



# **Calls and Responses: The American Novel of Slavery since *Gone with the Wind* (Southern Literary Studies)**

*Tim A. Ryan*

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## **Calls and Responses: The American Novel of Slavery since *Gone with the Wind* (Southern Literary Studies)** Tim A. Ryan

In this comprehensive, groundbreaking study, Tim A. Ryan explores how American novelists since World War I have imagined the institution of slavery and the experience of those involved in it. Complicating the common assumption that authentic black-authored fiction about slavery is starkly opposed to the traditional, racist fiction (and history) created by whites, Ryan suggests that discourses about American slavery are—and have always been—defined by connections rather than disjunctions. Ryan contends that African American writers didn't merely reject and move beyond traditional portrayals of the black past but rather actively engaged in a dynamic dialogue with white-authored versions of slavery and existing historiographical debates. The result is an ongoing cultural conversation that transcends both racial and disciplinary boundaries and is akin to the call-and-response style of African American gospel music.

Ryan addresses in detail more than a dozen major American novels of slavery, from the first significant modern fiction about the institution—Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* and Arna Bontemps's *Black Thunder* (both published in 1936)—to recent noteworthy novels on the topic—Edward P. Jones's *The Known World* and Valerie Martin's *Property* (both published in 2003). His insistence upon the necessity of interpreting novels about the past directly in relation to specific historical scholarship makes *Calls and Responses* especially compelling. He reads Toni Morrison's *Beloved* not in opposition to a monolithic orthodoxy about slavery but in relation to specific arguments of controversial historian Stanley Elkins. Similarly, he analyzes William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner* in terms of its rhetorical echoes of Frederick Douglass's famous autobiographical narrative. Ryan shows throughout *Calls and Responses* how a variety of novelists—including Alex Haley, Octavia Butler, Ishmael Reed, Margaret Walker, and Frances Gaither—engage in a dynamic debate with each other and with such historians as Herbert Aptheker, Charles Joyner, Eugene and Elizabeth Genovese, and many others.

A substantially new account of the development of American slavery fiction in the last century, *Calls and Responses* goes beyond merely exalting the expression of black voices and experiences and actually reconfigures the existing view of the American novel of slavery.

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Calls and Responses: The American Novel of Slavery since Gone with the Wind (Southern Literary Studies) can be one of your nice books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that could increase your knowledge in vocabulary, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The article author giving his/her effort that will put every word into joy arrangement in writing Calls and Responses: The American Novel of Slavery since Gone with the Wind (Southern Literary Studies) although doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource data that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information can certainly drawn you into completely new stage of crucial imagining.

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