in purchasing power in 2008 to $1,240 (Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis). Through other funds, Boas could pay Deloria more, but such additional income was always discretionary and uncertain. Moreover, the committee was never able to adequately fund publication of its researchers' findings, leading to a considerable backlog.

Nonetheless, given that the Depression simply halted research in many areas, it is amazing that the committee held on for ten years, and it was providential for Deloria that it did. Ultimately it hired nearly forty people working on more than seventy languages, and during its ten-year existence it spent over $80,000 (equivalent to $1,223,262 in 2008) (Leeds-Hurwitz 132). In his final report of 1938, Boas gave the total amounts paid to each researcher. In

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Rolling in Ditches with Shamans: Jaime de Angulo and the Professionalization of American Anthropology, historian of anthropology Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz gives the information in tabular form, combining monies earned for fieldwork and for "writing up."[4] Deloria's earnings were in the top six of thirty-nine investigators: $4,130.06—equivalent in purchasing power in 2008 to $65,904—for her work with Dakota, Santee, and Assiniboine.

I cite this information to contextualize Deloria's financial position as an uncredentialed tribeswoman in the academe that both enabled and exploited her. Boas, Benedict, and Mead occasionally paid Deloria at their own expense, and Boas opened his home to her at least once when she was writing up her linguistic research; he also paid for her first railway fare to join him in New York. Despite her supervisors' acts of individual generosity, there were no other means to challenge the institutionalized discrimination against Deloria and other American women ethnic scholars. Deloria was, of course, perceived as single; however, she was supporting numerous members of her extended kinship network.

The woman whose career with Boas most parallels Deloria's—Zora Neale Hurston—was desperately dependent on a white patron, Charlotte Osgood Mason, who also sponsored Langston Hughes and other artists of the Harlem Renaissance. "Godmother" funded Hurston from 1928 to 1932 (when the Depression affected even someone as wealthy as she), and although Hurston never broke with her, their relationship had insufferable overtones. "Mrs. Mason was a rigid taskmaster who insisted on wielding unnerving control over every detail of Hurston's life, setting rigid accounting standards, and retaining power over her fieldwork" (Bordelon 11).

Alice Gambrell, in *Women Intellectuals, Modernism and Difference: Transatlantic Culture, 1919–1945,* argues that Deloria and Hurston were "othered" (as well as mentored) by anthropological conventions and discourse; they were also required to "other" their cultures of origin. Yet Gambrell feels it would be misleading to view "these women in a deeply and perhaps irretrievably compromised position—to position them, primarily, as collaborators, (somewhat more melodramatically) as capitulators to a series of powerful invasive forces, who enabled the leaders of centrist formations to prey upon the margins" (26–27). More positively stated, Ella Deloria became an adept at what cultural critic Mary Louise Pratt calls "transculturation"—a process by which "subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant culture. While subjugated peoples cannot readily control what emanates from the dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for" (6).

Gambrell brilliantly analyses Deloria's and Hurston's incessant revision of their research findings, a process she refers to as "versioning."[5] In terms equally appropriate to Deloria's works, Gambrell characterizes Hurston's anthropological texts as "highly complex, elusive, and even, at times, self-contradictory" (32) and her autobiography *Mules and Men* as "guided by a cacophony of voices—including those of Hurston's friends, editors, colleagues, teachers, as well as her famously manipulative patron" (115). Such self-revision, she claims, "reflects the sharply determined limits within which Hurston operated—it is a form of self-censorship and a sign of either voluntary acquiescence or victimization" but also leads to "a constant inventiveness" (115–16). "Hurston must subsume her own expression within the various

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stories, rituals, and explanatory vocabularies of others…. [T]he master narratives that she is taught fail to square with her own reading of her experience" (121). Gambrell regards as master narratives not only those of the ethnological establishment but also those of Hurston's own culture. Not only may these discourses contradict each other but the "insider/outsider" may find both inadequate. Even while Hurston's primary loyalty was to her culture of origin, her texts—including recourse to multiple genres to refashion her ethnological material—reflect this conflict; Gambrell uses Hurston's varying depictions of"hoo-doo" over the years to establish her point.

An equivalent "versioning" in Deloria's work is her many accounts of the Lakota Sun Dance. First she characterized the dance as a wholesome daylong entertainment devised for the YWCA in 1928 (restricted to the search for a Sun Dance pole, which she couldn't identify as such to a Christian audience since the dance was then outlawed), then she translated George Bushotter's 1887 Lakota texts (over one thousand handwritten pages) and other Lakota manuscripts.[6] Later she described the dance in a journal article and in *Waterlily*. In the novel the Sun Dance occupies center stage, due not only to its sacred significance but also to its textual placement.

In her analysis of Deloria's work, Gambrell identifies a "resistance to closure" as "an important philosophical premise in all of Deloria's work" (183). In this reading, an "insider/outsider's" work can *never* be finished. There is always too much to tell and no adequate way to tell. My survey of *Waterlily*'s textual history, for instance, reveals a novel that, in its final form, was truncated and edited by three Euroamerican women as well as by Deloria herself. The novel's original manuscript, which has been lost, included many passages from "The Dakota Way of Life," which were then excised on the grounds that they would not appeal to a commercial readership. Stylistic tension is palpable as Deloria tried to translate/"version" ethnological description into story. Many concerns appear in letters about the novel sent to Benedict in the 1940s: Deloria's attempt to devise an accessible style for a potentially uninterested and definitely uninformed audience; her determination to present her people in the best light; and her deference to Benedict, whom she entrusted to pull the manuscript together and then to find a publisher.

When she began assisting Boas with Lakota texts in 1927, Deloria had little idea that she would devote her life to an ethnological description of Sioux peoples, particularly the Lakotas, spanning the approximately two hundred years from their arrival on the northern Great Plains to their conquest by American military force. The research agenda Boas set for her was cut-and-dried: she was to retranslate previous collections and help him to analyze Sioux grammar. She thoroughly enjoyed the work, which she did not regard as threatening and for which, with her native and English language fluency, she was more qualified than anyone else. Every one of her supervisors understood that she brought skills that no scholar with a PhD in anthropology could equal. Their academic recommendations extolled her unique contributions. When Deloria applied for a grant from the American Philosophical Society to write up her ethnological findings, Ruth Benedict addressed her irregular academic preparation straight on, artfully dismissing it:

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> [I] believe that … her special qualifications for the work she proposes are so great as to counter-balance her lack of academic status. … In all his work with the American Indians, Professor Boas never found another woman of her caliber and he gave her intensive and personal training which in reality outweighed the kind of training which often leads to a Ph.D. degree…. Both Professor Boas and I found her a person of the highest integrity and competence. Even her gifts in the use of the English language are far superior to those of the usual young Ph.D. (Benedict to Morris, 27 September 1943)

In a letter of recommendation to the Bollingen Foundation Margaret Mead enthused, "Ella Deloria is an extraordinarily gifted person, one of those people who span the world of the arts and sciences as well as the gap between the life of the Indian and the life of modern America. She has sensitivity, imagination, warmth…. Everything she writes thus gives a double insight, from inner experience and outer analysis" (Mead to Russ, 27 August 1952).

Once Deloria became associated with Ruth Benedict in the early 1930s, the nature of her research was transformed. Her sources were no longer textual but experiential—living people and their memories of traditional life and culture. All told, she undertook five field trips for Boas and Benedict and two more helped by grants from the American Philosophical Society. In the course of all this work for others, her own agenda of cultural mediation emerged and consumed her for the rest of her life, remaining unfinished up to the day she died.

As early as 1933 Benedict advised her, "Your big Dakota manuscript isn't ready to send to a publisher, but work still goes on it. That will be a very fine book" (22 October 1933). As late as 1948, a few months before her death, Benedict pronounced herself delighted: "I think you can well be very proud of it" (22 June 1948). But Deloria despaired of it. Her niece Barbara Deloria Sanchez remembers her writing and crying all night, drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes, trying to finish an assignment on time (Sanchez to the author, 19 June 2006). The very "insider/outsider" position that so impressed her academic colleagues was a burden for Deloria. In a 1947 letter, she lamented to Benedict,

> Ruth, it's just awful! I simply cannot write ["The Dakota Way of Life"] as a real investigator, hitting the high points and drawing conclusions. There is too much I know. I made a hundred false starts, and can't tell you how many times I've torn up my Ms and begun again. I think the most you can say for it is that it is a composite of Dakota information, and that I am the glorified (?) native mouthpiece….
>
> It is distressing to find it so hard to do this writing in any detached, professional manner! It reads like a chummy book on travel, rather than like a study…. I try to keep out of it, but I am too much in it, and I know too many angles. If the outside investigator is like a naturalist watching ants, and reporting what he sees, and draws conclusion from that, I am one of the ants! I know what the fight is about, what all the other little ants are saying under their breath! I did think it would be such a cinch! (13 February 1947)

Deloria both was and was not "one of the ants." Insofar as she spoke the people's language and was related by blood to some of her interviewees and by social relationship to many others, she had advantages no outside investigator could match. Observing an ex-Columbia student on the Sioux reservations, she reported to Benedict: "His attitude and method are not right for these people. He said his problem was to investigate attitudes and opinions, and he hopes to get these by sending out, or filling out, questionnaires. These people won't express themselves point-blank like that. You have to learn to know them, and get their attitudes and opinions indirectly. They won't *commit* themselves. He complains that different informants promise to come to him—and fail to show up, naturally" (24 August 1947; emphasis in original).

Deloria's ethnological modus operandi was deceptively simple: "Kinship terms and the

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offering of food are inseparable. You can not get in without them" ("Interview Fragment" 11). She toiled down gravel roads, her younger sister as chauffeur, sweltering in temperatures well over 100 degrees and bringing meat (may it not spoil in the heat!) to aged interviewees. She typed as they talked—no incompetent interpreters here!—and at times eavesdropped and took notes without them knowing it (a practice that would give pause to today's institutional and tribal review boards). Sometimes she used her knee as a writing surface. If people couldn't come to her because their horses had died of drought, she went to them, when she had the use of a car. Most of her salary went for transportation, not always without incident. Once, the axle on one of her ancient cars gave way, the brakes failed, and one wheel flew off. Roads turned to gumbo and temperatures way below zero could slow her down, but nothing other than death could stop her.

She chose the people she spoke with very carefully. "I have seen white people questioning someone who is regarded as a fool in the tribe, and quoting him as gospel; and I have seen the real people of the tribe laughing at him" ("Gamma, Religion" 3). She valued the eldest people as "priceless because they could say, 'I saw; *I* did.' Other men and women, middle-aged to elderly, could do the next best thing: name someone they had known and trusted as their authority. 'My mother said this …' 'I heard my grandfather tell …' (and so I know it was true)" ("The Dakota Way of Life" 3). In her seventies, she lamented to her nephew Vine that there were no more old people to interview. When he countered that they would have to be 120 to be significantly older than she, she was not amused. Apparently she didn't consider herself old; the identity that mattered most to her was that of her people's daughter (V. Deloria, personal interview).

Deloria preferred to verify her data by interviewing people several times and also by checking what they said against others; hers was a consensual anthropology (DeMallie, personal interview). She often found it particularly illuminating to compare men's accounts with women's. However, in matters concerning sexuality, which Benedict particularly wished her to investigate, she had to tread carefully, well aware that most men would politely refuse to answer questions about traditional women's lives, aspects of which they knew little about anyway. On the few occasions that she did interview men, they gently chided her about indecorum. "Even now," she admitted in the 1930s, "I hesitate to look at any man's face when talking, no matter how emphatic I want to be. If I have an entreaty to make, I do it in the tone of my voice, in the choice of words, calling on kinship, etc., any way but with the eyes…. In nice Dakota society, people's first concern is that they shall be regarded as moral in sex" (Boas, f. 38). But even when interviewing women, the majority of her informants, she was not always at ease. Unmarried, she knew that women would be reluctant to share information unsuitable for younger daughters. After all, she had not been initiated into adult female responsibilities in a buffalo ceremony, nor had she ever been present at a traditional birth; her younger siblings were born with doctor and nurse in attendance, and she had been sent to board at her elementary mission school when xx their births occurred. The most tortured portions of her ethnological manuscript concern puberty, marriage, contraception and abortion, childbirth, and transvestism. Her interviewees shied away from describing traditional means of contraception and abortion.

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The contributors to “The Dakota Way of Life”—Deloria’s co-creators for the ethnological text and, therefore, for *Waterlily*—were nearly legion. A list of named sources prepared for Margaret Mead in the early 1950s contains no fewer than forty-nine “principal ones, with whom I worked systematically for days, or to whom I went back more than one summer” (“Autobiographical Notes” 8). The majority were Lakotas (from Rosebud, Standing Rock, and Pine Ridge reservations), as well as Cheyennes living at Rapid City. The stories they told spanned well over a century, if we include what they recalled their parents and grandparents telling them. Of these forty-nine, some of her “champion talkers” were Makula from Pine Ridge and Fast Whirlwind from Yankton; substantially (if indirectly) they contributed some of the more dramatic incidents in *Waterlily*. Makula recounted his own experience of “buying” a wife (as Waterlily is “bought” the first time she marries); the sister of a chief, she refused to come to him any other way. Fast Whirlwind, on the other hand, “threw away” his wife because of her ornery personality. In the original *Waterlily* manuscript, Waterlily’s mother, the virtuous Blue Bird, blinds her jealous first husband, Star Elk, by chasing him with a knife since he throws her away unjustly. A woman of the Planters-by-the-Water/Minneconjou band gave Deloria what she considered her best account of the Virgin’s Fire, which appears both in the ethnological manuscript and in *Waterlily* when Waterlily’s cousin Leaping Fawn is unjustly accused of sexual looseness. In 1934 Simon Antelope gave her “a full account of the different grades of handling a murderer,” a matter of ethical concern in *Waterlily* (E. Deloria To Boas, 2 August 1935). The dramatic beginning of the novel, when Blue Bird gives birth to Waterlily alone, derives also from the ethnological manuscript. Every incident in the novel can be traced to its description in that text.

“My mother’s mother,” Deloria recalled in her unpublished ethnological papers, “was very skilful, and people used to say she was a Two-woman, but I never heard her speak of it. I wouldn’t have understood it then, anyway” (“Two-Women” 97–98). In *Waterlily* the protagonist’s aunt, Dream Woman, possesses uncanny artistic ability in porcupinequill embroidery, but she never speaks of how she came to acquire her powers. It was in a vision “fraught with peril but full of life,” as Vine Deloria Jr. later described a vision of his great-grandfather’s *(Singing* 18). Originally Ella Deloria wished to recount a vision of Double Woman in her novel, but under pressure from her editors she reluctantly omitted “that sort of supernatural stuff [that] is hard to swallow in this day and age” (E. Deloria to Benedict, 6 July 1947).

Myths about the Double Woman are typically associated with the Oglala Lakotas, but Deloria also collected Yankton and Santee versions. As described by feminist art historian Janet Catherine Berlo, Double Woman “looks like a human woman, yet has two personas”:

> She had been beautiful, yet was punished for infidelity with acquisition of a second, horrific face. She is at once a benefactress to womankind and a temptress to men…. Double Woman figures prominently in discussion of Sioux women’s arts, for she was the supernatural agent by which the first woman learned to make art…. [T]he myth … warns that a woman who becomes too absorbed in her art, creating masterpieces with the help of Double Woman, no longer leads a balanced life. Dreaming of Double Woman is a socially validated way of giving in to the overriding demands of art, yet such a commitment to one’s art exacts a toll: one risks becoming socially unacceptable. (2–3)

The versions of the Double Woman myth that Deloria collected at Benedict’s behest

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included queries about the “retiring” or menstrual tipis, where young girls received instruction about sexual and other matters that would affect their adult lives. When a good girl chose wisely, she was rewarded with unparalleled artistic skill. But “the one who broke this rule and ran away from the tipi thereby made the wrong choice and was destined to live forever under the bad nature’s control. As its devotee, she would incline towards a futile, pleasure-loving existence and lightly transgressed the rules of propriety whenever they got in her way. Restlessness would mark her life.” “In general,” Deloria noted, “those touched by the Two-women are to be pitied. Even if they somehow chose correctly and became very model women and were the secret possessors of porcupine work skill, nevertheless they were under a spell. It was something they could not shake off…. But the lewd women in the tribe who never were able to settle down to any sane sort of existence … were the most often spoken about as being controlled by the Two-women” (“Two-Women” 92).

Deloria’s lifework was structured by both choices. Her enormous body of ethnological writings was her “porcupine-quill embroidery.” Like the good woman, she chose a life of “industry” rather than “lewdness,” but to pursue her ethnological work at all, she had, indeed, to “run away from the tipi.” She more than “lightly transgressed the rules” of traditional Dakota female decorum in a public domain, and “restlessness” certainly did “mark her life.” As late in her life as 1969, she gave an interview describing a childhood daydream of transgression she had when dozing during a sermon. It is a revision of the parable of the prodigal son. Tempted by biblical references to “harlots” and “riotous living” (English terms she only partly then understood), she associated these exciting activities with the white town across the Missouri River from the Standing Rock Reservation. She ran away, changed into a boy, and was taken in by various white people until starvation forced her to return home. Her father found her, transformed back into a daughter again, and forgave her. He ordered a magnificent feast to welcome her back into his fold. I interpret this dream as an almost uncanny foreshadowing of Deloria’s career in ethnology.

Ultimately, I believe, Ella Deloria’s skills and character were *doubled* (or even multiplied) rather than disabled by her varied identifications. As her great-nephew Philip J. Deloria describes her professional activities, her “conception of a positive notion of Indianness … is impossible to locate in rigidly separatist understandings of either Dakota or American societies” (230). But certainly the tensions of being a dutiful relative, a good Christian woman, and an ethnologist extraordinaire were all woven into the texture and design of her life. The paradox of many identifications and affiliations remains among “Native” anthropologists to this day, although they experience their complex position more positively. Kirin Narayan rethinks the “insider/outsider” binary in terms of our present world of global exchange: “Two halves cannot adequately account for the complexity of an identity in which multiple countries, regions, religions, and classes may come together…. I increasingly wonder whether any person of mixed ancestry can be so neatly split down the middle, excluding all the other vectors that have shaped them. Then, too, mixed ancestry is itself a cultural fact: the gender of the particular parents, the power dynamic between the groups that have mixed, and the prejudices of the time all contribute to the mark that mixed blood leaves on a person’s identity” (673–74).

Much of Deloria’s ethnological work in professional reports can also be read

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autobiographically. (The only intentionally autobiographical piece Deloria wrote, “Ella Deloria’s Life,” responded to a request from Margaret Mead.) When I read her ethnological texts, therefore, I do not attempt to assess their “authenticity” or value for that discipline (a subject addressed by Raymond J. DeMallie in his afterword to the 1988 edition of *Waterlily)*. Ella Deloria never worked for anyone she could not establish a social kinship relationship with. Franz Boas became a father figure, as was the bishop of the Diocese of South Dakota before him; Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead were professional sisters. In her correspondence, boundaries between confession and profession blur. She never could separate herself from her people nor did she wish to. Her ethnological manuscript is riddled with reminiscences, scrawled all over with extensive notes and incessant revisions. The more she added to her ethnological manuscript, the more her childhood memories interrupted her text. As her father’s conversion to Christianity was initially enthusiastic and then troubled, I so regard her own “conversion” to scientific “objectivity.” Promises of salvation and salvage were illusory. Whether religious or secular, the institutions Deloria and her father served denied them free agency and marginalized and exoticized them.

As early as 1941, Deloria communicated her anxiety about publishing her ethnological findings to Benedict:

> I’ve been telling non-anthropologists and non-ethnologists that you are having me write up all my Dakota stuff; and instantly they say how wonderful! What a help that will be to those who try to deal with Indians, to have at last a true interpretation of the Indian temperament, etc., etc. Church workers, and social workers, say that. So I tried to slant my first attempt to them.
>
> But … [i]t was too simple, and superficial, and would be milk-and-watery to your kind of person…. I can’t slant it two ways, naturally.
>
> Then I wrote for you; and again I found I can’t possibly say everything *frankly,* knowing it could get out to the Dakota country…. The place I have with the Dakotas is important to me; I can not afford to jeopardize it by what would certainly leave me open to suspicion and you can’t know what that would mean.
>
> I am writing freely; but [“The Dakota Way of Life”] can’t be a commercial book.
>
> Either it must be printed as a book for the scientists only, or some such thing. Even if I didn’t sign it, for a commercial book, they’d know I wrote it. My brother is out there. He’d know how I wrote it—objectively. But still it would not be comfortable for him. Honest, it wouldn’t. Here you have a practical demonstration of some of the cross-currents and underneath influences of Dakota thinking and life. It trips even anyone as apparently removed as I am, because I have a place among the people. And I *have to* keep it. (20 May 1941; emphasis in original)

Ever fearful of offending her audiences, she asked Benedict to find an alternative mode of publication: “Print it in succeeding issues of the Folklore Journal, or some similar publication that Indians won’t see?” (20 May 1941). Deloria even considered publishing “The Dakota Way of Life” by presenting the tribe she investigated as fictional, but the only solution she could finally accept was nonpublication, although she hoped that her materials would be made available to graduate students in anthropology.

It was easier for Deloria to collect material in the field, however ambiguous her presence there, than to write a coherent linear narrative from interviewees’ oral recollections. With little confidence (and little desire) in her ability to wield ethnological terminology, she depended on others to pull her manuscripts together and constantly asked for direction. If Benedict could not spare the time to help her it would be a “calamity.” If her work was to require indexes, tables, statistics, or glossaries, she wanted other people to provide them. She feared that the American Philosophical Society—which retained the right of first refusal—would turn her manuscript down because “it isn’t scholarly. No acres of footnotes, bibliography, references to previous

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works, all that." She shunned professional terminology after wrestling with a "terribly confused [section] about the bands, tribes, gentes, etc., etc…. I hated it in the end" (E. Deloria to Benedict, 7 April 1947). In the same letter she enjoined Benedict to "cut ruthlessly, and also change my wordings for better clarity. If you think an expression sounds absurdly affected, or if I seem to be trying too desperately for effect, change it. You can't insult me."

Certainly, though, Ella Deloria felt no qualms about releasing *Waterlily*. Conventional ethnology in published form was an impossibility; writing a novel based on that fieldwork was not. Had Boas and Benedict not encouraged Deloria to write *Waterlily,* our knowledge of her literary and intellectual legacy would be considerably impoverished. She did hate to let the fictional manuscript go but not from fear of publication. She would miss Waterlily and her people, she told Benedict. She insured it for $1,000 (over $9,800 in 2008), for "it is worth that to me, to write it again, if it should get lost" (6 July 1947). "It is ironic," Beatrice Medicine later wrote, "that although she did not want it published it has superseded her ethnographic contributions. It … is read like an ethnographic text—which would have displeased her, I am sure. Although seen as 'sugary' and 'idealistic' by one Native professor teaching American Indian Literature, it nonetheless is important in delineating the kinship dimension in dyadic interaction between members of the tiyospaye" (281).

Yet there is no indication in Deloria's correspondence with Benedict and Mead that she did not want *Waterlily* published. With the war over and paper no longer rationed, she hoped it would sell well, for by the late 1940s her income was even more sporadic and straitened. Instead, several publishers rejected it; over time she may have given up on it. Like every member of her distinguished family, Ella Deloria sought in adverse circumstances to build the new upon the old without fetishizing or fossilizing the latter. *Waterlily's* eviscerated final form, although an accommodation, is not a surrender. As ethnographic fiction it has succeeded beyond anything she could have dreamed, and she could hardly have anticipated the novel's impact today.

In her introduction to the unpublished "The Dakota Way of Life," Margaret Mead refers to the "occasional felicitous event like the life of Ella Deloria" (4), celebrating her as combining "the roles of informant, field worker and collaborator" (2). During her years at Columbia, Deloria "assumed a new role, a … teaching role to … graduate students approaching for the first time the complexities of comparative culture, which to her were part of the very fibre of her being, informing every perspective, qualifying every judgment" (3). All of us involved with this anniversary edition of *Waterlily* hope that it will enhance the reputation of Deloria's lifework and captivate more audiences. All readers will be grateful that the University of Nebraska Press *did* care "to bother with such a specialized subject."

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Notes

I am particularly grateful to Philip J. Deloria, Helen Jaskoski, and Nancy Oestreich Lurie for reading drafts of this introduction. For their kind permission to quote from materials by Ella Deloria in various manuscript collections, I acknowledge her literary representatives, Vine V. Deloria Jr. and Philip J. Deloria. Professor Raymond J. DeMallie provided encyclopedic knowledge during my research visit to Indiana University, Bloomington, in 2005; I also thank the University of North Carolina at Charlotte

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for faculty research grants awarded between 1998 and 2007.

For permission to quote Margaret Mead's words, I thank the Institute for Intercultural Studies in New York. All references from Deloria's "The Dakota Way of Life" manuscript are from the Ella Deloria Archive at the Dakota Indian Foundation (DIF), Chamberlain, South Dakota. For this paper I used the online edition at the American Indian Studies Research Institute (AISRI), Indiana University. Under the stewardship of Raymond J. DeMallie and Douglas R. Parks, the DIF collection was consolidated and reorganized. It is invaluable.

1. Professor Raymond J. DeMallie of the American Indian Studies Research Institute (Indiana University, Bloomington) intends to publish it. Margaret Mead submitted the manuscript to the American Philosophical Society in the early 1950s, but it was not published.

2. Joyzelle Godfrey, a social granddaughter of Ella Deloria, introduced Ella Deloria's writings to Lower Brule Community College.

3. Gardner, Susan. "'Though It Broke My Heart to Cut Some Bits I Fancied': Ella Deloria's Original Design for *Waterlily.*" *American Indian Quarterly* 27.3–4 (2003): 667–96.

4. I'm grateful to Professor Raymond J. DeMallie for introducing me to this invaluable reference.

5. Gambrell borrows this concept from Nathaniel Mackey's 1992 article "Other: From Noun to Verb," quoting his definition of versioning—derived from reggae musical practice—as "improvisatory self-revision" (Gambrell 33).

6. See Raymond DeMallie's afterword to *Waterlily* for more complete detail about Deloria's extensive translation work.

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Publisher's Preface

Waterlily is a novel of Indian life—of the Dakotas, or Sioux. But apart from dealing with an actual people at a more-or-less-identifiable time and place, it has little in common with the conventional historical fiction centered on famous people and major events. For the book was written by Ella Deloria, herself a Sioux and an accomplished ethnologist, who sought to record and preserve traditional Sioux ways through this imaginative recreation of life in the camp circle. It is of special value because it is told from a woman's perspective—one that is much less well known than the warrior's or the holy man's. More fully and compellingly than any ethnological report, and with equal authority, it reveals the intricate system of relatedness, obligation, and respect that governed the world of all Dakotas as it takes the protagonist, Waterlily, through the everyday and the extraordinary events of a Sioux woman's experience.

In *Speaking of Indians,* a more analytical description of Sioux culture published in 1944, when she had completed at least a first draft of *Waterlily,* Deloria states explicitly a goal that applies as well to the novel: "We shall go back to a time prior to white settlement of the western plains, when native custom and thought were all there was, and we shall examine certain of the most significant elements in the old life." White Americans appear only peripherally, providing in their first tentative contacts with the western Sioux a counterpoint to the native values.

Deloria goes on to point out that "the ultimate aim of Dakota life, stripped of accessories, was quite simple: One must obey kinship rules; one must be a good relative. No Dakota who has participated in that life will dispute that. In the last analysis every other consideration was secondary—property, personal ambition, glory, good times, life itself. Without that aim and the constant struggle to attain it, the people would no longer be Dakotas in truth. They would no longer even be human. To be a good Dakota, then, was to be humanized, civilized. And to be civilized was to keep the rules imposed by kinship for achieving civility, good manners, and a sense of responsibility toward every individual dealt with. Thus only was it possible to live communally with success; that is to say, with a minimum of friction and a maximum of good will."

Deloria was an ideal intermediary between the predominant American and traditional Dakota cultures, and she took that role seriously. She was born in 1889 the daughter of one of the first Sioux to become an Episcopalian priest. The Delorias belonged to the Yankton group of Sioux, those who were situated geographically between the Santees, the easternmost, and the Tetons, the westernmost. But Ella came to know the Tetons, the subject of this book, intimately because she was raised among them while her father served as a missionary on the Standing Rock Reservation. After 1928, when she began to do anthropological research for Franz Boas

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on a regular basis, she conducted fieldwork among them. Her biculturalism is manifest in her career: that she revered the old Dakota ways, studied them, recorded them, and could defend them eloquently in English as a member of the American scientific community, is illustrative.

A letter from Ruth Benedict to Ella Deloria dated November 7, 1944, which Deloria preserved with the manuscript of *Waterlily,* makes it clear that Benedict had at that time read a completed draft. Although she found it eminently publishable, she recommended cuts to bring it "down to the usual size for such a book." Benedict wrote: "We must get together and go over them, so that, when the war is over and publishers are taking books that dont have to do with the war effort, the manuscript will be ready to submit to them." But the book was not published in Deloria's lifetime, even though she did shorten the manuscript, reducing the length by half or more in the interests of making it a better story, and she and Benedict expended a good deal of effort in refining it for publication. It is published here for the first time—an immensely readable, enjoyable, informative story that transcends easy categorization.

The present edition of *Waterlily* reproduces the manuscript in its entirety. Beyond the usual copyediting to systematize spelling and punctuation and to clarify style, inconsistencies in characters' names—the result of Deloria's combining drafts written at different times—have been regularized. Occasional redundancies have been eliminated, and a few dated slang expressions and turns of phrase out of keeping with the tone of the story (set in the days of early contact between the Teton Sioux and the whites) have been revised editorially: for example, "the eternal question in a man's heart" (referring to courtship), "sweet young thing" (a young girl), "sinful" (evil), "thank heaven" (thankfully). Similarly, occasional terms whose meaning has changed since the manuscript was written have been revised to forestall confusion: for example, "migration" (for a formal move of the camp circle), "routine" (ritual actions), "superstition" (common belief). Some terms common in the anthropological literature on the Sioux in Deloria's time have gone out of fashion today, but they have been retained in this work: for example, "Dakota" (referring to all the divisions of the Sioux people), "magistrates" (the camp-circle officials), "social kinship" (relationship based not on the Western concept of blood relatives, but on the Dakota cultural concept that relationships can be based on patterns of thought and behavior and be equally as binding as relationships of blood). Finally, to clarify cultural features an occasional explanatory phrase has been added, based on other of Deloria's writings. Throughout, the effort has been to retain the author's style and tone. Although she occasionally used Sioux terms, they are explained in the context. The character ṡ, conventionally used in Sioux orthography, is pronounced like the English *sh*.

A fuller account of Deloria's life and career, of how *Waterlily* relates to her professional work, and of its ethnographic value may be found in the biographical sketch of Deloria and the afterword at the end of this book. The University of Nebraska Press is deeply indebted to Father Vine V. Deloria, Sr., for graciously permitting the publication of his sister's manuscript; to the Dakota Indian Foundation, Chamberlain, South Dakota, for their care in preserving the manuscript, which had been entrusted to them, and for making a copy available; to Agnes Picotte, director of the Ella C. Deloria Project, Chamberlain, South Dakota, for bringing the manuscript to the Press's attention and for generously sharing her knowledge of Ella Deloria's life; and to Raymond J. DeMallie, professor of anthropology and director of the American

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Indian Studies Research Institute at Indiana University, for so kindly giving of his time and expertise to provide crucial assistance with the editing as well as an afterword that splendidly illuminates the broader significance of *Waterlily*.

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Biographical Sketch of the Author

By Agnes Picotte

Ella Cara Deloria was born January 31, 1889, at White Swan on the Yankton Sioux Reservation in southeastern South Dakota. Her parents—she was the third daughter of Philip Deloria and the first child of his marriage to Mary Sully Bordeaux—gave her the Dakota name *Anpetu Waśte,* Beautiful Day. Her baptism a few weeks later on Sexagesima Sunday at White Swan's Philip the Deacon Chapel, where her father was deacon, marked her formal introduction to the Protestant Episcopal religion, a faith which was, along with her Sioux heritage, to be a major influence in her life.

The Deloria family was a large and loving one. As early as 1869 Ella's grandfather, Chief Frank Deloria, had requested that an Episcopal mission be established among the Yankton people. His son Philip was accepted for religious training two years later and was received into the priesthood in 1891. Twice widowed—his first wife and two young sons having died of smallpox and his second wife having left him with two small daughters—Philip was married in 1888 to Mary Sully Bordeaux, a widow who also had two daughters from a previous marriage. After Ella, two more children, Susan Mabel and Vine Victor, were born to Philip and Mary. Although only of one-quarter Indian blood, Mary had been raised as a traditional Dakota, and Dakota remained the primary language in the Deloria home, an environment in which Sioux values mingled easily with Philip and Mary's devout Christian principles.

In 1890 Philip Deloria was assigned to St. Elizabeth's Church on the Standing Rock Reservation, a pastorate that served a Teton Sioux community. Ella entered the St. Elizabeth's school adjacent to the church and parsonage on the bluff overlooking the Missouri and Grand rivers. In 1902 she transferred to All Saints boarding school in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. After her graduation from All Saints in 1910 she enrolled at Oberlin College. In 1913 she became a student at Columbia Teachers College, receiving a bachelor of science degree two years later.

Deloria returned to All Saints in 1915 and taught there until 1919, when she accepted a job with the YWCA as health education secretary for Indian schools and reservations. In that position she traveled widely throughout the western United States and became acquainted at first hand with a large number of Indian groups. In 1923 she was employed by the Haskell

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Indian school in Lawrence, Kansas, to teach physical education and dance. Four years later Franz Boas, the preeminent American anthropologist of the time, asked Deloria to translate and edit some written texts in the Sioux language. She did so, gathering additional material as well, and in 1929 she published an article on the Sun Dance in the *Journal of American Folk-Lore.*

Over the years, until Boas's death in 1942, Deloria assisted him as a research specialist in American Indian ethnology and linguistics. Her work resulted in several books: *Dakota Texts* (1932), a bilingual collection of Sioux tales that stands today as the starting place for any study of Sioux dialects, mythology, or folklore; *Dakota Grammar* (1941), a collaboration with Boas; and *Speaking of Indians* (1944), a nontechnical but sophisticated description of Indian (particularly Sioux) culture. *Waterlily,* or at least the first draft of it, was also written during the early forties.

By the 1940s Deloria was recognized as the leading authority on the Sioux. She continued her research, writing, lecturing, and consulting into her later years, taking time off from 1955 to 1958 to serve as director of her old school, St. Elizabeth's. From 1962 to 1966 she worked on her projects at the University of South Dakota. She lived out her last years in Vermillion and died on February 12, 1971.

The unique and irreplaceable quality of Deloria's work is reconfirmed as previously unpublished manuscripts like *Waterlily* come to light. Not only was she a meticulous and knowledgeable researcher; she had a deep and heartfelt understanding of—a true kinship with—those whose culture she both studied and shared.

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Afterword

By Raymond J. DeMallie

Waterlily is a unique portrayal of nineteenth-century Sioux Indian life, unequaled for its interpretation of Plains Indian culture from the perspectives of women. The prominent features of Plains Indian lifeways during the middle of the nineteenth century were intertribal warfare and the elaborate system it entailed for encouraging and rewarding individual bravery, and mounted buffalo hunting, by which men pursued the vast herds for the food and other necessities of life that the buffalo provided. In writings about Plains Indians, women have not played a conspicuous part.

The book's focus on the experiences of the heroine Waterlily and her mother and grandmother makes it a major contribution to understanding women in traditional Sioux culture. Yet Ella Deloria surely did not intend the book to be construed as a feminist statement. In presenting her people's past in novelistic form she wrote from the heart in the only culturally appropriate way—as a Sioux woman. This special insider's perspective not only infuses the narrative with interest and insight, but offers ample material for a reexamination of the written record of traditional Sioux life.

In order to understand what Ella Deloria attempted to do in *Waterlily*—and accomplished so well—it is important to appreciate the intellectual context in which the idea grew and the manuscript was written: Boasian anthropology in the 1930s and 1940s. For even though Ella Deloria never undertook any formal study of anthropology, her long association with Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, Alexander Lesser, and Margaret Mead—all leaders in the field—shaped and directed her studies of the Sioux past.

At Columbia University in New York, from 1899 until his death in 1942, Boas attracted the leading scholars of the first half of the century who were devoted to the recording and preservation of American Indian languages and cultures. Boas's leadership of this diffuse group, whose members spread throughout the country to develop academic anthropology in the universities, was most importantly by example. He facilitated research by finding funds to support it and helped design many of the projects carried out by his students, but in this as in teaching he let the quality of his work set the example and allowed students the freedom to develop their own ideas.

For Ella Deloria, Franz Boas was a charismatic figure. She respected his integrity as well as his scholarship. Writing on July 17, 1939, to congratulate him on his eighty-first birthday, Deloria commented, "I would not trade the privilege of having known you, for anything I can

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think of." Although some of his students called him "Papa Franz," she addressed him as "Father Franz," acknowledging the closeness of their relationship but marking her respect. (Boas, the prototypical Jewish scholar, would respond to Deloria by saying, "Ella, you make me feel like a Catholic priest!" and she would reply, "Next to my own father, you are the most truly Christian man I ever met.") For Boas, Ella Deloria was the fulfillment of a long search to find a native speaker who could help him in his study of the Sioux language. With her command of Lakota, appreciation for scholarship, sharp intellect, and literary skills, she was the perfect collaborator.

Boas's interest in the Sioux seems to have stemmed from his commitment to bring to fruition the studies of James Owen Dorsey, of the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology, who died prematurely in 1895, leaving a rich legacy of unpublished manuscripts relating to Siouan languages. Among them was a remarkable collection of stories in Lakota—more than a thousand handwritten pages—composed in 1887 under Dorsey's supervision by George Bushotter, a young Sioux educated at Hampton Institute in Virginia. Boas tried on several occasions to prepare the manuscripts for publication, and he employed Ella Deloria to work with him and his students on a small part of them during the spring of 1915, when she was a student at Columbia Teachers College. She found the process of translation and grammatical analysis fascinating, and later wrote that she had enjoyed the work under Boas, her first real paying job, which brought her eighteen dollars a month!

After Ella Deloria left New York, Boas lost contact with her until 1927. That summer he visited her at Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, and apparently resumed work on the Bushotter material where they had left off a dozen years before. He stayed there a few days to establish a routine, showing her exactly what he wanted done by way of revision, rewriting, and translation of the texts, and then hired her for the summer to continue the work. This was the beginning of her long association with anthropology.

The next year, 1928, Boas was able to find funds to bring Ella Deloria to New York to begin work in earnest. Although he wished to collaborate with her on study of the language, the project for which she was hired was psychological in nature. Boas wrote to her on January 16, 1928: "The object of your work would be to study, in the greatest detail, the habits of action and thought that are present among the Dakota children and among adults. … From an ethnological point of view, the whole study will, of course, be full of opportunities because the investigation implies that you will have to know all the details of everyday life as well as of religious attitudes and habits of thought of the people."

In New York, Deloria met Ruth Benedict, a student and colleague of Boas who came more and more to control the daily operations of the anthropology department at Columbia in Boas's later years, and who was fiercely loyal to his perspectives and methods. In subsequent years Ella Deloria's assignment was to collect specific types of material as suggested by Benedict, who planned ultimately to assist her in editing and preparing them for publication. It was she who suggested, for example, that Deloria should work on the family and tribal structure, and examine kinship and the role of women, recording women's autobiographies as a source of insight.

Ella Deloria continued to work with Boas until his death in 1942 and with Benedict until her

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death in 1948. During the twenty years of her association with Columbia she worked steadily on Sioux grammar and compiled a Sioux-English dictionary; she also completed her translation of the entire Bushotter collection and translated the manuscripts of George Sword, an Oglala (written around 1908), and of Jack Frazier, a Santee Sioux (dictated to Samuel and Gideon Pond in 1840). In addition, she transcribed and translated an enormous body of texts in the Lakota and Dakota dialects of Sioux on a wide variety of topics, selected to represent the range of variation in spoken language: traditional myths, anecdotes, autobiographies, political speeches, conversation, humorous stories, and aphorisms. A written record of such magnitude and diversity does not exist for any other Plains Indian language.

Although most of her work was devoted to the collection of data, Ella Deloria also spent a great deal of effort after Boas's death in writing syntheses of ethnographic material on the old Sioux way of life. Foremost among the projects was the one suggested by Benedict on kinship and social life, a manuscript that Deloria entitled at different times "Camp Circle Society" or "Dakota Family Life." It is a thorough presentation of Sioux social life, ranging from the structure of society to the workings of the kinship system and the individual life cycle, all copiously illustrated with quotations from her interviews and from the historical writings she had translated.

This manuscript is very much a scholarly study and was intended for publication by the American Philosophical Society, but without Benedict's guidance, Deloria found it difficult to complete. By integrating material from all her sources, she produced a work that may be characterized as ahistorical; it is not grounded in time. The core of the book is a presentation of the values of the traditional Sioux way of life as articulated in the historical manuscripts she had translated and the interviews she had recorded; it is a contrastive view of Sioux society that places it in perspective with modern America. In a word, it is a cultural description in a Boasian sense: an idealized and generalized synthesis of the past, a testament to the old and valued customs of the Sioux.

The work was well under way in 1945 when Deloria offhandedly remarked in a letter to her friend Virginia Dorsey Lightfoot (daughter of James Owen Dorsey) that such research had become old-fashioned; the Second World War had ushered in an era of practical social science, and American Indian ethnology was no longer perceived as an endeavor with high priority. Lacking adequate financial support, she struggled on with the project, finally completing the manuscript in 1954. But no publisher could be found, and the work is only now being prepared for publication.

The dedication that is apparent in Ella Deloria's lifelong quest to preserve traditional Sioux language and culture was deeply rooted in her concern for the future of her people. She articulated this concern in relation to her own work in a letter written December 2, 1952, to H. E. Beebe, who provided her with funds to have the manuscript on social life typed for publication:

> This may sound a little naïve, Mr. Beebe, but I actually feel that I have a mission: To make the Dakota people understandable, as human beings, to the white people who have to deal with them. I feel that one of the reasons for the lagging advancement of the Dakotas has been that those who came out among them to teach and preach, went on the assumption that the Dakotas had *nothing*, no rules of life, no social organization, no ideals. And so they tried to pour white culture into, as it were, a vacuum, and when that did not work out, because it was not a vacuum after all, they concluded that the Indians were

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impossible to change and train. What they should have done first, before daring to start their program, was to study everything possible of Dakota life, and see what made it go, in the old days, and what was still so deeply rooted that it could not be rudely displaced without some hurt. … I feel that I have this work cut out for me and if I do not make all I know available before I die, I will have failed by so much. But I am not morbid about it; quite cheerful in fact.

Clearly, a scientific monograph would establish credibility and present the social foundations of traditional Sioux life in a context where it might be beneficial for government officials, missionaries, and teachers who dealt with Sioux people. But it was not a vehicle suited to reach a wide audience. As she wrote to Virginia Lightfoot on February 3, 1946, "Ethnology has to be objective and impersonal." Perhaps she was thinking of the chapter based on her manuscripts that was written by Jeannette Mirsky, a student of Boas, and published in the volume edited by Margaret Mead, *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples* (1937). While an excellent summary of the fundamental features of the traditional Sioux social system, it gives little sense of the dynamics of daily life. The lead sentence of the conclusion is indicative of the tone: "The Dakota have a culture that rests solidly on a constant interplay between the individual attainment and group participation, with prestige accorded a place in either" (p. 426). Such flat generalization vitiated Deloria's rich source material and reduced human emotion to statistical patterns.

Ella Deloria herself always chose to take a directly personal approach. Throughout her career, beginning as a student at Columbia Teachers College in 1913, she made it a practice to lecture and give presentations of Sioux songs and dances to white audiences of all kinds—church groups, schools, the YMCA and other organizations—both to earn money and to reach the public and promote understanding of Indian people. It was in this spirit that she developed some of her material into a popular book on the past and present of American Indians published by the YMCA in 1944 as *Speaking of Indians*.

Ella Deloria was not alone in regretting that anthropological approaches to the American Indian seemed to preclude a personal dimension to the presentation of the American Indian past. In 1922 Elsie Clews Parsons—an anthropologist who was herself a student and colleague of Boas, as well as one of the main financial supporters of the field research of Boas's later students—edited a volume of fictional sketches of American Indian individuals set in historical times under the title *American Indian Life*. Boas and many of his prominent students responded to Parsons' call, for some of them, perhaps, their first and only experiment with writing fiction. Parsons conceived of the book as popular literature and expressed in her preface the hope that it would be read, as an antidote to prevailing stereotypes, by people everywhere who were interested in American Indians. By focusing the sketches on what she termed "the commonplaces of behavior" in daily life, Parsons designed the book to present impressionistic pictures of the variety of American Indian traditional cultures, drawing attention to the psychological dimensions of common human experience that were so notably lacking from professional anthropological monographs.

Perhaps it was this book that inspired Boas and Benedict to suggest to Deloria that she undertake to write a novel about the life of a Sioux woman set a century in the past, before traditional culture had been significantly altered by contact with American civilization. It would provide the opportunity for her to explain the workings of kinship and the social system in the context of daily life and in a format that would appeal to the general public. She could

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work from the same material she was using to write her ethnographic monograph on Sioux social life, but take a freer perspective, situating her cultural description in the context of daily life and revealing the social patterns and emotional overtones of the kinship system in action.

Deloria was hard at work on *Waterlily* in 1942, but how she developed the plot seems not to have been recorded. A passage from George Sword's manuscript may well have served as one inspiration for Deloria to focus her novel closely on the female characters as a vehicle for presenting ethnographic description of the women's share of traditional life. Although Sword had been an accomplished warrior, epitomizing the manly virtues of Sioux culture, in describing the old way of life he went to great length to point out the crucial importance of women's roles, and wrote as follows (Deloria's translation):

> The work of men was as follows: They took part in fighting the enemy; that was a great honor. They hunted buffalo; they shot deer; they hunted for wild animals for food; they went to the hill to scout for buffalo.
>
> The women's work was: They packed every bit of household equipment each time the camp moved; they alone guarded all these things during the march. When they stopped to make camp, the women again unpacked everything alone and erected their tipi. They laid out all the bedding; they gathered and brought in firewood; they brought water; they cooked; they passed out the food; they took care of all the children. They used all the utensils incident in managing the household. They even made the tipis; they themselves dressed the robes for their tipis; they made all the bedding; they were in entire charge of all food, once it had been obtained and brought home by the men.

The letter from Ruth Benedict to Deloria of November 7, 1944, indicates that the original version of the manuscript had been completed by then. Benedict encouraged her to shorten it for publication. With Benedict's help, Deloria cut and revised the manuscript in 1947 and by the summer of 1948 had completed the final copy. Benedict planned to help in obtaining its publication, but her sudden death in September 1948 deprived Deloria of the professional assistance she needed. *Waterlily* was to suffer the same fate as the monograph on social life. In a letter to H. E. Beebe, February 7, 1954, Deloria outlined her attempts to get the work published. The critics agreed that the work was "rich in material, and racially and ethnologically accurate. But Mac-Millan's turned it down, saying it was all of that but they feared the reading public for such a book would not be large enough to warrant their publishing it." She had recently submitted it to the University of Oklahoma Press, only to have it returned with similar comments.

Ironically, the very qualities that made *Waterlily* unpublishable at the time it was written are those that make it of such interest today. It represents a blurring of categories: in conception it is fundamentally a work of ethnographic description, but in its method it is narrative fiction, a plot invented to provide a plausible range of situations that reveal how cultural ideals shaped the behavior of individual Sioux people in social interactions. The correct attitudes and behaviors for kin relationships are the focus for much of the narrative, reflecting Deloria's interpretation of the supreme importance of kinship in structuring Sioux life.

In the novel, Deloria writes of traditional Sioux women's life without apology or explanation. Her female characters reflect their preeminent concern for the welfare and reputation of their brothers, followed by concern for their children and husbands. The women's role in achieving honor for themselves by honoring their relatives, especially their male relatives, is clearly portrayed in a social environment in which differences in activities, status, and all aspects oflife are rooted in the differences—culturally perceived by the Sioux to be the

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natural state of affairs—between the sexes. Men's and women's worlds were complementary but very much compartmentalized. Women, for example, are portrayed in *Waterlily* as playing only peripheral (but no less essential) roles in religious activities. Blue Bird, as a young mother, has only a vague notion of proper procedure in prayer and sacrifice as she seeks to save her baby's life, and Deloria goes to some length to suggest how vague her character's notions of the Powers of the Universe are. Gloku, the aged grandmother, prays more confidently on Box Butte for the welfare of her grandchildren, suggesting increasing experience of the sacred as a woman matured. Importantly, Deloria presents such inequality between men and women as a normal and accepted part of the differentiation of Sioux society by sex. Women are portrayed not as exploited, but as comfortably situated in a cultural system that provided them with security and a sense of well-being.

Ella Deloria wove into the narrative of *Waterlily* materials garnered over more than two decades of study. Many of the customs mentioned or described incidentally in the plot—the burial of baby teeth in the earth at the side of the tipi door, Gloku's prayer and offering of rocks on Box Butte, the fellowhood established between Rainbow and Palani, the ghostkeeping ceremony, and the Virgin's Fire, to name a few—are subjects of the writings of George Bushotter. Most of the description of the Sun Dance, including the prayers and detailed discussion of the cutting of the sacred tree, as well as the customs of war, are taken from the writings of George Sword. Deloria had translated this material and studied it, reviewing details with living elders for so many years that she had clearly made it her own. Other parts of the narrative, such as the presentation of the treatment of murderers, the long admonitions to young women about the dangers of courtship, the discussions of types of marriage, the honor bestowed on a girl who was "bought" as a wife, the mechanisms of polygyny, the details of getting along with one's in-laws, and the description of how the space inside the tipi was designated for various functions, were taken directly from her transcripts of interviews. Finally, some aspects of the manuscript—for example, Deloria's comparison of the repetition of the pipe ceremony in the Sun Dance to the recitation of the Gloria Patri, the unequivocally negative stance toward warfare, the exceptional adherence of the protagonists to the spirit and letter of kinship law—may mirror Ella Deloria's own personality rather than her reconstruction of nineteenth-century social life. But that is as intended: This was to be a personal statement, in contrast to the objective stance of the anthropological monograph.

Although Ella Deloria mused once in a letter to Boas (dated December 5, 1935) that perhaps she should have tried to earn a degree and become a professional anthropologist, she stated flatly, "I certainly do not consider myself as such." In later years she was content to call herself a linguist. Doubtless she would have found the anthropology of the 1980s much more congenial than that of the 1940s. That ethnography is as much literature as science, that ethnographic reportage should focus on meaning as much as behavior, and that the anthropologist's role is to serve as interpreter between cultures, are increasingly-accepted tenets of what has come to be designated "symbolic" or "interpretive" anthropology. This anthropology has grown out of the same concerns that led Ella Deloria—and doubtless Boas and Benedict, as her advisers—to experiment with the medium of fiction as an effective way of explicating ethnographic fact.

Readers will appreciate *Waterlily* as a novel that guides them into the mental as well as the

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historical world of the nineteenth-century Sioux. The twists and turns of plot are no more fantastic than the true-life autobiographies Deloria recorded from living people. The story is charged with universal human interest, set firmly in the matrix of Sioux cultural practices and understandings. Some readers will want to compare this work with the writings of anthropologists and historians as a means of critique, particularly of the adequacy of published representations of the role and status of women in Sioux society. A few readers, like myself, will find it a useful commentary on the development of anthropology during the past century, in terms of both its methods and its goals.

Waterlily forms a valuable part of Deloria's legacy, the treasure trove of material preserving the Sioux past that she has bequeathed to us all, Indian and non-Indian alike. Today, fifty years after most of her interviews were recorded, we realize how irreplaceable those records are, and how fortunate we are that Ella Deloria devoted her life to their collection and translation. As more of her writings become published at long last, we can appreciate how splendidly she achieved her life's mission. For above all, Ella Deloria's work of transcription, translation, and cultural interpretation has provided the data and insight from which we can come to understand the Sioux people of the last century in the way that she intended, as fellow human beings.

>The fullest account of Ella Deloria's life is Janette K. Murray, "Ella Deloria: A Biographical Sketch and Literary Analysis" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Dakota, 1974). Most of Deloria's unpublished manuscripts, including her voluminous correspondence with Boas, are housed in the Library of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Other manuscripts—including "Waterlily" and the accompanying letter from Ruth Benedict—are in the keeping of the Dakota Indian Foundation, Chamberlain, South Dakota. Deloria's correspondence with H. E. Beebe is in the Southwest Museum, Los Angeles, California; her correspondence with Ruth Benedict is in Vassar College Library; and her correspondence with Virginia Dorsey Lightfoot is in my possession. The anecdote about "Father Franz" was told to me by Ella Deloria in 1970. I wish to express my gratitude to Father Vine Deloria, Sr., and to the entire Deloria family for sharing with me remembrances of Ella Deloria and her work.

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