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Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 202-218) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Defining punishment: the need for a justification and the nature of the question -- The traditional justification. Backward looking justifications ; Forward looking justifications ; Mixed theories of punishment -- The relevance of responsibility. Moral responsibility, freedom and punishment ; Moral responsibility and criminal liability ; Reconstructing responsibility ; Responsibility, disposition and autonomy -- The question of legal obligation. Legal obligation and the normativity of the law ; Legal obligation and the law's claim to obedience ; Sanctions and effectiveness -- The nature and limits of the criminal law ; The nature and functions of the criminal law ; The proper ambit of the criminal law -- Political obligation. The nature of political obligation ; An obligation to obey the laws of the system ; Obedience to just laws ; Obedience to unjust laws -- Punishment and the liberal world. Liberalism and theories of punishment ; The theories relocated ; The strengths and weaknesses of liberalism in punishment -- Punishment and community. The primacy of the social ; The ideal of community ; Community and criminal law ; The functions of punishment ; The distribution of punishments ; The form of punishments ; The actual and

the ideal.

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**Sommario/riassunto**

Nicola Lacey presents a new approach to the question of the moral justification of punishment by the State. She focuses on the theory of punishments in context of other political questions, such as the nature of political obligation and the function and scope of criminal law. Arguing that no convincing set of justifying reasons has so far been produced, she puts forward a theory of punishments which places the values of the community at its centre.

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