



The Grammar of Good Intentions: Race and the Antebellum Culture of Benevolence

By Associate Professor of English Susan M Ryan PH.

Cornell University Press, United States, 2005. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 1st New edition. 231 x 150 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Susan M. Ryan explores antebellum Americans preoccupation with the language and practice of benevolence. Drawing on a variety of cultural and literary texts, she traces how people working and writing within social reform movements and their outspoken opponents helped solidify racial and class ideologies that ultimately marginalized even the most deserving poor. The links between race and the relations of benevolence occasioned much soul-searching among antebellum Americans, Ryan explains. In a period of heated public debate over issues such as slavery, Indian removal, and non-Protestant immigration, the categories of blackness, Indianness, and a generic foreignness came to signify, for many whites, need itself. Ryan puts familiar literary works such as Herman Melville's *The Confidence-Man*, Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*, and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* back into dialogue with a broad range of print materials: the reports of charity societies, African American and Native American newspapers, juvenile fiction, travel writing, cartoons, sermons, and tract literature. In the process, she dispels the myth that authors usually classified as literary were responding...



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