Reading Ella Cara Deloria's Waterlily for Cultured Speech

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Abstract

The authors discuss the use of a novel, Waterlily, by Ella Cara Deloria, for courses in communication studies. As a representation of the life and culture of Teton Dakotas in the time before substantial contact with European Americans, the novel reveals a distinctive outlook and system of practices with regard to communication. Thus it provides a striking counterpoint to assumptions commonly presented in courses in communication studies. An interpretive framework for examining such a novel, with particular reference to its portrayal of culturally distinctive ways of communicating, is presented and applied to Waterlily. Issues regarding the validity of the novel as an authentic representation of traditional Dakota culture are discussed, in the context of pedagogy.

"To be educated by novels...is to be educated into a strong taste for the sheer variousness of life," wrote Joseph Epstein (Epstein, 1989, p. 38). If this is true for novels in general, it certainly is true for novels that are written deliberately with an eye and an ear to a particular place and time. In this paper we examine one such novel, one that performs an important service in helping students of communication appreciate, perhaps even develop a taste for, the variousness of life, spoken and otherwise.

The work in question is Waterlily, written by Ella Cara Deloria in 1944 and circulated in manuscript form but published, posthumously, in its present form in 1988, with minor editorial changes made by the publisher to modernize some of its language. Set in South Dakota in the period just prior to substantial contact of Dakotas with European Americans, the book centers on the life of a fictional Teton Dakota woman, named Waterlily, from her birth to shortly after her marriage. Deloria, herself a Dakota who was a prominent fieldworker and author of scholarly works about her people, presented in Waterlily her most widely accessible, general, and definitive treatment of Dakota life and culture.

To introduce the world portrayed in the book, let us consider two interrelated themes it develops pertaining to Dakota ways of speaking.

First, the Dakotas placed *a great emphasis on the importance of signalling, in speech, the speaker's acknowledgment of the social status of one's interlocutors, particularly in speech with relatives.* For example, the Dakotas in the novel customarily address and refer to kinpersons with kin terms,

for example, "grandmother," "grandchild," and "cousin," rather than with personal names, the use of which is proscribed. This practice of using social identifiers reflects Dakota beliefs in the importance of relatives as well as in the value of treating persons in terms of their defining social attributes, such as gender, age, and kinship status. In one scene, Waterlily's grandmother said to her that "you must not call your relatives and friends by name, for that was rude" (Deloria, 1988, p. 34). In a more conventional ethnographic treatise, Deloria wrote that use of the proper kinship term is only the surface manifestation of a deeper-lying attitude representing the Dakota ideal:

> The core of the matter was that a proper mental attitude and a proper conventional behavior prescribed by kinship must accompany the speaking of each term.Term, attitude, and behavior, in the correct combinations, were what every member of society must learn and observe undeviatingly.The more correctly he could do this,.the better member of the group he was, the better his standing as a Dakota. (Deloria 1944/1992, p. 18)

The effect of speaking a kinship term of address was for the Tetons an act in and through which a particular sense of personhood is expressed and a spirit of kinship obligations is manifested. With every utterance of a kinship term, as a form of address, the speaker expressed a reminder, both to self and to the addressee, of the fundamental quality of the interlocutors' interpersonal relationship. Speaking the kin term materialized the fact that the interlocutors are kin to each other — granddaughter to grandmother, brother to sister, child to parent, cousin to cousin, and so forth.

Second, the Dakotas believed *in the power of speech to constitute social reality and, concomitantly, that one should take great care in making particular acts of speech,* such as a promise The making of a promise to another person was considered a vow that must not be broken. When Waterlily's mother, Blue Bird, told her grandmother, Gloku, that she had promised to marry a man whom Gloku judged to be unsuitable, Gloku experienced great distress because of her belief in the importance of keeping one's word whatever the cost. Deloria (1988) has Gloku say:

> Ah, if only you had told me he was courting you so I could have warned you, Grandchild. Since you have promised already, there is nothing I can do. Once she gives it, an honorable Dakota woman does not break her word to a man. Those who make false promises are forever derided. To give your word is to give yourself. (p. 12)

Blue Bird married the man, in spite of the second thoughts she had about the match, a reservation that was well founded, as it turned out that the marriage was not a successful one, ending in a humiliating termination. But for these Dakota, a speech act was not something to be taken lightly, it was a matter of great consequence and therefore something to be respected and regulated with great carefulness.

For many students in contemporary courses in communication studies, such beliefs and practices as described above present an important counterpoint to their own practices and beliefs and to others to which they are exposed in communication studies more generally. For example, these Teton practices and beliefs contrast sharply with an American speech code described by Philipsen and associates as a "Nacirema" code of communication (see, particularly, Philipsen,1976; Katriel and Philipsen,1981; Philipsen,1986; Philipsen, 1987, 1992, 1997; Carbaugh, 1988). The code described by Philipsen et al makes salient and thematizes the uniqueness and creative power of individuals, with a de-emphasis on communally defined roles and expectations. That code also emphasizes the capacity, indeed the moral imperative, of the individual to make highly individualized choices in negotiating interpersonal relationships. From the perspective of this code, it would be morally permissible to renege on a promise of marriage, if the promiser had a change of mind. Speech, in such a view, is a resource for the expression of individual intent rather than the expression of social identities and obligations, a resource for the negotiation of commitments rather than the expression of unchangeable vows. Waterlily provides evidence of an alternative communication code and of a contrasting system of linguistic practices in social interaction.

There is, of course, a strong emphasis in contemporary communication textbooks and other teaching resources on cultural differences and multiculturalism (see, for example, the most recent volume of the Basic Communication Course Annual, 1996, which has a special section on

"cultural diversity in the basic course"). But it is rare for such materials to present in its fullness an appreciation of a non-European code of communication, such as that of the traditional Dakota.

A book that the authors use in their own teaching provides a useful illustration of this point. The book, Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz' Communication in Everyday Life: A Social Interpretation (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1989), presents a highly sophisticated, extended treatment of personal address in a U.S. business organization. In the business organization examined, there are many forms of address but apparently no consideration is given to addressing someone as kin or with a kin term. There is a strong sense in Leeds-Hurwitz' treatment of personal address in this modern organization that the manifestation of social difference in patterns of address is a social and communicative problem for many employees, precisely because of the expression of social difference. The Dakota, too, were engaged in work, but as Deloria portrays them in Waterlily, would find a world of work in which kin terms are not used to address others to be foreign to their experience. Indeed they would find such a world to be morally problematic. The world of Waterlily is a world in which social difference, in terms of gender, rank, and position is systematically appreciated, honored and acknowledged. It is unusual in our experience to find classroom materials for the study of communication that portray such a world in its wholeness and to portray such a world with a sympathetic attitude.

Another contemporary textbook in communication that we use in our teaching is Sarah Trenholm's Thinking through Communication: An introduction to the Study of Human Communication (Trenholm, 1995). Trenholm presents what we believe to be an extensive and well informed survey of contemporary approaches to communication in interpersonal relationships—how they are formed, how they can be improved, how they are terminated, and so forth. Although we take no exception to what Trenholm presents about interpersonal relationships, we notice that nowhere in her detailed survey is there any consideration of the speech act of promising. This speech act, which is so crucial to an understanding of the interpersonal world portrayed by Deloria, is noticeably absent. Where the Trenholm book emphasizes self disclosure as a speech act, Waterlily emphasizes such speech acts as promise, pledge, and vow.

Two statements in Trenholm would seem particularly odd to the Dakotas portrayed in Waterlily. Trenholm asserts that "part of the joy of being in a close relationship is the knowledge that we are free to break everyday rules" (p. 162), where the Dakotas would emphasize the importance in close relationships of observing the rules, particularly as they pertain to kinship roles. And Trenholm asserts that "we choose our friends in part because they allow us to be who we want to be" (p. 164), where the Dakotas would emphasize the effects of proximity and custom in the choice of friends and the importance in a friend of observing the culturally determined proprieties of social intercourse.

Because it provides a step toward revealing "the sheer variousness of [spoken] life," we have for several years used Waterlily as one among other books for courses titled "Speech, the Individual and Society," "Cultural Codes in Communication," and "Ways of Speaking." In the next section of this paper we show how we applied an interpretive framework to the study of Waterlily to enhance its use in the communication classroom. Then we discuss the validity of the work's portrayal of cultural practices as evidence of culturally distinctive speech.

Speech in Waterlily

One of our concerns with Waterlily as a pedagogic resource is with how to read the text so as to find in it materials that provide students with a detailed sense of the world of communication portrayed in it. There are, of course, many possible interpretive frameworks to use in approaching a work, literary or otherwise. Our approach has been guided by one such framework, that supplied by the ethnography of speaking (Hymes, 1974; Philipsen, 1992). We borrowed selectively from this framework to produce a systematic reading of Waterlily that can help us use it as a resource for illustrating culturally distinctive ways of speaking, and in this section of the paper we report some of our efforts to date in making such a reading.

The ethnography of speaking emphasizes the detailed examination of communicative phenomena in their sociocultural contexts. This includes direct observation of how people use speech and how they behave toward their own and others' communicative conduct. A novel such as Waterlily potentially provides one kind of record of such speech. Our scanning of the book's 227 pages produced some 1,500 direct references to talk as action or to other modes of communicative activity.

These references were identified and classified as one of four types: (1) expressions that state or implicate a rule for speaking, (2) expressions that state or implicate a premise about speaking, (3) linguistic action verbs, and (4) statements that designate ways of speaking. Each of these will be illustrated in turn, with special reference to how our observations of these phenomena are linked to the two themes of speaking with relatives and the power of speech.

Rules for Speaking

A "rule" is "a prescription, for how to act, under specified circumstances, which has (some degree of) force in a particular social group" (Philipsen 1992, p. 8). We were concerned to find rules pertaining to the use of language and other communicative conduct, as these rules are evidenced in the text. An example is Deloria's formulation of the rule, attributed to the speech of Waterlily's grandmother, but written in the voice of the narrator, that "you must not call your relatives and friends by name, as that was rude" (Deloria, 1988, p. 34) and in Deloria's quoting Waterlily's mother, Blue Bird, as saying that "a woman who talks about her relations with her husband is disloyal to her mate, and a reproach to herself" (p. 180).

Deloria (1988) painted a picture of a people who were vitally concerned with the proprieties of spoken interaction. Thus, materials pertinent to inferring rules for speaking are woven throughout the text. Such materials include: (1) statements, attributed to characters in the novel, in which a rule is expressed or implied, and (2) the narration of events which imply that characters sanction the violation of rules. We combed the lines of the novel and produced a corpus of over 300 items which can be used to infer that the Waterlily characters were orienting to socially constructed rules for speaking.

To illustrate our approach to rules of speaking, drawing from materials in the text, we formulated the following rule:

> A mother-in-law may not speak in a direct manner to her daughter-in-law, nor may a daughter-in-law speak in a direct manner to her mother-in-law.

This rule was inferred both by considering rule-statements by Waterlily characters and by examining the narrated action of the text. In

particular, this rule was manifested in Deloria's portrayal of the relationship between the mother of Sacred Horse (Waterlily's first husband) and Waterlily. Deloria reported, "Sacred Horse's real mother...occasionally overstepped by talking directly and in a chummy way to Waterlily" (Deloria, 1988, p. 165). In the previous statement, Deloria implicitly invoked the rule. Then, in the following she puts the expression of the rule into the dialogue of the characters:

> And indeed some friends of the mother-in-law openly criticized her for it. "But it is too much liberty that you take, the way you talk so freely with your son's wife." To which she replied, "What of it? I can't let that rule stop me. She is only a child, after all, and far from her own people because we carried her off. She must be homesick at times. If I can cheer her up, what is so bad in that?" (p. 165)

In this passage, Sacred Horse's mother explicitly acknowledges the force of a rule regarding the manner in which a mother-in-law may talk to her daughter-in-law. The sanction she must endure for breaking this rule is direct criticism of her by her friends. In the passage, however, Sacred Horse's mother responds in a manner atypical for a traditional Dakota woman, by openly challenging the wisdom of the rule in this particular case.

The rule as formulated illustrates both of the Dakota themes we have foregrounded. First, the rule specifies what is appropriate behavior between two people in terms of their relationship as kin. Second, in its attention to the control of what can be said between two people in a close but potentially sensitive relationship, the rule manifests a concern with the danger of speech and with the importance of vigilance in its regulation.

Premises about Speaking

"Premise" refers to "a generalized statement of belief or value" (Philipsen, 1992, p. 8). These include statements of what is (belief) and of what counts as good or bad (value). Premises always link two terms in some kind of relationship of definition or evaluation, with the line between definition and evaluation frequently blurred. For example, the following two premises from Waterlily might be taken to illustrate,

respectively, premises of belief and value, but the line between them is not an absolutely clear one: "To speak aloud is to make a promise" (Deloria, 1988, p. 143) and "Speech is holy" (p. 50).

Our combing of Waterlily for passages in which a premise about speaking was stated or implied yielded a corpus of over 200 such passages. As with rules, the pertinent materials can be direct statements which can be classified as premises, or they can be narrative accounts which provide materials for inferring a premise.

Two interrelated premises from Waterlily that are attributed to the Dakota by Deloria (1988) are that when a child has memory, the child is accountable for her actions (p. 71) and that a child of seven is able to remember past experiences (p. 71). At first glance, these might not appear to refer to premises about the use of language and other communicative means, except for their linkage to communication through a reference to cognition. But we use these as examples of premises pertaining to speaking because, upon examining them in the context of the novel, they are directly related to language use.

The focus upon the child's memory ties in with language use with a special pertinence because the Teton Dakota lived in an oral society. That is, most of their symbolic communication is accomplished via spoken language. Thus, it is not surprising that the Tetons portrayed in Waterlily took memory to be of great importance and that they had a principled account of it, because memory is necessary for retaining the meaning of spoken words and the prudential import of spoken utterances — they are not written down and therefore cannot be looked up or consulted in text. In such a world, the child's memory for spoken words is a matter of crucial importance.

The importance of remembering spoken language is, for the Tetons, not merely a matter of technical competence and informational efficiency. It is important to focus as well on what is remembered — or what is considered most vital as the subject of memory. What the Teton child was trained to remember are the wise words of the elders. Remembering the wise words of the elders, the child has a ready reference point for guiding her actions, and the child's relatives, knowing that the child has memory of what has been taught her, have a basis for calling the child to account for untoward actions.

With the two premises concerning us here — when a child has memory, the child is accountable for her actions, and a child of seven is

able to remember past experiences — the Tetons not only have two separate parts of an explanation of memory, control, and speech, they also have two premises that supply the major and minor premise of a syllogism, the conclusion of which is that a child of seven is accountable for her actions. This means that a child of seven can be expected, upon contemplating an action, to search their memory for the instruction they have received from their older relatives. Memory is thus necessary for control and, more specifically, for control and accountability of one's speech in the conduct of social life, most of which is life among kin.

Terms for Talk

"Terms for talk" refers to words that label speech acts. We focused on linguistic action verbs (Katriel and Philipsen, 1981; Verschueren, 1987; Carbaugh, 1989) such as "speak," "talk," "say," "tell," "argue," "converse," "chat," etc., or a linguistic variant of such terms, such as "speaking," "talks," and so forth. Linguistic action verbs refer to linguistic acts only. The word "cry," for example, was recorded only if it was associated with speech, as in "'My daughter! My daughter!' she cried" (Deloria, 1988, p. 6).

There are over a thousand instances of the use of a term for talk in Waterlily. A large portion of these is devoted to the literary devices used by the author. The English words "say," "speak," "tell," and "talk," for example, are basic terms used to report the actions and events of the novel. But we found some 134 different linguistic action verbs in Waterlily, showing that there is a great variety of spoken action portrayed in it.

Although the record of linguistic action verbs provides evidence of a rich and variegated pattern of speaking among the Teton Dakota portrayed in Waterlily, there is evidence as well of a culturally distinctive emphasis. Certain domains of speech activity are salient in the record supplied by Deloria. One of these domains is mapped by the vocabulary of discipline and norm enforcement, revealed in the prominence of such linguistic actions represented here in the English of Deloria's text as "account," "ask" (as in summoning, or monitoring the behavior, of a child by an older relative), "answer," "call," "deride," "ridicule," "order," "summon," "urge," and "warn." A second domain of speech activity is mapped by a vocabulary of promising, revealed in the promi-

nence of such linguistic actions as "break" (one's word), "give" (one's word), "make" (a promise), "swear," "vow," and "warn."

The domain of discipline and norm enforcement and the domain of promising are both pertinent to the cultural themes of kinship and the nature of speech. The greater part of discipline and norm enforcement in Waterlily is directed toward kinship relations, that is, toward teaching children and influencing adults in how to speak to relatives. Promising is of consequence primarily in relation to the giving of one's word to relatives, or giving one's word in the name of a relative. A concern with promising reflects a concern with how one acts toward and with one's kin and, furthermore, is a costly kind of talk which must be managed prudently.

Expressions Which Designate Ways of Speaking

"Ways of speaking" refers to a particular style or manner of speaking. For example, "joking lightheartedly" (Deloria, 1988, p. 24) refers to a particular way of speaking. In some instances, a single word refers to a way of speaking, such as "whispering" or "murmuring."

There were over 200 references in Waterlily to a way of speaking. Although there are some repetitions of particular expressions, there is also great variety, as evidenced in several examples from the text. "To wail in a quavering voice" (Deloria, 1988, p. 13) includes a reference to the act of wailing, a speech act performed in rule-governed ways by women in the course of mourning the dead. This way of speaking thematizes not only a gender-specific way of speaking but also implicates an orientation, among the people of Waterlily, toward relatives. "'Like a dog greeting familiars'" (p. 21) thematizes a concern with linguistic decorum and, in particular, is used in an evaluative comment about a character in the novel who greeted relatives effusively. In the text of Waterlily, this phrase is interpreted with the comment "rushing at them too eagerly before sensing their mood and situation" (p. 21), a comment that implicates a Dakota concern for guidedness in human conduct. The phrase "used kinship terms" (p. 24) also thematizes the Dakota concern for family and a Dakota criterion for judging the worthiness of a child.

Another perspective on ways of speaking in Waterlily is afforded by examining all those ways of speaking mentioned which are taken from quoted speech. This is speech which the author attributes to a character in the novel, thus implying that it is the kind of thing (the author believes) the character would say, and not merely a manner of speaking

characterized in the language of the author. Our record of such items reveals an expressed concern by the novel's speakers with the quality of everyday talk. Specifically, there is prominent attention to the familiarity, directness, and volume of speech, all concerns which articulate with other aspects of the novel and with other reports of Dakota culture. These concerns articulate with a concern for propriety toward relatives (e.g., "speaks too directly," Deloria, 1988, p. 26) and a concern with the power of speech to do good and evil (e.g., "talk so freely" [p. 165] and "she seems afraid to talk freely"[p. 171]).

Our examination of statements of rules of speaking, statements of premises about talk, use of linguistic action verbs, and expressions designating ways of speaking, has revealed that in each of these instances Waterlily provides evidence of Dakota ways of communicating. In each of these cases, furthermore, we have been able to show how these ways of communicating are linked to two important themes of Dakota culture, the culturally distinctive meaning of speech as a mode of communicative activity and speaking with (and to) relatives.

A Novel as Evidence?

Our first concern was with how to read the novel and with what such a reading would tell us about Dakota ways of speaking as they are portrayed in the novel. Our second concern is with how to interpret the novel as constituting evidence of a historically real way of commucating.

Recent writings in cultural studies have problematized the reading of ethnographic treatises in terms of their validity in re-presenting the social realities they present. What is true of conventional ethnography is true of the ethnographic novel: the reality presented is not necessarily the same as the experience which provided the initial inspiration for tellings and re-tellings that eventually find their way into print (Trinh Minh-ha, 1989).

How, then, should readers approach a text such as Waterlily as a purportedly true account of a way of life and a peoples' ways of speaking? Our study of Waterlily suggests not only some issues of interpretation in such readings but also some strategies for addressing those issues.

We have focused not so much on the ethnographic truth of Waterlily as on the nature of the reality created within the text. From a pedagogical standpoint, we feel that it is important to acknowledge

such a limitation of focus, that is, to acknowledge that as readers we can see only the text itself.

Nevertheless, there is a substantial body of literary, linguistic, and ethnographic materials available to the student of Dakota culture. Deloria herself authored or co-authored several important works, including Dakota Texts (Deloria, 1932), Dakota Grammar (Boas and Deloria, 1941), and Speaking of Indians (Deloria, 1944/1992). A review of each of these revealed some of the issues involved in reading Waterlily as an ethnographic report of Dakota communicative practices.

Dakota Texts (Deloria, 1932) includes sixty-four tales collected from Dakota storytellers on the Standing Rock, Pine Ridge, and Rosebud reservations (located in South Dakota). Without the benefit of a tape recorder, shorthand, or notes, Deloria listened to these stories and later wrote them down as she remembered them, first in Dakota and then in English (Rice, 1992, p. 5). Just as any storyteller recreates the story in his or her own words, so presumably Deloria added her creative input in the written versions of these stories. All of the Dakota text presentations include both the Dakota version and a free English translation; the first sixteen presentations also include a direct literal translation. Thus, Dakota Texts provides a primary source in which can be found some of the materials used for the plot, characters, scenes, motives, and tone of Waterlily were constructed.

Dakota Grammar (Boas and Deloria, 1941) is useful in understanding the Dakota language subtleties which do not translate easily into English but which affect linguistic accentuation, emotional tone, and meaning. The study of these subtleties provides students with a hint of the complexities of language as well as additional insight into the culture and other sources such as Dakota Texts (Deloria, 1932). Steiner (1992) provides a discussion of Dakota language complexities that is particularly accessible for beginning students of Waterlily who have no knowledge of Dakota. Dakota Grammar thus provides a resource for contextualizing the English of Waterlily with the language in which its characters conducted their spoken life.

Speaking of Indians (Deloria, 1944/1992) is a broad study of Dakota oral literature, language, and culture, written as a series of scientific reports. Part II identifies several key situations and circumstances in Dakota life: kinship roles, life in the tipi and camp circle, praying and religion, education of the young, and gift giving. Deloria

discusses each of these in turn, elaborates upon them in considerable detail as to premises and rules of conduct, and identifies how these various situations and circumstances overlap and integrate with each other. The general ethnographic interpretations presented in Speaking of Indians provide a background against which the contents of Waterlily can be juxtaposed and assessed.

Julian Rice's Deer Women and Elk Men: The Lakota Narratives of Ella Deloria (1992) is an important interpretive and critical resource for the study of Waterlily. In large measure, Waterlily is constructed from the stories Deloria produced for Dakota Texts (Deloria, 1932). Rice's book is a literary criticism of, and serves as an introduction to, a selected group of these stories. His essays provide an explication of the major themes presented in the stories as well as a discussion of the subtleties of the Dakota language, specifically as its components relate to the meanings of the stories and to storytelling techniques. Rice identifies ten complementary and parallel themes found in both Waterlily and Dakota Texts. All of these thematic parallels, such as the jealous husband's detrimental effect on community life, pertain to kinship relationships and corresponding behaviors which promote harmonious interdependence in everyday community activity. Other useful sources are Jahner's (1983) critical examination of one extended story from Dakota Texts, "Blood-Clot Boy," Grobsmith's (1979) ethnography of modern Lakota speaking styles, and Rice's (1994) commentary on the authenticity of recent representations of Dakota culture.

Our reading of such materials as those reviewed above shows that students of Waterlily have available to them a detailed and extensive literature which provides background for assessing the degree to which the world created in the novel is similar to the social world portrayed in other sources pertaining to the life of the Dakotas. For example, the dramatic action in Waterlily can be juxtaposed to stories told by Dakota informants to Deloria and written down by her (Deloria, 1932). Steiner (1992) provides a critical examination of these stories, and discusses difficulties in reconstructing a portrait of a way of life from such materials.

In our discussions of rules, premises, linguistic action verbs, and ways of speaking, we used background readings so as to juxtapose the novel's portrayals of Dakota beliefs and conduct to other treatments of Dakota culture and language. For example, we showed how the novel's

depiction of these communicative phenomena show a broad correspondence to ethnographic treatments of Dakota life.

And we have juxtaposed the details of the novel to linguistic sources. It could be argued that the observed variety, in the novel, in verbs of saying is an artifact of Deloria's linguistic repertoire. The fact that she grounded her report in her first-hand knowledge of Dakota life and in her knowledge of ancient texts provides evidence against this objection. Furthermore, we found that each of the 134 linguistic action verbs in English used in the text of Waterlily has a Dakota language counterpart (Williamson, 1902). Thus, we concluded that the speech acts referred to in the text of Waterlily are an accurate reflection of Dakota communicative conduct. This opens up, but of course does not settle, the issue of the translatability of Dakota terms into English.

In addition to the concerns with literary fidelity to actual experiences of a people who lived long before the writing of a novel and who spoke a language different from the one in which the novel is written, there is the matter of the rhetorical purpose of the novel's author. Deloria herself provides a starting point for a critical examination of her ethnographic and literary treatment of Dakota life. She declares (in Deloria, 1944/1992) a desire to present in her work a view which emphasizes positive aspects of Dakota life (over the negative side of life) and which emphasizes the coherent tying together of threads of the culture which might not always be weavable into an even and harmonious pattern. Thus, we feel it is important to acknowledge Deloria's explicitly rhetorical purpose in the presentation of Dakota culture in Waterlily.

Given Deloria's own framing of her work, it is useful to consider possible lines of critical examination. One might ask, What aspects of Dakota life are neglected, ignored, suppressed, or tidied up for the sake of rhetorical and literary effect? Specifically, a case can be made that this is true for Deloria's treatment of the ways women express dissent from the strictures of the Dakota code. We believe such diversity of voice is in the novel, even if it is not foregrounded, and that such diversity might be foregrounded through a consideration of the various social dramas portrayed in the novel (Philipsen, 1987).

Our detailed examination of the text provides a useful backdrop against which to notice patterns and, potentially, creative and principled departures from those patterns, in the speech of Waterlily characters. To date our emphasis has been, like Deloria's, on the coherence of a

code and uniformities in its application, rather than on divergences in appreciation or enactment of it among those who experienced it.

In sum, we have not tried to find a conclusive argument for the validity of re-presentation in Waterlily. Rather, we are interested in exploring issues which students of the novel can begin to discuss in order to appreciate what kind of a code it presents and what kinds of limitations in appreciating the code the student should face.

Conclusion

Our primary motivation in reading Waterlily was to equip ourselves to use it as a resource in teaching and learning about communication. We use it as a literary embodiment of a way of life and of the ways of communicating that, in part, constituted that way of life. The culture displayed in the novel is, in specifiable ways, a counterpoint to the culture articulated and implicated in much contemporary writing and informal discussion about communication in contemporary communication classrooms. Specifically, the novel portrays a world in which social difference and its manifestation in speech are rationalized and celebrated. This emphasis provides a contrast to much contemporary classroom material on communication that emphasizes the value of individualized expression and that either denigrates, or does not provide an appreciation for, the value of speech forms that express and legitimate social differences. Thus, the novel provides a useful resource for examining the essentially cultured nature of communication and its study.

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