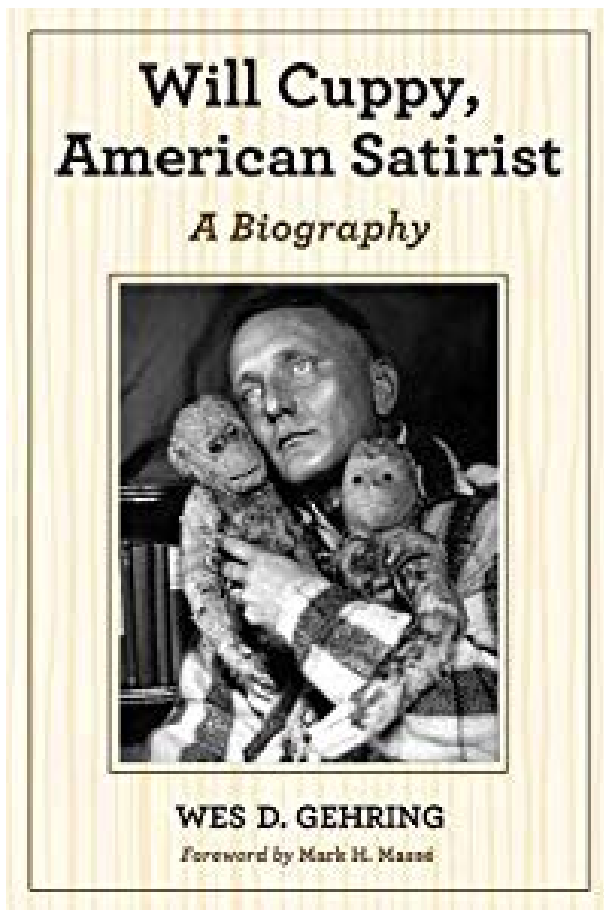


Will Cuppy, American Satirist: A Biography



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Back in the golden age of humor books (late 1920s-early 1950s), when wits of the pantheon like Robert Benchley, James Thurber, and S.J. Perelman were producing their signature works, there was another singular satirist who more than held his own with such fast company: Will Cuppy (1884-1949). This factual funnyman's metier is dark comedy that flirts with nihilism.

His agenda is baldly stated in such classic Cuppy book titles as *How to Be a Hermit* (1929), *How to Tell Your Friends from the Apes* (1931), and *The Decline and Fall of Practically Everybody* (1950). This biography doubles as a critical study of a satirist whose shish-kebabing of humanity was often done through the veiled anthropomorphic use of animals. For a biographer, Will Cuppy represents a treasure trove of possibilities.

He was a great humorist, and most of his best work is still in print, but until now he has never been the subject of a book-length study. His mesmerizingly complex and eccentric private life almost trumps the comic accomplishments of his public persona.