



Irony in Action: Anthropology, Practice, and the Moral Imagination

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Irony today extends beyond its classification as a figure of speech and is increasingly recognized as one of the major modes of human experience. This idea of irony as an integral force in social life is at the center of this provocative book. The result of a meeting where anthropologists were invited to explore the politics of irony and the moral responsibilities that accompany its recognition, this book is one of the first to lend an anthropological perspective to this contemporary phenomenon.

The first group of essays explores the limits to irony's liberating qualities from the constrained use of irony in congressional hearings to its reactive presence amid widening disparities of wealth despite decades of world development. The second section presents irony's more positive dimensions through an array of examples such as the use of irony by Chinese writers and Irish humorists. Framed by the editors' theoretical introduction to the issues posed by irony and responses to the essays by two literary scholars, *Irony in Action* is a timely contribution in the contemporary reinvention of anthropology.

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