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Review of Deer Women and Elk Men: The Lakota Narratives of Ella Deloria.

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As a Dakota Sioux, Deloria couldn't be more American, considering Native Americans were on this continent before any of Deloria's contemporaries' ancestors were. But the barrier of language, both spoken and written, keeps respect and status from changing hands. Rølvaag's *Giants in the Earth* has the quote, "The fullest, finest, and most powerful novel that has been written about pioneer life in America," —*The Nation*," written on its book jacket. The same could be said of Deloria's *Waterlily*. Her book recreates life in the *tiyospaye*, relating to the reader the importance of family and family relationships to the land.

Rice presents Deloria's work admirably because he selects contemporary issues, issues relating to sexuality, and discusses how Deloria explains timeless Lakota values and lessons in her interpretations. For example, Rice discusses the issue of jealousy and its major role in several of Deloria's stories and explains:

While the jealous husband in the Lakota scheme of things is bad because he is selfish, the ideal husband is concerned to protect rather than possess his wife and everyone else in the tribe. (p. 124)

Deloria characterizes a husband in *Waterlily* as prone to "jealous fits"; "neither the disapproval of the older men nor the ridicule of his contemporaries" could prompt this jealous husband to be more "dutiful." Rice explains how Deloria uses the tradition of oral storytelling in *Waterlily* to define Lakota values and their relationship to issues of sexuality, human relationships, and societal relationships. Rice shows that "jealous fits" represent "an infantile, selfish emotion that the tribe cannot afford" (p. 124).

It keeps both men and women from contributing to the tribe's sustenance—Star Elk spies on his wife all day instead of hunting . . . —and it potentially endangers innocent bystanders with violence in small communities dependent on cooperation. (p. 124)

Deer Women and Elk Men: The Lakota Narratives of Ella Deloria. By Julian Rice. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992. Introduction, appendices, works cited, index. 211 pp. \$22.50.

Julian Rice presents Ella Deloria's work as part of the landscape of American literature without presenting an argument as to why the question of its noticeable absence exists and has never been answered. Although Rice does compare the conflict in Shakespearean plays to conflict in Deloria's collected stories to emphasize Lakota values and help contextualize her work as wholly American, the question remains as to why Deloria has to be justified.

American Indian literature and its fraternal twin, Oral Storytelling, have historically trailed behind the canonical of American literature both in pattern and respect. While interest in America's indigenous peoples and their history have enthralled anthropologists and ethnologists for a century, the same could hardly be said of literature professors. Not until the last couple of decades has society and academia listened to American Indians, let alone read what they are writing. My friend told me that Native peoples do not exist in this century; no one wants to read about contemporary Indians and their contributions. We are still quoting Sitting Bull. What about twentieth-century Native Americans? Well, Julian Rice is himself a pioneer for spotlighting an important twentieth-century American Indian writer: a Dakota Sioux woman.

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