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978-1-108-48133-5 — Rethinking Sympathy and Human Contact in Nineteenth-Century American Literature
Hawthorne, Douglass, Stowe, Dickinson, Marianne Noble
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RETHINKING SYMPATHY AND HUMAN CONTACT IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE

In accessible and impassioned discussions of literature and philosophy, this book reveals a surprising approach to the intractable problem of human contact. Nathaniel Hawthorne, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Emily Dickinson rethought the nature of human contact, turning away from transcendentalist approaches and toward sympathetic ones. Their second and third works portray social masks as insufficient, not deceptive, and thus human contact requires not violent striking through the mask but benevolent skepticism toward persons. They imagine that people feel real in a real world with real others when they care for others for the others' sake and when they make caring relationships the cornerstone of their own being. Grounded in philosophies of sympathy – including Adam Smith and J.G. Herder – and relational psychology – Winnicott and Benjamin – *Rethinking Sympathy and Human Contact in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* shows that antebellum literature rejects individualist definitions of the human and locates the antidote to human disconnection in sympathy.

MARIANNE NOBLE is the author of *The Masochistic Pleasures of Sentimental Literature* (2000), which won a Choice Outstanding Book Award. She also coedited *Emily Dickinson and Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2013) and has published essays in *Studies in American Fiction, The Yale Journal of Criticism, New England Quarterly,* and *The Emily Dickinson Journal*. She has served on the boards of *American Literature*, the Emily Dickinson International Society, *Legacy*, and the *Nathaniel Hawthorne Review*. In 2016, she was a Fulbright Scholar in Korea. She is Associate Professor of Literature at American University and received her PhD from Columbia University.

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