



## **Native Voices: American Indian Identity and Resistance**

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Despite significant strides over the past quarter century, Native peoples of North America face an uncertain future due to their unstable political, legal, and economic positions. Views of their predicament, however, continue to be dominated by non-Indian writers. In response, a dozen Native American writers here reclaim their rightful role as influential "voices" in the debates about Native communities at the dawn of a new millennium.

These scholars examine crucial issues of politics, law, and religion in the context of ongoing Native American resistance to the dominant culture. They particularly show how the writings of Vine Deloria, Jr., have shaped and challenged American Indian scholarship in these areas since the 1960s. Ranging across a wide array of relevant topics, they provide key insights into Deloria's thought, while introducing some of the critical issues still confronting Native nations today.

Collectively, these essays take up four important themes: indigenous societies as the embodiment of cultures of resistance, legal resistance to western oppression against indigenous nations, contemporary Native religious practices, and Native intellectual challenges to academia. Individual chapters address indigenous perspectives on topics usually treated (and often misunderstood) by non-Indians, such as the role of women in Indian society, the importance of sacred sites to American Indian religious identity, and the relationship of native language to indigenous autonomy. A closing essay by Deloria in vintage form brings the book full circle and reminds Native Americans of their responsibilities and obligations to one another and to past and future generations.

Ranging from insights into Native American astronomy to critiques of federal Indian law, this book strongly argues for the renewed cultivation of a Native American Studies that is much more Indian-centered. Without the revival of that perspective, such curricula are doomed to languish as academic ephemera missed opportunities for building a better and deeper understanding of Indian peoples and their most pressing concerns and aspirations.

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