

# The Standing Rock Dakota Pipeline Controversy

Dr. Waziyatawin

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Geography Department

Rocque Laboratory, Rhetoric Building, South Campus, Maynooth University

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Resources for US economic development (land, water, oil) have, through a long-standing history of colonialism, been taken from the ecumene of indigenous peoples. Typically, this involves displacement and pollution, and frequently only secures short-term exploitation of non-renewable resources. American Indian nations have resisted this for millenia, both for their own survival, but also in service of the longer-term sustainability of human life on earth. Waziyatawin will discuss the current situation in North Dakota, where the Standing Rock Dakota and Lakota peoples and their supporters are protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline, which not only bulldozes its way through sacred burial sites but, in passing beneath the Missouri, threatens to poison the river that feeds life throughout the Missouri basin, into the Mississippi and all the way down to New Orleans.

Dr. Waziyatawin is a Dakota writer, teacher, and activist from the Pezihutazizi Otunwe (Yellow Medicine Village) in southwestern Minnesota. She earned her PhD in American History from Cornell University, and has held tenured positions at Arizona State University and the University of Victoria, Canada, where she served as the Indigenous Peoples Research Chair in the Indigenous Governance Program. Her work seeks to build a culture of resistance within Indigenous communities, to recover Indigenous ways of being, and to challenge colonial institutions. She is currently the Executive Director of the Dakota nonprofit Makoce Ikikcupi, a reparative justice project supporting Dakota reclamation of homeland. She is the author or co/editor of six volumes, including *What Does Justice Look Like? The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland* (2008) and *For Indigenous Minds Only: A Decolonization Handbook* (2012). Her visit is supported by the Irish Research Council New Foundations Scheme and the Geography Department at Maynooth.