

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910458581403321
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Titolo	Abortion in the American imagination : before life and choice, 1880-1940 / / Karen Weingarten
Pubbl/distr/stampa	New Brunswick, New Jersey : , : Rutgers University Press, , 2014 ©2014
ISBN	0-8135-6539-1
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (192 p.)
Collana	The American Literatures Initiative
Disciplina	810.9/355
Soggetti	American literature - History and criticism Abortion in literature Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- 1. The Biopolitics of Abortion as the Century Turns -- 2. The Inadvertent Alliance of Anthony Comstock and Margaret Sanger: Choice, Rights, and Freedom in Modern America -- 2. The Inadvertent Alliance of Anthony Comstock and Margaret Sanger: Choice, Rights, and Freedom in Modern America -- 4. Economies of Abortion: Money, Markets, and the Scene of Exchange -- 5. Making a Living: Labor, Life, and Abortion Rhetoric -- Epilogue: 1944 and Beyond -- Notes -- Works Cited -- Index -- About the author
Sommario/riassunto	The public debate on abortion stretches back much further than Roe v. Wade, to long before the terms "pro-choice" and "pro-life" were ever invented. Yet the ways Americans discussed abortion in the early decades of the twentieth century had little in common with our now-entrenched debates about personal responsibility and individual autonomy. Abortion in the American Imagination returns to the moment when American writers first dared to broach the controversial subject of abortion. What was once a topic avoided by polite society, only discussed in vague euphemisms behind closed doors, suddenly became open to vigorous public debate as it was represented everywhere from sensationalistic melodramas to treatises on social

reform. Literary scholar and cultural historian Karen Weingarten shows how these discussions were remarkably fluid and far-ranging, touching upon issues of eugenics, economics, race, and gender roles. Weingarten traces the discourses on abortion across a wide array of media, putting fiction by canonical writers like William Faulkner, Edith Wharton, and Langston Hughes into conversation with the era's films, newspaper articles, and activist rhetoric. By doing so, she exposes not only the ways that public perceptions of abortion changed over the course of the twentieth century, but also the ways in which these abortion debates shaped our very sense of what it means to be an American.
