Contents

Preface ix

PART I. THE POSITIVE THESIS
1. Laughter as Superiority 3
   * Hobbes and Bergson • The Normative Foundation
   * Laughter as a Signal
2. The Elements of Laughter 16
   * Sociability • Surprise • Playfulness
3. The One Necessary Thing 29
   * Incongruity and Wordplay
   * Relief and Exuberant Laughter • Innocent Laughter
   * The Absurd and Postmodernism • Self-Deprecatory Humor

PART II. THE NORMATIVE THESIS
4. Objections to the Normative Thesis 49
   * The Paradox of Satire • Excessive Laughter
   * The Hobbesian Paradox • Vicious Laughter
5. Comic Virtues and Vices 60
   * The Rose-Wreath Crown • The Gay Science
   * Comic Norms
6. The Social Virtues 87
   * Integrity • Moderation
   * Fortitude • Temperance
7. The Charismatic Virtues 108
   * Grace • Taste • Learning
8. Machine Law 119
   * Risible Law • Kreimer v. Morristown • The Sick Chickens Case
9. Machine Scholarship 129
   * Analytical Philosophy • Zombies as Machine Men
   * Machine Political Theory • Baby Selling