

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910524891803321
Autore	Barton John Cyril
Titolo	Literary Executions : Capital Punishment and American Culture, 1820–1925 // John Cyril Barton
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Baltimore : , : Johns Hopkins University Press, , 2014 ©2014
ISBN	1-4214-1333-7
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (345 p.)
Disciplina	810.9/3556
Soggetti	Capital punishment - Moral and ethical aspects - United States - History Public opinion - United States Capital punishment - United States - Public opinion American literature - 20th century - History and criticism American literature - 19th century - History and criticism Executions and executioners in literature Capital punishment in literature Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Includes index.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Introduction: literary executions -- Anti-gallows activism in antebellum American law & literature -- Simms, Child, & the aesthetics of crime and punishment -- Literary executions in popular antebellum fiction -- Hawthorne & the evidentiary value of literature -- Melville, Mackenzie & the Somers affair -- An American travesty: capital punishment & the criminal justice system in Dreiser's An American tragedy -- Epilogue: the death penalty in literature.
Sommario/riassunto	"In Literary Executions, John Barton analyzes nineteenth-century representations of, responses to, and arguments for and against the death penalty in the United States. The author creates a generative dialogue between artistic relics and legal history. Novels, short stories, poems, and creative nonfiction engage with legislative reports, trial transcripts, legal documents, newspaper and journal articles, treatises, and popular books (like The Record of Crimes and The Gallows, the

Prison, and the Poor House), all of which participated in the debate over capital punishment. Barton focuses on several canonical figures--James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Lydia Maria Child, Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, and Theodore Dreiser--and offers new readings of their work in light of the death penalty controversy. Barton also gives close attention to a host of then-popular-but-now-forgotten writers--particularly John Neal, Slidell MacKenzie, William Gilmore Simms, Sylvester Judd, and George Lippard--whose work helped shape or was in turn shaped by the influential anti-gallows movement. As illustrated in the book's epigraph by Samuel Johnson -- "Depend upon it Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully" -- Barton argues that the high stakes of capital punishment dramatize the confrontation between the citizen-subject and sovereign authority. In bringing together the social and the aesthetic, Barton traces the emergence of the modern State's administration of lawful death. The book is intended primarily for literary scholars, but cultural and legal historians will also find value in it, as will anyone interested in the intersections among law, culture, and the humanities"--
