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Autore	Vignes, Daniel
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Autore	Bellin Joshua David
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Sommario/riassunto

In recent years, the study and teaching of Native American oral and written art have flourished. During the same period, there has been a growing recognition among historians, anthropologists, and ethnohistorians that Indians must be seen not as the voiceless, nameless, faceless Other but as people who had a powerful impact on the historical development of the United States. Literary critics, however, have continued to overlook Indians as determinants of American-rather than specifically Native American-literature. The notion that the presence of Indian peoples shaped American literature as a whole remains unexplored. In *The Demon of the Continent*, Joshua David Bellin probes the complex interrelationships among Native American and Euro-American cultures and literatures from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. He asserts that cultural contact is at the heart of American literature. For Bellin, previous studies of Indians in American literature have focused largely on the images Euro-American writers constructed of indigenous peoples, and have thereby only perpetuated those images. Unlike authors of those earlier studies, Bellin refuses to reduce Indians to static antagonists or fodder for a Euro-American imagination. Drawing on works such as Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, William Apess' *A Son of the Forest*, and little known works such as colonial Indian conversion narratives, he explores the ways in which these texts reflect and shape the intercultural world from which they arose. In doing so, Bellin reaches surprising conclusions: that *Walden* addresses economic clashes and partnerships between Indians and whites; that William Bartram's *Travels* encodes competing and interpenetrating systems of Indian and white landholding; that Catherine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* enacts the antebellum drama of Indian conversion; that James Fenimore Cooper and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow struggled with Indian authors such as George Copway and David Cusick for physical, ideological, and literary control of the nation. *The Demon of the Continent* proves Indians to be actors in the dynamic processes in which America and its literature are inescapably embedded. Shifting the focus from textual images to the sites of material, ideological, linguistic, and aesthetic interaction between peoples, Bellin reenvisiones American literature as the product of contact, conflict, accommodation, and interchange.
