
Contents

PART ONE. NATURE AND THE PROBLEM OF VALUE

- Introduction. Mixed Instrumentality: Nature as Protean Ground** 3
Let's Not Hear Anymore about Nature 3
Self-Production 6
Nature's Nation, Of Course 9
Nature as Negotiation 14
- 1. Sublime Possession, American Landscape** 20
An American School 20
Sublime Economics 30
The Manifest Sublime 36
The Course(s) of Empire 38
- 2. Transcendentalism and Protectionism** 57
Protecting Markets, Perfecting Character 57
Unprotecting Transcendentalism: Antinomianism in the Market 62
The Transactions of Value 66
The Sacramental Poetics of Commodities 73
Virtue as Reform and Reinvestment 76
Protective and Promiscuous Acts 82

PART TWO. REALISM AND ROMANCES OF FREEDOM

- 3. "Ours By the Law of Nature": Reading, Romance, and Independents on Mark Twain's River** 87
Independence Betrayed 87
A River Worth Reading About 90
"Ours By the Law of Nature": Mastering the River's Caprices 94
Miraculous Readers; Absolute Owners 97
It All Belongs to Me: *Huck* and the Feudal Fantasy 104
Changing Occupations 108
Manufacturing Aesthetics 112
Internal Evidence and the Power to Find the Nub 114
- 4. The Sordid and the Organic: Character and Economy in Howells and Economic Theory** 120
Fiction and the Economic Chance World 120

The Still, Small Voice	124
Organic Economies and the Hedonistic Calculator	126
Impartial and Hazardous Taste	138
Preferring the Freed Will	142

5. “To Find the Value of X”: Speculation and Romance in *The Pit* 146

An Awkward Marriage	146
The Poet as Financier	147
Real and Fictitious Values	151
Economies of Marriage and Flirtation	157
Taking Control	160
An Eden of Mimesis	163

PART THREE. TRANSCENDENT AGENCY

6. Transcendent Agency: Emerson, the Standard Trust, and the Virtues of Decorporation 171

Are Trusts Transcendental?	171
The Conventionality of Intuition	173
Perfecting and Annihilating the Self	175
Perfecting Idealism, the Standard	181
The Attractions of Decorporation	186
Theory and the Agency of the Trust	189

7. Dreiser, Debs, and Deindividualization: Hypothecation, Union, Representation 192

Failing to Represent; the Realist’s Love of Death	192
Hypothecation, Surmounting Representation	196
Personality and [De]Individuation	201
Transcending Labor: Debs’s Unionism	205
Bars, Stars, and the Residue of Individualism	213

8. The Natural Law of Property: *O Pioneers!* and Cather’s Aesthetics of Divestment 218

Marking the Land	218
Two Accounts of Property	220
Homesteading and Domiciliation: Legislating Property	225
Gender and Identifying with Property	230
The Antinomy and Aesthetics of Property	233

Afterword 239

Notes 247

Works Cited 289

Index 311