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Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. [171]-184) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front Matter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- A Critical Prejudice -- Alternatives to Laughter -- Typologies of Laughter -- Nonsense -- Ridicule -- Laughter in Utopia -- Self-Deprecating Laughter -- The Comedian -- Laughter and Insult -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	The crucial question is not whether or not there is offensive laughter but whether or not all laughter offends. Almost everyone has felt the bitter stab of malicious laughter and knows that laughter can be cruel, but it is more difficult to decide if there is also laughter that can never insult. Through a reading of Aristophanes, Rabelais, Molière, Fielding, and Rostand, Victorian nonsense poetry, and the philosophical texts of Plato, Dante, and More, Gantar explores the reasons for critics' prejudice against comedy, the specific position of laughter in various utopian societies, and self-deprecating laughter and the role of the comedian as its primary producer. His conclusions contradict basic postmodern thought and contribute to current debates on the epistemological nature of criticism.