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| Autore                  | Mizruchi Susan L (Susan Laura)  |
| Titolo                  | The science of sacrifice [[electronic resource] ] : American literature and modern social theory // Susan L. Mizruchi   |
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| Edizione                | [Course Book]   |
| Descrizione fisica      | 1 online resource (446 p.)  |
| Disciplina              | 810.9/353   |
| Soggetti                | American literature - History and criticism<br>Sacrifice in literature<br>Literature and anthropology - United States<br>Literature and society - United States<br>Rites and ceremonies in literature<br>Human sacrifice in literature<br>Self-sacrifice in literature<br>Social problems in literature<br>Scapegoat in literature<br>Realism in literature |
| 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 (p. 371-426) and index.   |
| Nota di contenuto       | Front matter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- CHAPTER ONE: Sacrificial Arts and Sciences -- CHAPTER TWO: The Return to Sacrifice in Melville and Others -- CHAPTER THREE: Rites of Passage in an "Awkward Age" -- CHAPTER FOUR: Du Bois's Gospel of Sacrifice -- Afterword -- Notes -- Index   |
| Sommario/riassunto      | From ritual killings to subtle acts of self-denial, the practice and rhetoric of sacrifice has a special centrality in modern American literature. In a compelling interdisciplinary investigation, Susan Mizruchi portrays an episode in American cultural history when the  |

literary movement of realism and the fledgling field of sociology both converged in the belief that sacrifice is basic to sociality. This is a book about the fascination that sacrifice held for writers--principally Herman Melville, Henry James, and W.E.B. Du Bois--and also for those who articulated the main tenets of modern social theory, an inquiry that eventually spans historical events such as public lynchings and the political scapegoating of immigrants a century ago. The execution in *Billy Budd*, the death of Du Bois's first-born son in *The Souls of Black Folk*, Henry James's preoccupation with renunciation and scapegoating, and the self-denying working classes of Norris and Stein all illustrate repeated stagings of sacrificial rituals from a Biblical past. For Mizuchi, the peculiar persistence of this aesthetic construct becomes a guide to a rich theological and social-scientific tradition distinctive to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and including such influential works as Smith's *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, Frazer's *Golden Bough*, and Ross's *Sin and Society*. The major features of sacrifice--its original association with spiritual doubt, its function as a form of spiritual economics that sustained divisions between the fortunate and the bereft, and its role in fixing boundaries between aliens and kin--held strong symbolic value for writers struggling to reconcile faith with rationalism, and communal coherence with capitalist expansion. Mizuchi eloquently demonstrates how the conceptual power of sacrifice made it a key mediator of cultural change, from the decline of sympathy and the significance of "race" in an emerging multicultural society to the revival of maternal self-sacrifice.

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