



# Native American Environmentalism: Land, Spirit, and the Idea of Wilderness

*Joy Porter*

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In *Native American Environmentalism* the history of indigenous peoples in North America is brought into dialogue with key environmental terms such as “wilderness” and “nature.” The conflict between Christian environmentalist thinking and indigenous views, a conflict intimately linked to the current environmental crisis in the United States, is explored through an analysis of parks and wilderness areas, gardens and gardening, and indigenous approaches to land as expressed in contemporary art, novels, and historical writing.

Countering the inclination to associate indigenous peoples with “wilderness” or to conflate everything “Indian” with a vague sense of the ecological, Joy Porter shows how Indian communities were forced to migrate to make way for the nation’s “wilderness” parks in the nineteenth century. Among the first American communities to reckon with environmental despoliation, they have fought significant environmental battles and made key adaptations. By linking Native American history to mainstream histories and current debates, Porter advances the important process of shifting debate about climate change away from scientists and literary environmental writers, a project central to tackling environmental crises in the twenty-first century.

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