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978-1-107-07081-3 - Indigenous Intellectuals: Sovereignty, Citizenship, and the American Imagination, 1880–1930

Kiara M. Vigil

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Indigenous Intellectuals

In the United States of America today, debates among, between, and within Indian nations continue to focus on how to determine and define the boundaries of Indian ethnic identity and tribal citizenship. From the 1880s and into the 1930s, many Native people participated in similar debates as they confronted white cultural expectations regarding what it meant to be an Indian in modern American society. Using close readings of texts, images, and public performances, this book examines the literary output of four influential American Indian intellectuals who challenged long-held conceptions of Indian identity at the turn of the twentieth century. Kiara M. Vigil traces how the narrative discourses created by these figures spurred wider discussions about citizenship, race, and modernity in the United States and elsewhere. By setting them in dialogue with white American culture, Vigil demonstrates how these figures deployed aspects of Native American cultural practice to authenticate their status both as indigenous peoples and as citizens of the United States.

Kiara M. Vigil is an assistant professor of American studies at Amherst College and specializes in teaching and research related to Native American studies. She is a past recipient of the Gaius Charles Bolin fellowship from Williams College, as well as fellowships from the Mellon Foundation, the Autry National Center, the Newberry Library, and the Rackham Graduate School at the University of Michigan.

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In loving memory of
R. Max Vigil
Father, artist, and intellectual

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