

Arthur Asa Berger

Humor, Psyche, and Society

A Socio-Semiotic Analysis

SERIES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Summary

It is the age-old saying that “laughter is the best medicine”. Scientific research has substantiated the claim made by this proverb by verifying the positive effects it has on both our mind and body, but what is it about a good joke, comic, or sitcom that makes us laugh? *Humor, Psyche and Society* is a compilation of Berger’s previously published articles and new chapters on the nature of humour, its importance for our psyches, and its social and political significance. Written in an accessible style, it uses semiotics, psychoanalytic theory, sociological theory, as well as other theories of humour to explore the multifaceted nature of humour, various styles of jokes and sitcoms.

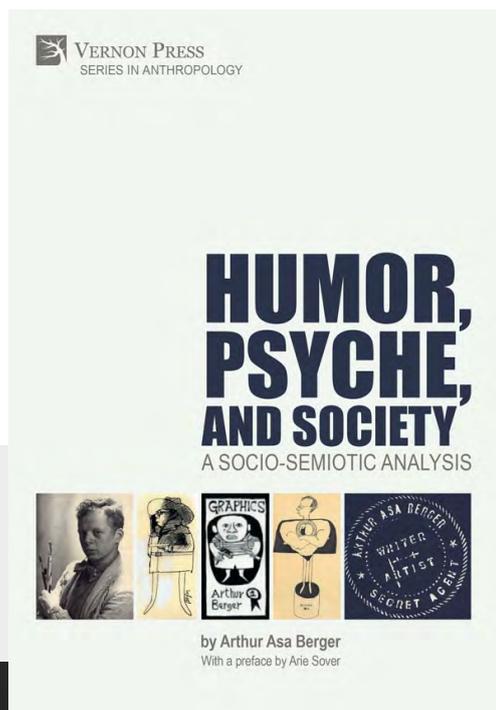
Using Berger’s typology of forty-five techniques found in all forms of humour, developed to explain what makes us laugh, this book analyses a variety of humorous texts. Balancing theory, entertaining jokes and other humorous texts, as well as the author’s illustrations, the chapters in this book delve into a diverse range of topics such as humour and the creative process, humour and health, and visual humour; along with an examination of the sitcoms *Frasier* and *Cheers*; and finally, the exploration of jokes including Jewish jokes, and jokes on Russia and Communism, and Trump. This book will be of particular interest to university

students studying courses in humour, comedy, popular culture, applied semiotics, American politics and culture, and cultural studies. Due to the accessible nature of this book, the general public may find it to be both a fascinating and entertaining read.

About the author

Arthur Asa Berger is the author of more than 100 scholarly articles and more than 70 books on media, popular culture, semiotics and humour. He has written numerous articles on humour which have been published in journals in America and other countries, together with several books on the same subject including: *Li’L Abner: A Study in American Satire* (his PhD dissertation); *An Anatomy of Humor*; *The Art of Comedy Writing*; *Blind Men and Elephants: Perspectives on Humor*; *The Genius of the Jewish Joke*; and *Jewish Jester*.

He taught Comedy Writing and Sitcom Writing in the Broadcast and Electronic Communication Arts Department at San Francisco State University for a number of years. Arthur was also elected into the University of Iowa School of Journalism and Communication Hall of Fame. His teaching career spans continents; from teaching at the University of Milan, by way of a Fulbright to Italy in 1963, to later teaching as a Fulbright Senior Specialist in Argentina and Belarus. In addition, he has also lectured in countries such as Iran, France, Germany, Vietnam and China, to name a few. In line with this, many of his books have been translated into nine languages including Chinese and Turkish.



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