UCLA
UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

“Taking the Teachings of Our Ancestors”: Decolonizing History, Tribalography & Lakota Storytellers

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7gk0g3mb

Author

Yellow Hawk, Lydia Anna

Publication Date

2023

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

"Taking the Teachings of Our Ancestors": Decolonizing History, Tribalography & Lakota Storytellers

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts

in American Indian Studies

by

Lydia Anna Yellow Hawk

2023

© Copyright by

Lydia Anna Yellow Hawk

2023

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

"Taking the Teachings of Our Ancestors": Decolonizing History,

Tribalography & Lakota Storytellers

by

Lydia Anna Yellow Hawk

Master of Arts in American Indian Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2023

Professor Shannon E. Speed, Chair

This thesis examines Lakota storytellers, specifically through the works of Ihunkthunwan Dakota anthropologist Ella Deloria, and analyzes the various research methods and spaces she articulated her communities' histories with her "kinship methodology." Deloria, by writing in different genres and speaking to different audiences, allowed her to serve her community while also shaping the development of Federal Indian policy, reforming the general public's views about Native peoples, and documenting traditional histories. Deloria's use of "tribalography," oral history, and storytelling showcase the valuable ways to (re)create history grounded in tribal traditions, values, and ceremonies that went against a Western approach to documenting history. In her lifetime, she created a multitude of texts that were intertextually connected through the Lakota concept of *tiospaye*. Deloria would ultimately impact the way her community was viewed more accurately while also preserving their culture, languages, and histories.

The thesis of Lydia Anna Yellow Hawk is approved.

Erin Katherine Debenport

Kyle Travis-Carrington Mays

Shannon E. Speed, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2023

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis in memory of my *unci*, Sandra Black Crow. A strong Lakota woman who taught many generations through her roles as a relative, educator, and leader. Her stories and teachings live on through her children, grandchildren, and students. Without her, I wouldn't have made it this far in my education. And I know you are still watching over me in the stars. *Iyotancila*.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction……………………………………………………………………1

Ella C. Deloria: Standing On “A Middle Ground”……………………………………...2

Ella C. Deloria’s Linguistic Research and Lakota Orthography………………………..6

Chapter Two: Decolonizing History with Oral History………………………………….…...10

Tribalography in *Waterlily*: “A New Way of Doing Ethnography”…………………….12

Speaking to Different Audiences through Intertextuality………………………………17

Chapter Three: Conclusion “I Have A Mission”……………………………………………..24

Bibliography....…………………………………………………………………………….....26

List of Figures

Fig. 1: Diagram that shows how Deloria's work intertextually connects……………………………21

Chapter One: Introduction

"Throughout most of U.S. history, historians generally considered American Indians either too culturally different or too unimportant for rigorous historical investigation" (Blackhawk 2011: 376). Because of this exclusion, Indigenous peoples share similar experiences regarding colonization, marginalization, and suppression. Since first contact with Euro-American settlers, Indigenous communities have had their voices, histories, languages, and struggles silenced. Even though the effects of colonialism still impact Native communities today, community members are finding ways to bring back their traditions. For many Native communities, this is being accomplished through storytelling and the reclaiming and rearticulating of old materials, histories, and knowledges collected by early missionaries, historians, and anthropologists in traditions such as "salvage ethnography" and Boasian anthropology. Going against these Western traditions and more towards a tribal community-centered approach to knowledge production (both within the academy and outside of it), Native peoples have collectively been involved in this decolonization project as early as the nineteenth century.

In the process of decolonizing history, Native scholars who are using oral history and storytelling as tools to rearticulate and reclaim their histories are not only continuing the traditions of their ancestors, but they are also "talking back" (Rosaldo 1986) to Western history and the academy, resisting its colonial discourses. This thesis argues that while oral history and storytelling are deemed "too subjective" or "unreliable" (Ritchie 2015) from a Western perspective, these modes of knowledge production have been a critical tool for Indigenous communities in reviving, recreating, and managing their own interpretations of history. This thesis will focus on Lakota storytellers, specifically through the works of Ihunkthunwan Dakota

anthropologist Ella Deloria, and analyze the various research methods and spaces she articulated her communities' histories with her "kinship methodology" (Cotera 2008). Deloria, by writing in different genres (fiction, literary, ethnographic, and educational) and speaking to different audiences (Natives, government officials, missionaries, and the general public), allowed her to serve her community while also shaping the development of Federal Indian policy, reforming the general public's views about Native peoples, and documenting traditional histories.

This thesis is also an ethnohistorical account of Ella Deloria's ethnographic and linguistic work on the Dakota and Lakota. It will first provide an overview of Deloria's tribal, educational, and research background and how this impacted her ethnographic research practices in anthropology. Second, this thesis will examine how her early linguistic work allowed for a "fully phonemic orthography" (Ullrich 2008) of the Lakota language and its dialects. Her work here is foundational in the way contemporary Dakota and Lakota language revitalization efforts better teach, write, and speak the language. Third, building upon LeAnne Howe's (Choctaw) concept of "tribalography" (Howe 1999), we might better understand how and why oral history and storytelling are valuable ways to (re)create history grounded in tribal traditions, values, and ceremony through the creation of Deloria's novel *Waterlily* (1988). Fourth, this thesis will examine how Deloria's overall body of work became "intertextually" (Bauman 2004) connected through Deloria's interpretation of the Dakota kinship system known as *tiospaye* (the Dakota and Lakota familial network system based on bloodline, marriage, and adoption).

Ella C. Deloria: Standing On "A Middle Ground"

Anpetu waste win (Beautiful Day Woman), also known as Ella Cara Deloria, was born on January 31, 1889, on the Yankton Sioux Reservation located in southeastern South Dakota. She comes from one of the best-known American Indian intellectual families in the U.S., whose

leadership in religious, academic, and cultural influence still plays out today. Her Dakota grandfather, Saswe, was a traditional healer who later converted to Christianity. Her father, Reverend Philip Deloria, also known as *Tipi sapa* (Black Lodge), was a priest in the Episcopal Church, and her mother, Mary Sully Bordeaux, was the granddaughter of Irish artist Thomas Sully. Her nephew was Vine Deloria, Jr., a professor of history and religious studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and is seen as one of the most "famous and provocative American Indian intellectuals of the last four decades" (Gardner 2010: vii). Last, her family's work and legacy in cultural translation and interpretation continues today with her great-nephew, Philip J. Deloria, a professor of history at Harvard University.

When Ella Deloria was young, her father was assigned to do mission work on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota, this was where she was mainly raised. Because of her upbringing in Standing Rock in a Dakota household, she became a fluent speaker of both the Dakota (Santee and Yanktonai dialects) and Lakota languages. Her religious background reflected her family's Protestant Episcopal practices, but she also learned and participated in traditional Sioux practices throughout her upbringing. In 1902, at 13 years old, she became a student at Bishop Hare's All Saints School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Deloria spent four years at All Saints, and because she showed "such an aptitude for absorbing the white man's knowledge" (Deloria 1998: xii), she received a university scholarship from them. This scholarship would take her first to the University of Chicago, then to Oberlin College in Ohio, and finally to Columbia University's Teachers College in New York City.

In 1927, Deloria worked again with Boas at Columbia. He wrote her that summer asking if she would join him in New York City to continue their research together: "I have thought of you very often…and wish to have a few weeks time to continue the little work that we did years

ago…I am very anxious to get some good material on Dakota because what we have is not quite up to our modern scientific standards and I want your help" (Boas in 1927, cited in Cotera 2008: 46). He hired her as a researcher associate, instructor and consultant for his anthropology and linguistics classes at Columbia. For Boas, Deloria was the "fulfillment of a long search to find a native speaker who could help in his study of Sioux language…she was the perfect collaborator" (DeMallie 1988: 235). She was trained by Boas on ethnological methods and phonetic transcription in relation to the Siouan languages. This training allowed her to annotate, study, transcribe, and translate older texts and manuscripts written in the Siouan dialects of Dakota and Lakota, ranging from the early works of George Sword and Jack Frazier to Gideon and Samuel Pond's collection on Santee Sioux tales and personal histories (DeMallie 1988; Medicine 2001).

Deloria was operating within anthropology at a very particular historic moment when the elders she spoke with during her research in the 1930s could either speak from personal experiences of living in a more traditional Dakota society or retell the stories that their relatives had told them. She would also read about these early stories and experiences during her translation of the George Bushotter, George Sword, and James Owen Dorsey manuscripts. In addition to this research, Deloria learned about many of these stories from her upbringing on the Yankton and Standing Rock Sioux Reservations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In a letter she wrote to Margaret Mead, she details this further: "I remember pretty much all I ever saw and heard of Teton life in the past. That was the foundation on which I base my subsequent interest in Dakota linguistics and ethnology" (Deloria 1952, cited in Cotera 2008: 42).

Deloria's positionality as an educated Dakota woman and anthropologist in the early twentieth century situated her on a "middle ground" (Cotera 2008) that allowed her to speak on

her Dakota heritage and language, both as a tribal community member and scholar in an academic institution. Deloria's colleagues at Columbia University, such as Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and her mentor Franz Boas, "praised her as an ideal participant observer, and 'insider/outsider' (tribes)woman in the academe" (Gardner 2010: x). However, she recognized that her status also led to the marginalization of her voice in academia and in her Native community. For example, in academia, her "objectivity" was often questioned by other anthropologists, while in the Native communities she worked in, she had to overcome linguistic and cultural divides because she was seen as the Dakota woman who "lived in the East, and talked about Indians" (Medicine 2001: 283).

As she saw it, she had a responsibility to her family and to her community – her *tiospaye* – to accurately represent their languages, histories, and voices in her texts. Because she stood on a "middle ground," receiving this information from the Lakota people often became a challenge for her because she was an unmarried, Christian, college-educated, "mixed-blood" Dakota woman. She overcame these divides and barriers in the academy and in her tribal community with her linguistic ability to speak in Dakota and Lakota. For example, as Beatrice Medicine notes, Deloria recounted the many times during her research how the Lakota people spoke in Lakota in her presence, not knowing she understood what they were saying (Medicine 2001). In one instance, Deloria recalled that older Lakota men from the Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation spoke about her in Lakota as being a *wasicu winyan* (white woman); her response to remarks such as these were normally "'Ee, tuwale misyama Lakota ki' (Unbelievable! I'm a Lakota too)" (Medicine 2001: 284-285). In this specific interaction, Deloria's response in Lakota secured and legitimized her status with these men as a Lakota woman; they stood up and shook her hand in the end.

Deloria's Lakota linguistic abilities carried over into her linguistic and ethnographic research because she could document Lakota stories directly and accurately from the speaker without having to go through an interpreter. She privileged the Dakota speakers behind the stories they told along with their own interpretations, capturing their "authentic" voice. In keeping with her "kinship ethnography" Deloria also acknowledged the names of the Dakota speakers in her texts. While working at Columbia, she made frequent visits to South Dakota to have her research checked and approved by her community before she published it for academic purposes. By conducting her research in this manner, Deloria gained access to information that a more traditional anthropological approach would not have allowed her to do.

Ella C. Deloria's Linguistic Research and Lakota Orthography

Throughout her research career, Deloria returned to different linguistic-focused projects alongside her ethnological and anthropological research, and her knowledge of Dakota and Lakota set her apart from her anthropologist peers. In 1927, one of the first texts Boas instructed Deloria to transcribe was the account of the Oglala Sioux Sun Dance collected by Dr. James Walker, a physician on the Pine Ridge Reservation in the late nineteenth century. This manuscript was written in Santee Dakota orthography by George Sword (Oglala Lakota). From this translation of Walker's manuscript, Deloria published her first academic article in the *Journal of American Folklore*, "The Sun Dance of the Oglala Sioux" (1929). In her translation of this text, Deloria explained how the Dakota orthography used was inadequate and how "the manuscript was obscure in some places," but she "revised it with the help of several old people" (Deloria 1929: 354) whom she consulted on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Sioux Reservations. In the article, she provided the Dakota example from Sword, followed by her translation in English. She did this for over 300 sentences, laid out in her 60-plus-page article.

Boas also asked Deloria to revise Stephen R. Riggs' *A Dakota-English Dictionary* (1890). Riggs was a missionary in North Dakota on the Spirit Lake Sioux Reservation, and during his time there, he collected Santee Dakota words and compiled them into one dictionary. Boas asked Deloria to provide the Lakota dialect variants to Riggs' twenty-one thousand entries. As longtime Lakota language instructor and linguist Jan Ullrich points out, this project was important because it was the first extensive lexical work on the Lakota language, and this lexical material spelled the Lakota language fully phonemically. Additionally, her work on this project provided a base for the development of future work on Lakota linguistics and lexicography (Ullrich 2008).

Because Boas trained and mentored her on many of her linguistic projects, he influenced the way she presented these texts in her writing, resulting in many of them taking a "contextual and general" approach (Epps et al. 2017). For Boas, presenting grammar that incorporated both the cultural and historical context, along with its "general characteristics of articulate speech" (Epps et al. 2017: 45), allowed it to be understood on its own terms and not through the phonology of "outsiders" own colonial languages (Webster & Peterson 2011). This shifting in writing and interpretation in early ethnolinguistic research would later be known as "linguistic relativity" (Epps et al. 2017).

For example, "Short Dakota Texts, including Conversations" (1954) clearly brings forward a "contextual and general" approach in Deloria's writing. This text, along with her grammatical presentation and analysis, would also provide the "significant cultural exegeses" (Epps et al. 2017: 51) of each conversation. By typing the Lakota language in a reliable phonemic orthography, she illustrates the importance of the language and its sounds when she marks all of the diacritics throughout the article. She did this consistently for many of her linguistic texts and typescripts before and after this article. After she presented the conversation

in Lakota, she commented on and provided its cultural significance. For example, in conversation 3 of her article (1954), she displayed how (in some cases) it may be culturally appropriate to mention the name of someone who is dead as a compliment in the form of a Lakota greeting. Even though under normal social and cultural circumstances mentioning the name of an individual who is dead can come off as disrespectful (Deloria 1954).

It should be noted that Deloria used the descriptive term “Dakota” when talking about the Siouan language and its three dialects in her writing and texts. Deloria was fluent in all three Siouan dialects: Dakota (Santee), Lakota (Teton), and Nakota (Yankton). “Dakota” was also used as a classification marker in the development of early Americanist anthropology and linguistics. As a result of this influence, her grammar is titled *Dakota Grammar* (1941), and her text collection is titled *Dakota Texts* (1932), although both deal with the Lakota dialect (Ullrich 2008). However, Cotera (2008) also argues that Deloria’s consistent use of “Dakota” over “Sioux” had a “counterdiscursive objective with distinctive aesthetic and political implications” that went against traditionalist anthropology’s “discourse to generalize when writing about distinct tribal communities” (Cotera 2008: 236).

One of the last projects Deloria worked on was the creation of a Lakota dictionary. In 1962, she received a grant from the National Science Foundation that supported this work, which she carried out at the University of South Dakota (Medicine 2001). This last project allowed her to accomplish one of her greatest desires “to do a proper Lakota dictionary with the psychological meanings of the words and ideas” (Medicine 2001: 282). Unfortunately, she wasn’t able to finish the dictionary before her passing in 1971, and her work on this project, which resulted in valuable lexical material and over seven thousand Lakota entries, was never published (Ullrich 2008).

Deloria's linguistic work continues to address community needs, as seen in contemporary Dakota and Lakota Language revitalization efforts. Deloria's linguistic research provided much of the groundwork for the construction of Dakota and Lakota lexicons and orthographies. Many of her published and unpublished grammars, transcriptions, and typescripts are used in the creation of contemporary Dakota and Lakota dictionaries, curriculums for schools, and neologisms. For example, the Lakota Summer Institute, held every summer on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, has based their Dakota (Santee dialect) and Lakota orthography around Deloria's linguistic work to help them better teach, write, and speak Dakota and Lakota.

Chapter Two: Decolonizing History with Oral History

In her critique of Western history, Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues in *Decolonizing Methodologies* that "history is told from the perspective of the colonizers…which has been developed alongside imperial beliefs about the Other" (1999: 29-30). With history being told from the perspective of colonizers, a "settler historical consciousness" (Tupper 2020) has been maintained that continues to "invisibilize" (Speed 2020) and silence Native perspectives, especially as it pertains to how they experience history. This settler historical consciousness also works to exclude those who participate in history-making, leaving Native voices, for many centuries, outside the literature and works written about them. This exclusion privileged settler-colonial Western traditions and ideologies, such as the valuing of history in a literary form. For example, Navajo historian Jennifer Nez Denetdale notes how Western conventions and procedures "requires mastery of Euro-American intellectual practices" (Denetdale 2007: 17). Native peoples' introduction to these practices didn't happen until the Indian boarding school era beginning in the nineteenth century with schools such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, which was founded in 1879.

Western historians, and those trained within the discipline, are also dismissive of oral history as a resource to speak about past events. As oral historian Donald Ritchie asserts in *Doing Oral History* (2015), opponents of oral history see it as unreliable and too subjective, so they seek objectivity "based on statistical analysis and other objective data" (2015: 10). These same historians also claim that by crafting a history free from personal biases and prejudices, they are portraying a "truer people's history" (Ritchie 2015: 10) and, in the process, can even perceive events more clearly than those who lived through them. Other critics of oral history also point out the "accuracy" of memories and instead value secondary sources and documents

because they “remain the same over time even if interpretations of them shift” (Ritchie 2015: 10).

In writing a history dismissive of oral accounts and interpretations, history has only been told from the perspective of the “colonizer,” and in the process, is upholding settler-colonial epistemological frameworks that perpetuate dominance, hierarchy, and patriarchy (Mihesuah 2003). Commonly noted in early works written by historians on Native peoples is the omission of Native women's voices and perspectives and the focus solely on Native men instead. If Native women are represented in these early works, they are categorized as “princesses” or “squaw-drudges,” tied to practices of conquest (Denetdale 2007). Because patriarchy is a pillar of colonialism, outsiders’ interpretations of Native women have been skewed to fit Eurocentric standards, which “invisibilize” their contributions and voices regarding their roles and importance in traditional and contemporary Native communities.

To better represent Native women's voices in these texts and in the historical record, Native scholars have written extensively about the women in their community, with an increase of works in the mid-late twentieth century. For many Native communities, women have always had prominent roles. Choctaw scholar Devon Abbott Mihesuah exclaims, “we can learn that Native women were and are powerful, they were and are as complex as their cultures are diverse” (2003: 5). Grounded in traditional values and practices, writing about Native women through oral history has been the methodological route Native peoples use in deconstructing and decolonizing older Euro-American portrayals of Native histories. Jennifer Nez Denetdale articulates oral history as: “the ways in which information is passed across generations and includes personal information, pieces of information, events, and incidents that happened to the narrator and ancestors…As a person listens to the stories relayed, she or he takes in memories of

the person who tells the narratives. In this way, our ancestors' memories become our memories, and we become part of the vehicle of oral history" (Denetdale 2014: 73).

Denetdale also notes the importance of oral histories being intergenerational within her own Navajo family clan. As a descendant of Diné Chief Manuelito and his wife Juanita, Denetdale's family can trace their lineage to their oldest daughter Dághá Chíí de Asdzáá (Red Mustache's wife). Denetdale's family will often meet throughout the year and recount Juanita's life and death, and she is remembered and honored as the "grandmother and mother who left a land base for her descendants" (Denetdale 2007: 89). Denetdale in her research findings and personal memories also recognized that the older generations of her family through Juanita have pushed for all their descendants to be closer to one another, with one elder stating: "Our grandmother said long ago that we should not forget the ties that connect us as kin" (Denetdale 2007: 9). The rekindling of their kinship has been revived and strengthened through oral traditions and stories at these family gatherings, or as she articulates it, "taking the teachings of our ancestors" (Denetdale 2014: 80), allowing Juanita's descendants to feel more connected to each other.

Tribalography in *Waterlily*: "A New Way of Doing Ethnography"

In her book chapter "Interior and Exterior Landscapes," Laguna Pueblo writer Leslie Mormon Silko talks about the importance of storytelling in passing on knowledges to future generations and why it needs to be maintained: "The ancient Pueblo people depended upon collective memory through successive generations to maintain and transmit an entire culture, a worldview complete with proven strategies for survival. The oral narrative, or story, became the medium through which the complex of Pueblo knowledge and belief was maintained" (Silko 1996: 8). In her statement, Mormon Silko articulates storytelling as a "strategy for survival" to

maintain her community's culture, not only for passing on these Indigenous knowledges but to also ensure itself for the future generations to come.

Silko's placement on the importance of storytelling as a tool to transmit knowledges is similar to LeAnne Howe's concept of Tribalography. Tribalography, according to Howe, is the "power of Native storytelling…as a living character who continues to influence our cultures" (Howe 1999: 118). She uses the Haudenosaunee's influence on the formation of the US Constitution as an example to highlight how mythic stories on unity shaped early colonists' views of governance. With storytelling acting as a rhetoric space, it contains the power to connect, transform, and weave narratives so that "the real and the past can become present. From myth to history then to reality…" (Liu 2019: 208). Howe's definition of Native oral histories is inclusive of different types of stories that include origin or creation narratives, myths, legends and of past events, something a Western approach might be dismissive of when articulating a past or history. Tribalography also recognizes the impact and influence these stories have on contemporary Native communities, providing lessons for life and acting as a "conduit for revitalizing our indigenous traditional values within our own communities" (Denetdale 2007: 37).

In Ella Deloria's novel *Waterlily* (1988), she, too, uses tribalography when writing about traditional Dakota society and history. She decided to write this novel in a new form of ethnographic writing called "life histories." Cotera (2008) details how "life histories" had been a feature of anthropological writing that started in the 1920s and were used by anthropologists such as Ruth Underhill in her ethnography *The Autobiography of a Papago Woman* (1936). However, what Cotera emphasizes about Deloria's use of this type of writing is that even though *Waterlily* is a "life history" ethnography, Deloria "could not follow the formal conventions of the

anthropological life history" (2008: 155) that the discipline called for because *Waterlily*, although a fictional life history, was one based on her own Dakota people who were her relatives as well as her informants.

Writing *Waterlily* as a "life history" freed Deloria from the "narrative strictures of the ethnographic monograph" (Cotera 2008: 68) that had to be both "objective" and "impersonal." Writing a "life history" also allowed her to incorporate Dakota narrative styles, values, and voices in the only "culturally appropriate way" (DeMallie 1988) that she could as a Dakota woman anthropologist, a way that respected the voices of her Native informants. In writing this way, Deloria was able to bring the lives and voices of the Dakota women that she worked with "to the very center of a reimagined discourse on Indian survival" that allowed these women's voices "to move from the margins of the ethnographic text to the center of the literary text" (Cotera 2008: 69). Deloria challenged Boas' anthropological "objective," methodological approach to research and writing by developing "a new way of doing ethnography" (Cotera 2008: 43).

Waterlily details the life histories of three generations of Dakota women and is based on the ethnographic research Deloria collected on elderly Dakota and Lakota women. In a letter she wrote to Margaret Mead in 1948, she highlighted this by stating: "Only my characters are imaginary…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…And it is purely the woman's point of view, her problems, aspirations, ideals, etc." (Gardner 2009: vi). In this life history, Deloria puts the reader in the perspective of the titular character and protagonist, Waterlily. Throughout the book, Waterlily experiences many things, such as the hardships that came with the smallpox disease and the violence that comes with the "long knives" (Euro-

American soldiers) from the East. However, Deloria also speaks on the importance of Dakota values such as courage, reciprocity, and *tiospaye*, all of which shape the identity of the Oceti Sakowin (the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota under one nation collectively).

As seen in a few different characters, Deloria's writing of *Waterlily* forefronts the importance placed on stories and the lessons, their knowledges, and the impact they have on future generations she believed they carried. In her lifetime, Deloria embodied many different roles that went beyond what she is mainly known for, a scholar and relative in her community. But it's not too often that she's identified as a storyteller. In her adaption of weaving the multiple stories she heard for *Waterlily*, she embodied this role more fully. Dakota scholar Christopher Pexa articulates this more clearly when he observes how she was able to sustain the "power of Dakhóta women to remake the Oyáte, in part by passing on stories …of how to treat your relatives so all may survive" (2019: 220).

Deloria showcases her storytelling abilities in a few different examples in *Waterlily* that emphasize why stories need to be maintained in Dakota society. In Lakota traditional practices, stories serve as vehicles to pass on the histories and lessons from past generations. These stories were told through multiple modes, such as oral history traditions, as exemplified by Woyaka's (He Tells) role in *Waterlily*. He possessed many unique storytelling skills, such as retelling the winter count backward over three hundred years, a gift that he only possessed and was treasured for by many Lakota *tiospaye*. During his visit to Black Eagles (Waterlily's uncle) tipi camp, he acknowledges why the community must hear the stories, myths, and legends. The main reason is so that the people know their history and "learn tribal lore" (Deloria 1988: 49). He was highly respected, and people considered it a great honor when he visited their camp. They would gift

him their most valuable possessions and hold giveaways for his visits. Waterlily, still an infant at the time of his visit, would learn of his stories later on in life when she was older.

Another character in *Waterlily* who used stories to pass on information and wisdom was Waterlily's grandmother, Gloku. She used stories as lessons to teach about kinship and did this in a loving, patient manner that never made Waterlily feel harm or sadness. Gloku was instrumental in how Waterlily presented herself in front of company and other relatives around her. She reciprocates this love and appreciation for her grandmother by "sacrific[ing] herself" (Deloria 1988: 153) when she marries Sacred Horse. She uses the horses he buys her with so they can be used at Gloku's honoring after her passing. Her aunt, First Women, who's witness to this scene, supports her decision and exclaims excitingly, "How fitting! It shows what my niece thinks of her grandmother's memory." (Deloria 1988: 153).

Waterlily would reflect throughout the novel on the way Gloku's stories restored strength, security, and calmness in her life. This is beautifully exemplified in the last scene of the book, where Deloria brings everything together in a complete circle that focuses on kinship and the continuance of the Dakota in a positive light. Waterlily, as a young woman and new mother, begins to understand and appreciate her role within the kinship system (as a daughter, sister, cousin, and mother) of her *tiospaye*: "All my relatives are noble…They make of their duties toward others a privilege and a delight…When everyone was up to par in this kinship interchange of loyalty and mutual dependence, life could be close to perfect" (Deloria 1988: 224). Here Deloria tells a Dakota story that ends with the survival of the Dakota despite the war, famine, and disease they encountered. More importantly, however, she has valorized and rearticulated a Dakota history that portrays the Dakota with a past, present, and *future*.

Today, *Waterlily* is read by contemporary academics, anthropologists, theorists, and scholars in multiple of ways as an ethnographic, feminist, historical, literary, and linguistic text. How Deloria would want it to be read is unknown since the book was published after her passing and was revised and edited from her original manuscript. Based on her correspondence in her letter to Margaret Mead, she thought *Waterlily* "would be valuable from the standpoint of social history" (Gardner 2010: v). But it could also be argued that *Waterlily* is a pedagogical text from a Dakota and Lakota perspective because of how she interpreted, recorded, and preserved the Dakota knowledges found throughout *Waterlily*. This was one of Deloria's main underlying goals as a Native woman who stood on a "middle ground" between her Native community and in academia. She wanted to recover, record, rearticulate, and reclaim the Dakota language and its history and cultural traditions for Dakota future generations, "*hechel lena oyate kin nipi kte*" (so the people may live) (Deloria 1988: 116).

Speaking to Different Audiences through Intertextuality

Starting in the early 1930s, after receiving grants from Columbia University, the Missionary Education Movement of the National Council of Churches, and the American Philosophical Society, Deloria started to conduct her own ethnographic research in South Dakota, mainly on the Pine Ridge, Rosebud, and Standing Rock Reservations (Cotera 2008). Deloria "contact[ed] elders who could remember the old words and phrases" (Deloria 1998: xviii), so she could record and document them. Throughout this decade, she amassed a wealth of information on Dakota kinship, language, culture, and spirituality. How she would write and teach this information became a challenge for her in the 1940s.

Deloria understood the shifting of the political and social structures of the Dakota and Lakota during what Cotera calls the "wake of Federal Indian policies…that had called for re-

organization and 'revitalization' of tribal governing structures" (Cotera 2008: 149). Deloria knew she needed to insert the Dakota voice into the discussions that would ultimately impact her *tiospaye* in the end. She did this with the multitude of texts that came out of her research in the 1930s. This section explores the relationality of four texts written in a different genre along with their cultural, linguistic, and social significance.

Although anthropology provided Deloria the platform and training she needed to collect and conduct her research, as a Dakota woman anthropologist, writing about Dakota family life, history, and culture was difficult for her because she had kinship and tribal restrictions on what she could say or write. When explaining this to Ruth Benedict in a letter in 1941, she admitted, "it trips even anyone as apparently removed as I am…because I have a place among the people…I have to keep it" (Cotera 2008: 12). Consequently, "Deloria serially withheld key ethnographic information that she considered too sacred or personal to share with outsiders" (Cotera 2008: 43). She addressed this problem by writing in different genres (fiction, linguistic, ethnographic, and educational), for different audiences (Indians, missionaries, anthropologists, and the general public), which allowed her to serve her Native community and academia at the same time. From this thinking, she was able to produce multiple works that allowed her to write about her research while shaping the development of Federal Indian policy, reforming the general public's views about Native peoples, and documenting traditional Dakota histories.

One of the first works that came out of the research she conducted in the 1930s was her co-authored book with Franz Boas, *Dakota Grammar* (1941). This book was a synthesis of their research together on Dakota and Lakota grammar. This text spoke to a more academic audience in educational institutions because, as Ullrich notes, this grammatical analysis "was written for linguists and other academics in a style that can be difficult for the average person" to understand

(Ullrich 2008: 13). This text is important because it was one of the first larger publications at the time that transcribed Dakota and Lakota with a fully phonemic orthography that distinguished between plain and aspirated stops that the earlier missionary transcriptions failed to make (Ullrich 2008).

The second book to come out of her ethnographic research was *Speaking of Indians* (1944), an insider's (emic) analysis of Dakota spirituality and kinship. As Medicine notes, *Speaking of Indians* was "intended for a primarily white readership" (Medicine 2001: 278) because it mainly spoke to the general public, government officials, and church audiences. Deloria's text can be seen alongside the works of other indigenous writers and scholars at the time who were also advocating for Indian rights and protections, including Ruth Muskrat Bronson's (Cherokee) book *Indians are People Too* (1944) and Luther Standing Bear's (Sicangu Lakota) autobiography *My People the Sioux* (1975). But in her book, Deloria would do this by concentrating on the Dakota more exclusively, as she put it: "the one people that I know intimately and whose language is also mine…My people, the Dakotas" (Deloria 1944: 20-21).

The next book she worked on and finished in the late 1940s, but which was not published until 1988, was her novel *Waterlily*, a cultural and historical narrative that takes place in the early nineteenth century about traditional Dakota societies and kinship roles from a woman's perspective. This text appealed to many audiences because it was written in a fictionalized way and was not so academic; its readership extends beyond *Dakota Grammar* and *Speaking of Indians*. The book came from the encouragement and mentorship of Ruth Benedict, who, as Cotera (2008) notes, was instrumental throughout the writing and editing process of *Waterlily.* In *Waterlily*, "Deloria sought not only to humanize Boasian data on the complex kinship relations

that bound the Dakotas, but also shift the focus of that research to the lives of women in Dakota culture" (Cotera 2008: 6), something that had not been done.

The last project to come out of Deloria's research during this time was her monograph, *Dakota Way of Life* (2007). Deloria started the manuscript for this text after she had finished *Waterlily* and completed it in 1953, but it was not published until much later. Her monograph offers an analysis of traditional Dakota society (Camp Life) that incorporates different social patterns and customs such as: Law and Order, Courtship and Marriage, Death and Burial, and the Dakota Kinship System. She had hoped that *The Dakota Way of Life* would contribute "towards a deeper understanding of the Dakota…in describing what went on in their life…explaining why it went on in that precise way" (Deloria 2007: 6). *The Dakota Way of Life*, although written in an ethnographic style, took a departure from the "narrative norms of conventional ethnographies" (Cotera 2008:63), and in doing this, Deloria's text spoke to general public and academic audiences.

The "relational nexus between texts" (Bauman 2004: 5) such as *Dakota Grammar*, *Speaking of Indians*, *Waterlily*, and *Dakota Way of Life* and what Deloria intertextually accomplished in these works show how she was able to write about Dakota histories, language, and spirituality but in different genres for different audiences. Deloria wanted to insert a Dakota voice into public, governmental, and academic discourses, so that their traditional practices and way of life could be accounted for and understood respectfully in these institutions. As shown in Fig. 1, one key concept that ties all of these texts together intertextually is Deloria's interpretation of the Dakota kinship system known as *tiospaye*. *Tiospaye* is brought forward in every text and is highlighted as the underlying concept that kept the Dakota together, and Deloria emphasizes this in *Speaking of Indians* more clearly:

> "kinship was the all-important matter…By kinship all Dakota people were held together in a great relationship that was theoretically all-inclusive and co-extensive with the Dakota domain. Everyone who was born a Dakota belonged in it; nobody need be left out" (Deloria 1944: 24-25).

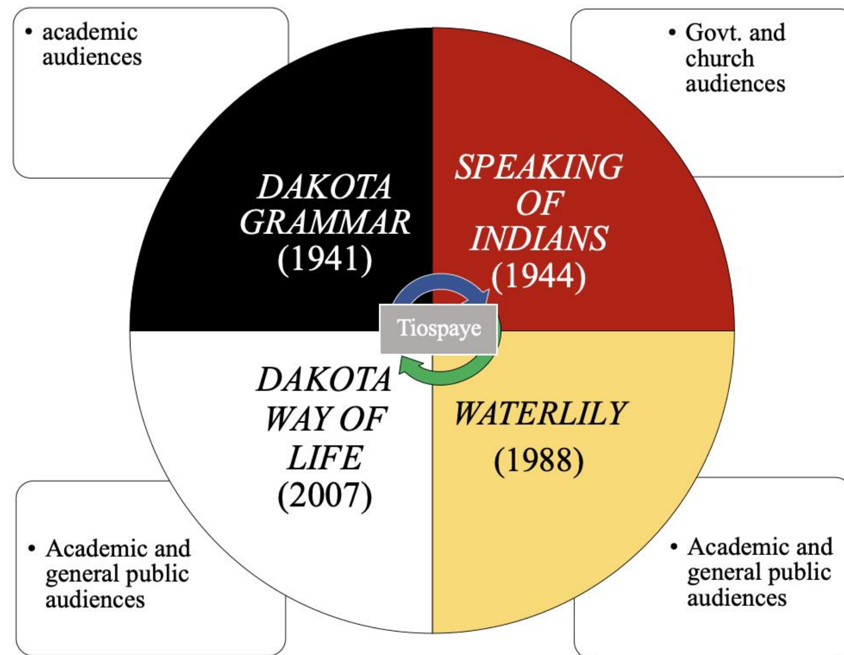

Figure 1. This diagram shows how Deloria's work intertextually connected her research around the concept of *tiospaye* in four of her works. (Govt. stands for the government)

Intertextuality is a Bakhtinian concept that Richard Bauman explores in his book *A World of Others' Words: Cross Cultural Perspectives on Intertextuality* (2004). He defines intertextuality as being how a text "lives only by coming into contact with another text (with context). Only at this point of contact between texts does a light flash, illuminating both the posterior and anterior, joining a given text to a dialogue…this contact is a dialogic contact between texts" (Bauman 2004: 4). Because *tiospaye* appears in all of Deloria's works, this key concept allows all of her texts, when read together, to be in "dialogic contact" with one another, written in a way that shows how *tiospaye* is important in that specific genre. Because Deloria's texts, as Cotera highlights, "address the same task, albeit in different idioms" (Cotera 2008:147).

Writing for distinct Dakota and non-Indigenous audiences forced her to go outside the boundaries of anthropological, ethnographic, and literary writing strictures.

Another way of looking at intertextuality in an Indigenous community is exemplified in Erin Debenport's article (2011), where she examined how San Antonian authors of the Native soap opera *As the Rez Turns,* used Bakhtinian "complex" or "secondary" genres when its authors "establish multiple connections to many types of texts, voice many types of subjectivities, and address several local audiences" (Debenport 2011: 89). Because *As the Rez Turns* was a new kind of text that had not been written in their Indigenous language, Tiwa, until then, the authors made intertextual links between this text and others by using recognizable San Antonian speech genres in a specifically local way that indexed many types of places, identities, and ways of speaking. *As the Rez Turns*, as a text, was initially a Tiwa practice tool for language learners, but it also functions as a "comedy of manners that contains pointed political commentary" (Debenport 2011:89) that speakers used to talk about the personal histories of community members while also speaking on the tribal, political, social, and linguistic issues in the San Antonio Pueblo.

Indeed, it is through her texts that Deloria allowed her readers to "live in a world of others' words" (Bakhtin 1986:143) when she told the stories that the Dakota elders had told her about traditional Dakota society. Above all, she wanted to show these different audiences how the Dakota *tiospaye* kinship system made a functional society because it was based on reciprocal Dakota values, such as *wowachantognake* (generosity), *wowaunsila* (compassion), *woowothanla* (honesty), and *wochantet'inze* (courage), that would allow her "people, the Dakotas" to continue to live through the hardships and the shifting of the political and social structures they were going through. As a Dakota woman anthropologist who stood on a "middle ground," she would

mediate this knowledge in her texts because, as she put it, "we may know about a people, but we cannot truly know them until we can get within their minds…and see life from their peculiar point of view" (Deloria 1944: 18).

Chapter Three: Conclusion "I Have A Mission"

Deloria dedicated her lifework and research to creating texts that accurately and appropriately represented the Dakota. In a letter in 1934 to John D. Rockefeller Jr., she details this further:

> "I have an idea that this is my work, which none other can do… I represent a middle ground in the development of my tribe…spoke the language and heard many myths as a child. I am related according to the kinship system of my tribe, with everyone in it…I stand on a middle ground, and know both sides…This is why I feel as though I have a mission." (Deloria 1934, cited in Cotera 2008: 41)

With this "mission," she created a multitude of linguistic, anthropological, literary, and educational texts. With *tiospaye* as the main underlying concept, she was able to intertextually link her works together, showing the importance of kinship, spirituality, and language practices in Dakota societies. Her research spoke to different audiences and represented the Dakota in the way they wanted to be understood by showing accurate first-hand translations directly from Dakota community members. In the end, her research not only shaped federal Indian policy, but told a Dakota history that articulated her *tiospaye* as being strong and resilient.

Deloria's research was relevant to the needs of the people in her community because she made sure the information she collected was accurate and valued Dakota kinship beliefs. Through her use of tribalography, she challenged long-held practices in history making on the ways to carry out research and write an ethnographic novel such as *Waterlily* by creating her own "kinship methodology" that "unsettled the boundaries between insider and outsider that constituted the very ground rules for participant observation" (Cotera 2008: 52). In doing this, Deloria "thus became a mentor to her mentors in turn" (Bonnie & Krook 2018: 10) and was ahead of better-known scholars such as Franz Boas and Margaret Mead in the way she recorded

and wrote about her informants, the Dakota, in her works. She also used her position as a Dakota woman anthropologist who stood on a "middle ground," to give her Native informants voice by allowing them to tell their own life histories in her texts. Not only was Deloria "talking back" to academia and its colonial discourse, but she was also letting her Native informants "talk back" to the academic establishment as well.

As I claim space for my Indigenous research and community, Deloria's work and texts will always remind me of my *unci* (grandmother) and our long conversations in her home in He Dog on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. These conversations encapsulated her life story, the retelling of others' life stories, Lakota creation stories and myths, and her explaining to me why our ceremonies had to be done in a certain way, pointing out the protocols and procedures handed down to us by the ancestors. I learned so much from her stories and teachings, and they still guide the way I live out my life today. I particularly hold onto one conversation closer to my heart, and it happens to also be our last conversation before her passing. She was happy that I was going to graduate school and has always lovingly supported me in my goals but reminded me cautiously to always privilege and protect our Lakota language and way of life over the Western one enforced upon us. She said when we do this, we not only ensure it for ourselves but also for the future generations, *"wakanyeja kin tokatakiya unkiyab"* (our children are our future). So when I hold myself accountable to my community in my research, I, like Ella Deloria, understand that my education, research, and culture are not entirely my own; it is one I share with my *tiospaye* and future Lakota generations, *hechel lena oyate kin nipi kte* "so that the people may live" (Deloria 1988: 116).

Bibliography

Bauman, Richard. 2004. *A World of Others' Words: Cross Cultural Perspectives on Intertextuality*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Blackhawk, Ned. 2011. "American Indians and the Study of U.S. History," in *American History Now*. Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Boas, Franz. and Ella C. Deloria. 1941. *Dakota Grammar*. Smithsonian Institute Volume 23 of Memoirs of the National Academy of Sciences.

Bonnie, Sarah L. and Susan H. Krook. 2018. "The Mentoring of Miss Deloria: Poetics, Politics, and the Test of Tradition." *American Indian Quarterly*. 42(3):281-305.

Bronson, Ruth Muskrat. 1944. *Indians Are People Too*. New York: Friendship Press.

Cotera, María Eugenia. 2008. *Native Speakers: Ella Deloria, Zora Neale Hurston, Jovita González, and the Poetics of Culture*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Debenport, Erin. 2011. "As the Rez Turns Anomalies within and beyond the Boundaries of a Pueblo Community." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal.* 35(2):87-109.

Deloria, Ella C. 1929. "The Sun Dance of The Oglala Sioux." *The Journal of American Folklore*. 42(166): 354-413.

-----. 1932. *Dakota Texts*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

-----. 1944. *Speaking of Indians*. New York: Friendship Press.

-----. 1954. "Short Dakota Texts, including Conversations." *International Journal of American Linguistics*. 20(1):17-22.

-----. 1988. *Waterlily*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

-----. 2007. *The Dakota Way of Life*. Sioux Falls: Mariah Press.

Deloria, Vine, Jr. 1998. "Introduction." *Speaking of Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

DeMallie, Raymond J. 1988. "Afterword." *Waterlily*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Denetdale, Jennifer Nez. 2007. *Reclaiming Diné History*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

-----. 2014. "The Value of Oral History on the Path to Diné/Navajo Sovereignty." In *Diné Perspectives Revitalizing and Reclaiming Navajo Thought*. Lloyd L. Lee, ed. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Epps, Patience L., Anthony K. Webster, and Anthony C. Woodbury. 2017. "A Holistic Humanities of Speaking: Franz Boas and the Continuing Centrality of Texts." *International Journal of American Linguistics*. 83(1): 41-78.

Gardner, Susan. 2010. "Introduction." *Waterlily*. 2nd edition. Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press.

Howe, LeAnne. 1999. "Tribalography: The power of Native stories." *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 14(1):117–125.

Liu, Yu. 2019. "Toward tribalography: rewriting the three sisters' story in *Shell Shaker*." *Neohelicon*, 46:199-212.

Medicine, Beatrice. 2001. *Learning to be an Anthropologist and Remaining "Native"*, edited with Sue-Ellen Jacobs. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Mihesuah, Devon Abbott. 2003. *Indigenous American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Pexa, Christopher. 2019. *Translated Nation: Rewriting the Dakhóta Oyate*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ritchie, Donald A. 2015. *Doing Oral History*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rosaldo, Renato. 1986. "When Natives Talk Back: Chicano Anthropology Since the Late Sixties." In *Renato Rosaldo Lecture Series Monograph*, edited by Ignacio M. Garcia, 3-20. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Riggs, Stephen R. 1890. *A Dakota-English Dictionary*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press.

Silko, Leslie Mormon. 1996. *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit*. New York: First Touchstone Press.

Smith, Linda T. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.

Speed, Shannon E. 2020. "Grief and an Indigenous Feminist's Rage." In *Heightened States of Injustice: Activist Research on Indigenous Women and Violence*. Lynn Stephen and Shannon Speed, eds. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Standing Bear, Luther. 1975. *My People, The Sioux*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Tupper, Jennifer A. 2020. "Cracks in the Foundation: (Re)Storying Settler Colonialism." In *Oral History, Education, and Justice*, ed. Kristina R. Llewellyn and Nicholas Ng-A-Fook.

Ullrich, Jan. 2008. "Introduction." *New Lakota Dictionary*. 2nd Edition. Lakota Language Consortium.

Underhill, Ruth. 1936. *The Autobiography of a Papago Woman*. Eastfield: Martino Publishing.

Webster, Anthony K. and Leighton C. Peterson. 2011. "Introduction: American Indian Languages in Unexpected Places." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*. 35(2):1-18.