## Contents

Preface		
Introduction		
	Overview Definitions Emphasis	:
	I Jokes	
1.	Theory and the Form of Jokes	9
	Theories of the form of humour Synthesis	19
2.	Evidence of the Form of Jokes	32
	Amusement and incongruity Amusement and the resolution of incongruity	32 37
3.	Amusement	4]
	Introduction Adaptation level theory Arousal theory Description of amusement	41 42 48 54
4.	Amusement and the Form of Jokes	60
	Introduction Experiment 1	60 66
	Experiment 2 Conclusions	73 76

viii		CONTENTS
5.	The Content of Jokes	78
	Introduction	78
	Factor-analytic studies of humourous appreciation	79
	Studies categorizing the content of humour	81
	Summary	91
6.	Amusement and Taboo Content	92
	Salience theory	92
	Wit and release from repression	93
	Wit and release from suppression	105
	Anxiety-reduction theory	112
	Arousal-boost theory	113
7.	Amusement and Sexual Content	115
	Experiment 3	115
	Experiment 4	126
	Conclusions	130
8.	Amusement and Derision	132
	Amusement and ridicule of other people	132
	Amusement and self-ridicule	141
	Summary	148
9.	The Mechanisms of the Joke	150
	II Joking	
10.	The Sense in Nonsense	159
	Introduction	159
	Natural jokes	160
	Contrived jokes	168

CONTENTS		ix
11.	The Functions of Filth	172
	Introduction Voyeurism and innuendo	172 173
	General ribaldry and exhibitionism	180
12.	The Use of Abuse	189
	Introduction	189
	Ridicule	190
	Private ridicule	213
	Shared ridicule	217
	Self-ridicule	220
13.	The Cryptic Conservative	226
	The personal functions of joking	226
	The social functions of joking	228
References		233
Subject Index		249