



Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence: Native Ghosts in North American Culture and History

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The imagined ghosts of Native Americans have been an important element of colonial fantasy in North America ever since European settlements were established in the seventeenth century. Native burial grounds and Native ghosts have long played a role in both regional and local folklore and in the national literature of the United States and Canada, as settlers struggled to create a new identity for themselves that melded their European heritage with their new, North American frontier surroundings. In this interdisciplinary volume, Colleen E. Boyd and Coll Thrush bring together scholars from a variety of fields to discuss this North American fascination with “the phantom Native American.”

Phantom Past, Indigenous Presence explores the importance of ancestral spirits and historic places in Indigenous and settler communities as they relate to territory and history—in particular cultural, political, social, historical, and environmental contexts. From examinations of how individuals reacted to historical cases of “hauntings,” to how Native phantoms have functioned in the literature of North Americans, to interdisciplinary studies of how such beliefs and narratives allowed European settlers and Indigenous people to make sense of the legacies of colonialism and conquest, these essays show how the past and the present are intertwined through these stories.

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