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Nota di contenuto	1. The Novel and the Market in the Early Republic -- 2. The Lawyer and the Rhapsodist -- 3. The Young Artist as Social Visionary -- 4. The

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Sommario/riassunto

The Romance of Real Life shows how a sensitive, prolific writer confronted, wrestled with, and ultimately promoted the emergence of a liberal society in nineteenth-century America.

Watts also shows how Brown's experience was central to broader developments: the rise of the novel in America, the development of gender and family formulations, the clash between republican "virtue" and liberal "self-interest," and the origins of a bourgeois creed of self-control. Perhaps most importantly, he explains how Brown helped articulate a notion of "culture" itself as a civilizing force to restrain restless liberal individualism.

His notoriously volatile private life, it turns out, in many ways flowed from a critique of market society and its impulses.

Offering a revisionist view of Brown himself, Watts examines the major novels of the 1790s as well as previously neglected sources - from early essays and private letters to late-career forays into journalism, political pamphleteering, serial fiction, and cultural criticism. The result is a fuller picture of Brown as a man of letters in post-Revolutionary America, a man who rigorously analyzed the public and private vagaries of individual agency.

Among the leading writers of the early republic, Charles Brockden Brown often appears as a romantic prototype - the brilliant, alienated author rejected by a utilitarian, materialistic American society. In The Romance of Real Life Steven Watts reinterprets Brown's life and work as a complex case study in the emerging culture of capitalism at the dawn of the nineteenth century.
