

# Indians in unexpected places

Literature



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BOOK REVIEW: Indians in Unexpected Places This book by Philip Deloria puts Indians in the spotlight. Philip focuses on the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century in his novel. At that time Indian people had dissuaded away from history. Indians back then were engaging themselves with those very practices that were compelling the non-Indians to re-evaluate themselves and their understanding of the society around them. Philip presented these longstanding stereotypes of Indians as violent. He elaborates on how Indians represented themselves in Wild West shows and Hollywood film, in sports and their use of sport utility vehicle, Dakota pickups. The book begins with Philip's description of mid-twentieth century photography of Indian women. She is draped in a beaded buckskin dress while she is herself sitting in a salon hair dryer. The author goes deep into the picture and explains how centuries long colonial projects were embedded in the portrait. He then uses his understanding and skills as a cultural historian to elaborate on the artifacts of cultural production, their participation in athletic events, their purchase of automobiles, their performances in films and their music. There are five essays in which these themes have been incorporated to attract a wide audience that also includes American Indian Studies scholars and those interested in American history around the turn of the twentieth century. In the initial chapters Philip explores the historical context of non-Indian expectations where their interest in the Indian product of cultural artifacts is concerned. These are such productions by the primitive Indian people that have helped reinforce the brand. According to Deloria, the nineteenth century Americans have been a part of a segregated world that separated the Indians from non-Indians, the outdated from the modern, and violence from harmony. Indian violence

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as depicted by the media and their movies is further piqued by Deloria. He explains how Indian actors basked in the glory of their self-created stereotype image of a violent Indian. However non-Indians perceive Indian participation as a validation of mis-understood expectations instead of evidence of Indian agency. Deloria elaborates on how the non-Indians associate authenticity and illusion. For many of them, illusion comes around more than authenticity. In various ways Indians in Unexpected Places does what good book should do. It raises curiosity in the mind of the reader by giving rise to more questions. It compels him to get intrigued and be engrossed with the thread of relationship associated with the subject matter. The author is also successful in drawing reader's interest into his search for answers. There are points in the novel when he leaves the reader asking for more insight. Deloria spends a good chunk of his novel in dissecting the meaning of Indians in films. Indian representation in media is very colorful and fully embedded in their cultural values. Deloria goes deep into the context behind various representations of Indians in the media, why they are the way they are, what kind of roles the actors play and for reinforces of the expectations of non-Indians and the protests of Indians against the cultural. The biggest strength of the novel is Deloria's scrutiny of Indians as consumers of the cultural artifact. The early twentieth century was the time period when consumer culture was growing and whites were given more access to higher levels in a class hierarchy. Deloria raises a lot of theories pertaining to non-Indian anxieties where the inclusion of the Indians in the American society was concerned. How did the two diametrically opposite races adjust? What were their expectations of consumerism and how did they negotiate eventually? What was the society's reaction? The book is a <https://assignbuster.com/indians-in-unexpected-places/>

tremendous wholesome account that takes into perspective both sides of the story. The book is exemplary in that it explores various possibilities. It puts light on how interdisciplinary cultural studies impact American Indian studies. It is a trend setting book where this profession is concerned. There is a huge dearth of such books in the market and there is little or no room for dissatisfaction from the book. It raises the bar of standards of explanatory account and delivers more than what was promised. Its biggest edge is the in-depth explanation of both sides of the coin.