Virgin Land: The American West As Symbol And Myth

Henry Nash Smith

Moreover, he synthesizes the imaginative expression of Western myths and symbols in literature with their role in contemporary politics, economics, and society, embodied in such forms as the idea of Manifest Destiny, the conflict in the American mind between idealizations of primitivism on the one hand and of progress and civilization on the other, the Homestead Act of 1862, and public-land policy after the Civil War. Virgin land; the American West as symbol and myth.