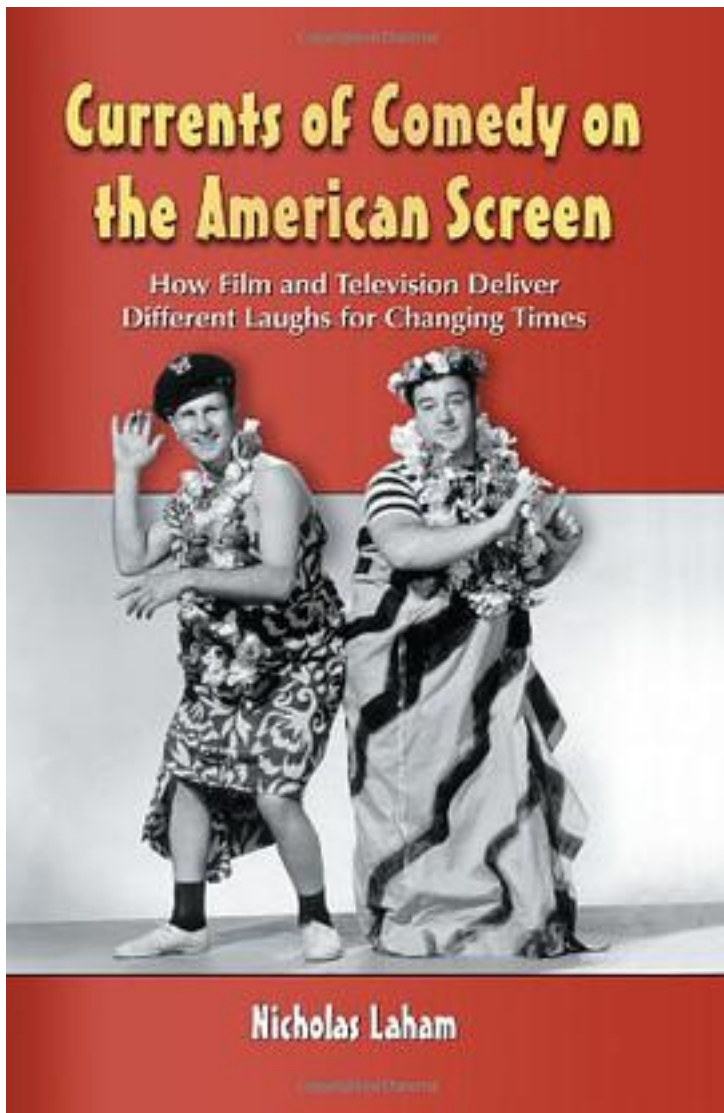


Currents of Comedy on the American Screen



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Film and television comedy offer more than mere entertainment. Since the birth of motion pictures, comedies have reflected and reinforced American societal trends. This book analyzes the evolution of film and television comedy from the 1930s through the present, defining five distinct periods and discussing the dominant comedic trends of each. Chapter One examines the period spanning 1934 to 1942, defined by screwball comedies that offered distraction from the Great Depression. Chapter Two deals with the suspense comedy, reflecting America's darker worldview during World War II. Chapter Three examines the 1950s battle-of-the-sexes comedy, focusing on I Love Lucy and other husband-and-wife sitcoms. Chapter Four details the shift from the physical, exaggerated comedy of the 1950s to more realistic plotlines, such as those of The Dick Van Dyke Show. Chapter Five explores the new suspense comedy of the 1970s and 1980s, focusing on the popular "dumb cop" or "dumb spy" series like The Pink Panther and The Naked Gun, along with modern remakes including 2006's The Pink Panther and 2008's Get Smart.

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