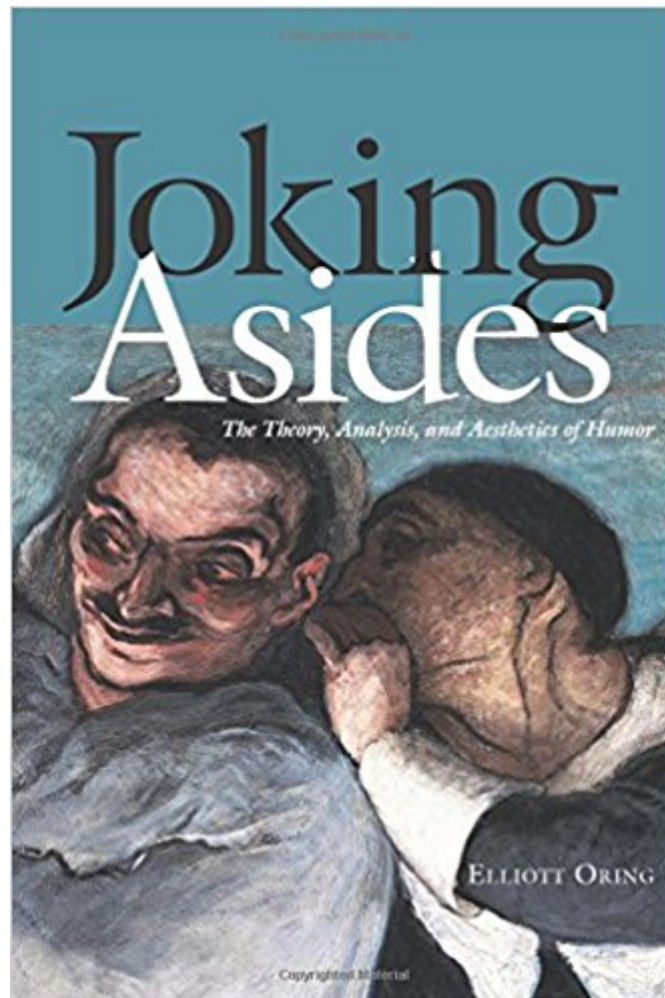




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Joking Asides: The Theory, Analysis, And Aesthetics Of Humor



Synopsis

Nothing in the understanding of humor is as simple as it might seem. In *Joking Asides*, Elliott Oring confronts the problems of humor, analyzing the key contemporary approaches to its study and addressing controversial topics with new empirical data and insights. A folklorist drawn to the study of humor, Oring developed his formulation of “appropriate incongruity” as a frame to understand what jokes must do to produce humor. He tests appropriate incongruity against other major positions in the field, including the general theory of verbal humor, conceptual integration theory, benign violation theory, and false-belief theory. Oring draws on the work of scholars from several disciplines—anthropology, folklore, philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and literature—to ask basic questions about the construction and evolution of jokes, untangle the matter of who the actual targets of a joke might be, and characterize the artistic qualities of jokes and joke performances. Although Oring guides the reader through a forest of jokes and joke genres, this is not a joke book. A major work from a major scholar, *Joking Asides* is a rigorous exploration of theoretical approaches to jokes and their functions and is filled with disquieting questions, penetrating criticisms, and original observations. Written in a clear and accessible style, this book will prove valuable to any scholar or student who takes matters of jokes and joking seriously.

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"A most valuable, indeed quite outstanding, contribution to the study of humor in general, and jokes

in particular, by one of the leading humor scholars of the English-speaking world. —•
 —•Christie Davies, University of Reading —• "Theoretically sophisticated, cogently argued, and always attentive to the ways that jokes operate in real-life social contexts, Elliott Oring's *Joking Asides* is a critical tour de force —• a stimulating contribution to the discourse in humor studies from one of the foremost scholars in the field." —•Greg Kelley, University of Guelph-Humber "[F]ar from being —• merely —• a collection of essays, the book is one whole, and worth reading from beginning to end." —• —•Western Folklore

Elliott Oring is professor emeritus of anthropology at California State University, Los Angeles, and serves on the editorial boards of —• —• *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* —• and —• *Journal of Folklore Research*. He has written extensively about humor, folklore, and cultural symbolism.

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