



# An Anatomy of Humor

By Arthur Asa Berger

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## An Anatomy of Humor By Arthur Asa Berger

Humor permeates every aspect of society and has done so for thousands of years. People experience it daily through television, newspapers, literature, and contact with others. Rarely do social researchers analyze humor or try to determine what makes it such a dominating force in our lives. The types of jokes a person enjoys contribute significantly to the definition of that person as well as to the character of a given society. Arthur Asa Berger explores these and other related topics in *An Anatomy of Humor*. He shows how humor can range from the simple pun to complex plots in Elizabethan plays.

Berger examines a number of topics—ethnicity, race, gender, politics—each with its own comic dimension. Laughter is beneficial to both our physical and mental health, according to Berger. He discerns a multiplicity of ironies that are intrinsic to the analysis of humor. He discovers as much complexity and ambiguity in a cartoon, such as Mickey Mouse, as he finds in an important piece of literature, such as *Huckleberry Finn*. *An Anatomy of Humor* is an intriguing and enjoyable read for people interested in humor and the impact of popular and mass culture on society. It will also be of interest to professionals in communication and psychologists concerned with the creative process.

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## Editorial Review

### Review

“This book belongs on the shelf of anyone who appreciates humor. It also belongs in the laboratories of psychological researchers investigating when and how we laugh.”

—T. Cameron Wild, *Contemporary Psychology*

“This is a significant book, and it will surely have a welcome place in any professional humor library.”

—Don L. F. Nilsen, *Humor*

### About the Author

*Arthur Asa Berger* is professor emeritus of broadcast and electronic communication arts at San Francisco State University. He is the author of numerous articles, book reviews, and books on media, popular culture, humor, and tourism, and he is the series editor of Transaction's Communication and Mass Culture and Humor series.

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