Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic

The book has been highly successful in France, where it is in its seventh edition. It has been translated into Russian, Polish, and Swedish. German and Hungarian translations are under preparation. Its success is due partly to the novelty of the explanation offered of the comic, and partly also to the fact that the author incidentally discusses questions of still greater interest and importance. Thus, one of the best known and most frequently quoted passages of the book is that portion of the last chapter (pages 150 in which the author outlines a general theory of art. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

Comic Laughter
Laughter

Laughter

Laughter

Laughter. An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic Authorised Translation by Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell

A hilarious argument in favor of taking life a smidge less seriously Popular humor writer Anna Lind Thomas had an epiphany after her essay about a humiliating fart went mega-viral: Everything’s funny . . .eventually. You’ll cry-laugh your way through the many grave offenses she’s endured, like not getting credit for Lady Gaga’s career, an epic financial crisis, and exercising while her children dole out biting critiques about her dimpled thighs. Anna’s wit, charm, and painful relatability will encourage you to remember that your most humiliating moment may be the best thing to ever happen to you—or at the very least, it’ll make for a really good story. “A hilarious, heartwarming trip.” —Bunmi Laditan, bestselling author of Confessions of a Domestic Failure and humorist behind The Honest Toddler “I couldn’t put this down.” —Tiffany Jenkins, bestselling author of High Achiever and humorist behind Juggling the Jenkins “Deep, bowel-loosening laughs, along with a side dish of humanity and understanding.” —Johanna Stein, author of How Not to Calm a Child on a Plane and award-winning television writer and producer “Full of humor and heart.” —Cindy Chupack, New York Times bestselling author and Emmy-winning writer/producer of Sex and the City, Modern Family, Otherhood, and more

Laughter Out of Place

In this extended essay, Vittorio Hösle develops a theory of the comical and applies it to interpret both the recurrent personae played by Woody Allen the actor and the philosophical issues addressed by Woody Allen the director in his films. Taking Henri Bergson’s analysis of laughter as a starting point, Hösle integrates aspects of other theories of laughter to construct his own more finely-articulated and expanded model. With this theory in hand, Hösle discusses the incongruity in the characters played by Woody Allen and describes how these personae are realized in his work. Hösle focuses on the philosophical issues in Allen’s major films by exploring the identity problem in Play It Again, Sam and Zelig, the shortcomings of the positivist concept of reality in A Midsummer Night’s Sex Comedy, the relation between reality and art in The Purple Rose of Cairo, the objective validity of
morality in Crimes and Misdemeanors, the power of evil in Shadows and Fog, and the relation between art and morality in Bullets over Broadway. He cites Allen's virtuosic reinterpretation of older forms of expression and his integration of the fantastic into the comic universe--elements like the giant breasts, anxious sperm, extraterrestrials, ghosts, and magicians that populate his movies--as formal moves akin to those of Aristophanes. Both an overview of Allen's work and a philosophical analysis of laughter, Hösle's study demonstrates why Allen's films have more to offer us--morally, philosophically, and artistically--than just a few laughs. "In Woody Allen, Vittorio Hösle goes a long way toward explaining everything you wanted to know about Allen but were afraid to ask. Just why exactly is he funny, and why does his humor have a strong appeal for academics? In his comprehensive analysis of Allen's work, Hösle outlines a workable theory of humor, illustrates his conclusions by referring to the films and prose, and points out several philosophic motifs underlying Allen's deceptively complex comedies. Hösle's work elevates the enjoyment of Allen's films from guilty pleasure to satisfying intellectual engagement with an intriguing contemporary thinker and artist."

--Richard A. Blake, S.J., Boston College

"Vittorio Hösle presents a compelling overview of Allen's work in which he discusses different theories of laughter and argues for the priority of the incongruity theory as the only one able to answer the normative question, what distinguishes good from bad laughter? On this theoretical basis he goes on to delve into both the humor and the philosophical profundity of Allen's films."

--Sander Lee, Keene State College

**Bergson, Laughter**

What does laughter mean? What is the basal element in the laughable? What common ground can we find between the grimace of a merryandrew, a play upon words, an equivocal situation in a burlesque and a scene of high comedy? What method of distillation will yield us invariably the same essence from which so many different products borrow either their obtrusive odour or their delicate perfume? The greatest of thinkers, from Aristotle downwards, have tackled this little problem, which has a knack of baffling every effort

**Comedy; Laughter**

James Sully (3 March 1842 - 1 November 1923) was an English psychologist. He was born at Bridgwater, Somerset the son of J.W. Sully, a liberal Baptist merchant and ship-owner. He was educated at the Independent College, Taunton, Regent's Park College, University of Göttingen, where he studied under Lotze, and at Humboldt University, Berlin where he studied under DuBois-Reymond and Helmholtz. Sully was originally destined for the nonconformist ministry and in 1869 became classical tutor at the Baptist College, Pontypool. In 1871, however, he adopted a literary and philosophic career. Between 1892 and 1903, he was Grote Professor of the Philosophy of Mind and Logic at University College London, where he was succeeded by Carveth Read.

**Laughing Matter**
**Laughter**

What does laughter mean? What common ground can we find between the grimace of a merry-andrew, a play upon words, an equivocal situation in a burlesque and a scene of high comedy? What method of distillation will yield us invariably the same essence from which so many different products borrow either their obtrusive odour or their delicate perfume? The greatest of thinkers, from Aristotle downwards, have tackled this little problem, which has a knack of baffling every effort, of slipping away and escaping only to bob up again, a pert challenge flung at philosophic speculation. Our excuse for attacking the problem in our turn must lie in the fact that we shall not aim at imprisoning the comic spirit within a definition. We regard it, above all, as a living thing. However trivial it may be, we shall treat it with the respect due to life. We shall confine ourselves to watching it grow and expand.

**Laughter an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic - Scholar's Choice Edition**

2014 Reprint of Original 1912 Edition. Exact facsimile of the original edition, not reproduced with Optical Recognition Software. "Laughter" is a collection of three essays by French philosopher Henri Bergson, first published in 1900. In a short introduction, Bergson announces that he will try to define the comic, but he does not want to give a rigid definition of the word; he wants to deal with the comic as part of human life. His ambition is also to have a better knowledge of society, of the functioning of human imagination and of collective imagination, but also of art and life. Bergson begins to note three facts on the comic: 1] the comic is strictly a human phenomenon. A landscape cannot be a source of laughter, and when humans make fun of animals, it is often because they recognize some human behavior in them. Man is not only a being that can laugh, but also a being that is a source of laughter. 2] laughter requires an indifference, a detachment from sensibility and emotion: 3] it is more difficult to laugh when one is fully aware of the seriousness of a situation. It is difficult to laugh alone, it is easier to laugh collectively. One who is excluded from a group of people does not laugh with them, there is often a complicity in laughter. Thus the comic is not a mere pleasure of the intellect, it is a human and social activity, it has a social meaning.

**An Essay on Laughter**

"Madness, Masks, and Laughter: An Essay on Comedy is an exploration of narrative and dramatic comedy as a laughter-inducing phenomenon. The theatrical metaphors of mask, appearance, and illusion are used as structural linchpins in an attempt to categorize the many and extremely varied manifestations of comedy and to find out what they may have in common with one another. As this reliance on metaphor suggests, the purpose is less to produce The Truth about comedy than to look at how it is related to our understanding of the world and to ways of understanding our understanding. Previous theories of comedy or laughter (such as those advanced by Hobbes, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Bergson, Freud, and Bakhtin) as well as more general
philosophical considerations are discussed insofar as they shed light on this approach. The limitations of the metaphors themselves mean that sight is never lost of the deep-seated ambiguity that has made laughter so notoriously difficult to pin down in the past. "The first half of the volume focuses in particular on traditional comic masks and the pleasures of repetition and recognition, on the comedy of imposture, disguise, and deception, on dramatic and verbal irony, on social and theatrical role-playing and the comic possibilities of plays-within-plays and "metatheatre," as well as on the cliches, puns, witticisms, and torrents of gibberish which betray that language itself may be understood as a sort of mask. The second half of the book moves to the other side of the footlights to show how the spectators themselves, identifying with the comic spectacle, may be induced to "drop" their own roles and postures, laughter here operating as something akin to a ventilatory release from the pressures of social or cognitive performance. Here the essay examines the subversive madness inherent in comedy, its displaced anti-authoritarianism, as well as the violence, sexuality, and bodily grotesqueness it may bring to light. The structural tensions in this broadly Hobbesian or Freudian model of a social mask concealing an anti-social self are reflected in comedy's own ambivalences, and emerge especially in the ambiguous concepts of madness and folly, which may be either celebrated as festive fun or derided as sinfulness. The study concludes by considering the ways in which nonsense and the grotesque may infringe our cognitive limitations, here extending the distinction between appearance and reality to a metaphysical level which is nonetheless prey to unresolvable ambiguities." "The scope of the comic material ranges over time from Aristophanes to Martin Amis, from Boccaccio, Chaucer, Rabelais, and Shakespeare to Oscar Wilde, Joe Orton, John Barth, and Philip Roth. Alongside mainly Old Greek, Italian, French, Irish, English, and American examples, a number of relatively little-known German plays (by Grabbe, Tieck, Buchner, and others) are also taken into consideration."--BOOK JACKET.Title Summary field provided by Blackwell North America, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Madness, Masks, and Laughter

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Comedy
"[] CHAPTER I THE COMIC IN GENERAL—THE COMIC ELEMENT IN FORMS AND MOVEMENTS—EXPANSIVE FORCE OF THE COMIC. What does laughter mean? What is the basal element in the laughable? What common ground can we find between the grimace of a merry-andrew, a play upon words, an equivocal situation in a burlesque and a scene of high comedy? What method of distillation will yield us invariably the same essence from which so many different products borrow either their obtrusive odour or their delicate perfume? The greatest of thinkers, from Aristotle downwards, have tackled this little problem, which has a knack of baffling every effort, of slipping away and escaping only to bob up again, a pert challenge flung at philosophic speculation. Our excuse for attacking the problem in our turn must lie in the fact that we shall not aim at imprisoning the comic spirit within a definition. We regard it, above all, as a living thing. However trivial it may be, we shall treat it with the respect due to life. We shall confine ourselves to watching it grow and expand. Passing by[]".

Laughter

Reproduction of the original: Laughter by Henri Bergson

An Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition, Written in the Year 1764

Henri Bergson — Laughter George Meredith — An Essay on Comedy Introduction & Appendix on The Meanings of Comedy by Wylie Sypher Laughter is a mystery—a mystery which defines man. Brought together in this volume are two classic studies of the nature of laughter and comedy. The great French philosopher Henri Bergson develops, in "Laughter," a profound psychological and philisophic theory of the main springs of comedy—a theory closely related to the doctrine of the élan vital. In his "Essay on Comedy,“ the English novelist George Meredith discusses the varieties of the comic experience and the social and moral function of comedy. Together these two major theories go far toward clarifying the mystery of laughter. Wylie Sypher, in his richly documented supplementary essay, places the views of Bergson and Meredith in a large context of speculation on the nature of comedy. The essay reviews important statements of such thinkers as Aristotle, Hobbes, Baudelaire, Freud, Cornford, and others. It serves to give further significance to Bergson and Meredith and to the meaning of comedy itself.

An Essay on Laughter
Laughter: Large Print By Henri Bergson The book has been highly successful in France, where it is in its seventh edition. It has been translated into Russian, Polish, and Swedish. German and Hungarian translations are under preparation. Its success is due partly to the novelty of the explanation offered of the comic, and partly also to the fact that the author incidentally discusses questions of still greater interest and importance. Thus, one of the best known and most frequently quoted passages of the book is that portion of the last chapter in which the author outlines a general theory of art.

Pleasure of Fools

Henry Bergson’s Laughter is a collection of three essays. Bergson begins the work with a brief introduction in which he clarifies that his aim is not to define "comic" as a term, but rather to better understand the role of comedy in human life and how it relates to the individual and societal imagination. The first essay in the book, "The Comic in General," highlights three essential principles by which Bergson sees "the comic" as defined. Firstly, the comic is a strictly human convention. It must concern human beings—or at least human habits and behaviors. Secondly, comedy recedes before the emotions. To find something funny, a person must subvert their emotions so they can view a person or situation in a detached manner. Thirdly, comedy is a social experience. Laughter occurs the most naturally and the most frequently in the context of a group regarding an outside entity.

Laughter

What does laughter mean? What is the basal element in the laughable? What common ground can we find between the grimace of a merry-andrew, a play upon words, an equivocal situation in a burlesque and a scene of high comedy? What method of distillation will yield us invariably the same essence from which so many different products borrow either their obtrusive odour or their delicate perfume? The greatest of thinkers, from Aristotle downwards, have tackled this little problem, which has a knack of baffling every effort, of slipping away and escaping only to bob up again, a pert challenge flung at philosophic speculation. Our excuse for attacking the problem in our turn must lie in the fact that we shall not aim at imprisoning the comic spirit within a definition. We regard it, above all, as a living thing. However trivial it may be, we shall treat it with the respect due to life. We shall confine ourselves to watching it grow and expand. Passing by imperceptible gradations from one form to another, it will be seen to achieve the strangest metamorphoses. We shall disdain nothing we have seen. Maybe we may gain from this prolonged contact, for the matter of that, something more flexible than an abstract definition,—a practical, intimate acquaintance, such as springs from a long companionship. And maybe we may also find that, unintentionally, we have made an acquaintance that is useful. For the comic spirit has a logic of its own, even in its wildest eccentricities. It has a method in its madness. It dreams, I admit, but it conjures up, in its dreams, visions that are at once accepted and understood by the whole of a social group. Can it then fail to
throw light for us on the way that human imagination works, and more particularly social, collective, and popular imagination? Begotten of real life and akin to art, should it not also have something of its own to tell us about art and life? At the outset we shall put forward three observations which we look upon as fundamental. They have less bearing on the actually comic than on the field within which it must be sought.

An Essay on Laughter.

This classic of anthropological literature is a dramatic, revealing account of an anthropologist’s first year in the field with a remote African tribe. Simply as a work of ethnographic interest, Return to Laughter provides deep insights into the culture of West Africa—me subtle web of its tribal life and the power of the institution of witchcraft. However, the author’s fictional approach gives the book its lasting appeal. She focuses on the human dimension of anthropology, recounting her personal triumphs and failures and documenting the profound changes she undergoes. As a result, her story becomes at once highly personal and universally recognizable. She has vividly brought to life the classic narrative of an outsider caught up and deeply involved in an utterly alien culture. “The first introspective account ever published of what it’s like to be a field worker among a primitive people.”—Margaret Mead

Laughter; An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. Authorized Translation by Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell - Primary Source Edition

In a short introduction, Bergson announces that he will try to define the comic, but he does not want to give a rigid definition of the word; he wants to deal with the comic as part of human life. His ambition is also to have a better knowledge of society, of the functioning of human imagination and of collective imagination, but also of art and life.

Laughter: Large Print

Laughter

This is a fascinating work, with all the clearness characteristic of French criticism and the carefulness of a philosophic thinker, and it is excellently done into English. But few will be converted to M. Bergson’s theory of the comic. Laughter is defined at the outset as a social corrective of the anti-social, and its cause has universal characteristics, however it occur. The laughable is always human: it is devoid of emotional elements and appeals to intelligence pure and simple; it appeals only to some social group and may be unintelligible to outsiders. It is the automatic and mechanical aspect of what should be living and free that makes us laugh.
With this as a "leitmotiv," M. Bergson analyzes the comic in forms and movements, in situations and words, and in character. The chapter dealing with this last phase is the most deeply interesting, for it gives us the author's views on art and its relation to life, and hints at his ethics. Comedy belongs neither to art nor to life; its position is equivocal. Art deals with the individual and real, comedy with types. Comedy organizes laughter, and its material is ready-made when life is seized upon by vanity. In his conclusion he admits that we often sympathize with the comic character and are relieved from the strain of thinking. Again, "laughter is simply the result of a mechanism set up in us by nature or, what is almost the same thing, by our long acquaintance with social life. It goes off spontaneously. It has no time to look where it hits." We are told that laughter is often unjust, and should never be kind. If we push the matter farther, the result may be most unflattering: "Laughter is gaiety itself. But philosopher, who gathers a handful to taste, may find that the substance is scanty and the after-taste bitter." The book would repay a much more detailed analysis, and it is perfectly delightful to read. - Richard Smith, International Journal of Ethics, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 216-218.

Laughter, an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. Authorized Translation by Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell


We'll Laugh About This (Someday)

“Laughter” is a collection of three of Bergson's essays, originally published in 1900. Within them, Bergson attempts a study of laughter—particularly laughter caused by a comedian—to discover the different types of comic situations and to define the laws of the comic. A classic text for those with an interest in comedy and being a comic. This classic work is being republished now in a new edition complete with a Chapter From “Bergson And His Philosophy” by J. Alexander Gunn. Henri-Louis Bergson (1859–1941) was a French-Jewish philosopher. He had a significant influence on the tradition of continental philosophy during the first half of the twentieth century until World War II, and is famous for his idea that immediate experience and intuition are more important than abstract rationalism and science for understanding the nature of reality.

Comedy

What does laughter mean? What is the basal element in the laughable? What common ground can we find between the grimace of a merryandrew, a play upon words, an equivocal situation in a burlesque and a scene of high comedy? What method of distillation will yield us invariably the same essence from which so many different products borrow either their obtrusive odour or their
delicate perfume? The greatest of thinkers, from Aristotle downwards, have tackled this little problem, which has a knack of baffling every effort

Laughter

Laughter - An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic

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Laughter: an Essay of the Meaning of the Comic

Drawing on the author’s experience in Brazil, this text provides a portrait of everyday life among the women of the favelas - a portrait that challenges much of what we think we know about the 'culture of poverty'. It helps us understand the nature of joking and laughter in the shantytown.

Laughter: an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic

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Case Study Classics: Laughter: an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic
Laughter

Finally available, a high quality book of the original classic edition of Laughter - An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. This is a new and freshly published edition of this culturally important work by Henri Bergson, which is now, at last, again available to you. Enjoy this classic work today. These selected paragraphs distill the contents and give you a quick look inside Laughter - An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic: The objects around him, however, have all been tampered with by a mischievous wag, the result being that when he dips his pen into the inkstand he draws it out all covered with mud, when he fancies he is sitting down on a solid chair he finds himself sprawling on the floor, in a word his actions are all topsy-turvy or mere beating the air, while in every case the effect is invariably one of momentum. Let us try to picture to ourselves a certain inborn lack of elasticity of both senses and intelligence, which brings it to pass that we continue to see what is no longer visible, to hear what is no longer audible, to say what is no longer to the point: in short, to adapt ourselves to a past and therefore imaginary situation, when we ought to be shaping our conduct in accordance with the reality which is present. From the runner who falls to the simpleton who is hoaxed, from a state of being hoaxed to one of absentmindedness, from absentmindedness to wild enthusiasm, from wild enthusiasm to various distortions of character and will, we have followed the line of progress along which the comic becomes more and more deeply imbedded in the person, yet without ceasing, in its subtler manifestations, to recall to us some trace of what we noticed in its grosser forms, an effect of automatism and of inelasticity. In a word, if a circle be drawn round those actions and dispositions implied in individual or social life-to which their natural consequences bring their own penalties, there remains outside this sphere of emotion and struggle-and within a neutral zone in which man simply exposes himself to mans curiosity-a certain rigidity of body, mind and character, that society would still like to get rid of in order to obtain from its members the greatest possible degree of elasticity and sociability. We will now endeavour to reconstruct the sequence of comic forms, taking up again the thread that leads from the horseplay of a clown up to the most refined effects of comedy, following this thread in its often unforeseen windings, halting at intervals to look around, and finally getting back, if possible, to the point at which the thread is dangling and where we shall perhaps find-since the comic oscillates between life and art-the general relation that art bears to life.

Return to Laughter

"Men cannot laugh heartily without showing their teeth," quipped Samuel Butler. From St Paul to Descartes to Adorno, scholars and writers have questioned the ethics of laughter - any laughter. In The Pleasure of Fools, Jure Gantar wrestles with our moral right to laugh and the limitations of contemporary critical approaches. 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 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.

Woody Allen

Laughter

With the help of theorists in such fields as psychology, anthropology, physiology, sociology, and folklore as well as literary criticism, Gutwirth perceives that writers across history have attempted to explain laughter in one of three ways - focusing on its social or political function, its emotional rationale, or its intellectual dimension. Offering an array of readings of comic texts and incidents, he constructs a general model of laughter which takes into account its causes, immediate effects, and long-range influence on human affairs. In conclusion, he looks at the unique nature of comic wisdom, particularly as reflected in works by Santayana, Cervantes, and Beckett.