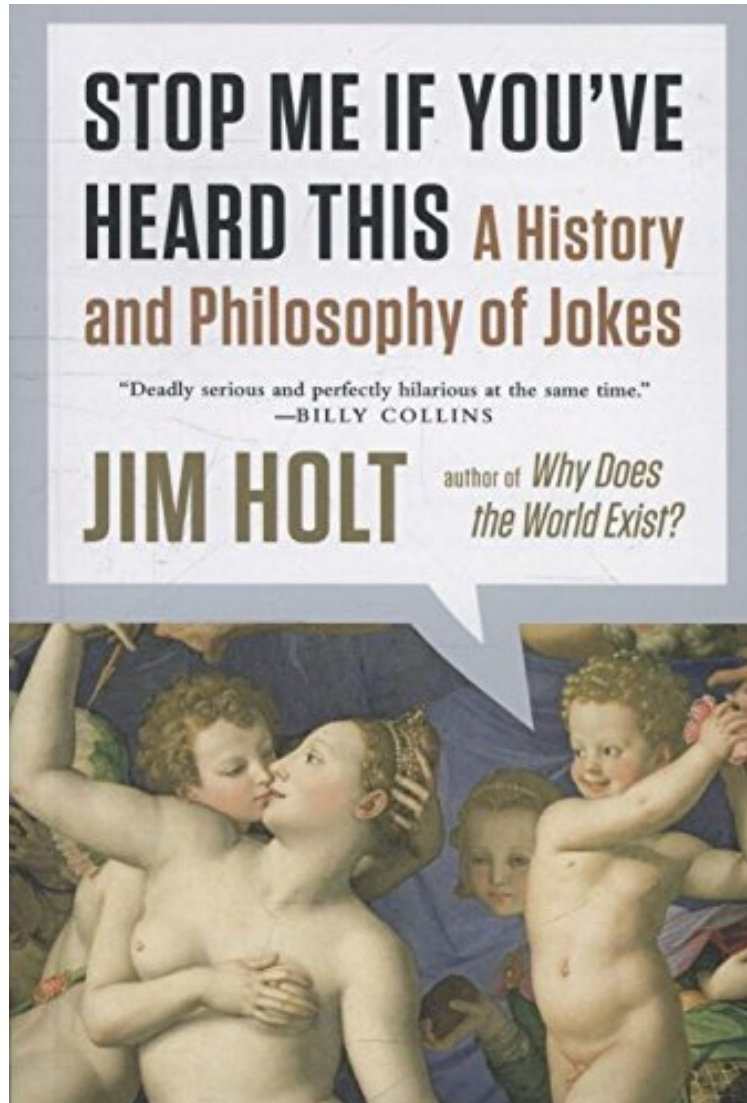


(Get free) Stop Me If You've Heard This: A History and Philosophy of Jokes

## Stop Me If You've Heard This: A History and Philosophy of Jokes

Jim Holt

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#511194 in Books Jim Holt 2013-10-21 Original language: English PDF # 1 6.70 x .40 x 4.60l, .22 #File Name: 0871407205160 pages Stop Me If You've Heard This: A History and Philosophy of Jokes | File size: 20.Mb

**Jim Holt : Stop Me If You've Heard This: A History and Philosophy of Jokes** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stop Me If You've Heard This: A History and Philosophy of Jokes:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Great Delight in a Small Package By Richard B. Schwartz First the caveats: This is not really an extensive history and philosophy of the joke. The subject is far too vast for that and, for many periods, the material is too sparse. A serious philosophy of the joke would require a very large volume. What

Holt does hit the high points. He offers a host of representative jokes and summarizes the chief collectors of and interpreters of the joke as a cultural phenomenon. Some of these individuals (Gershon Legman, Alan Dundes, Nat Schmulowitz) are as interesting and quirky as the material they studied. The book is tiny. Once you deduct the (clever, amusing) illustrations and account for the 175-or-so-words/page margins, you end up with approximately 17,000 words of text (plus brief bibliography and index). That's more like two long magazine articles than an actual book. At the same time, you have a terrific stocking stuffer with solid production values. As you would expect from the author of *Why Does the World Exist?* this is a well-written, clever piece of work. Sometimes laugh-out-loud funny, it elicited constant smirks and titters. I loved his non sequitur use of Umberto Eco, where he began to make a point, using *The Name of the Rose*, but couldn't complete it because he was forced to admit that he couldn't finish reading the novel. Finally, this is a good read and we could all use more of those. It is not a scholarly book; it is not a naughty book (for the most part); it is a good read on an important and engaging subject. You couldn't really read it in public because people would keep interrupting you and asking you why you were laughing. It's a curl-up-in-a-quiet-corner-and-enjoy book. Johnson once said of *Paradise Lost* that 'none ever wished it longer', but everyone will wish that this book was longer, because it is a great delight in a small package. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I've heard this By nick Pretty much every single joke in this book was lifted from another book called "Jokes: Philosophical Thoughts on Joking Matters," by Ted Cohen. That book is also pretty crummy, so don't think I have some bias. I disliked this book because it's boring, it's not funny, and it offers no insight. The history part isn't really a history of jokes or humor, but just a short description of a small handful of people who liked jokes. The philosophy half of the book gives less insight than the Wikipedia page on humor. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Humour and Understanding By Juan Pineda This book is a good read for any serious :- ) amateur philosopher. I cannot speak for real philosophers but my favourite one recommended it in his blog. I think this book has a good balance of jokes and interesting insights about humour. Its brevity can be seen both as an advantage and as a disadvantage. It took me two and a half hours to read the book because I am a slow reader and because I could not resist sharing some of the jokes with my wife, who was sitting nearby marking exams. I liked some of the jokes and I think she liked them too. This book also gave me a couple of reasons to start collecting jokes. My poor wife is now terrified. Now comes my boring philosophical comment, so you can stop reading here. Knowledge (immaterial possession of things), Love (willing the good of the other as other), Ethics (discernment of what is best), Religion (hunger for the Infinite), Gaming (enjoyment of rules), Art (expressiveness, skill and imagination combined) and Humour (read the book :-)) are all distinctive features of human beings. Any of these features alone sets us apart and all of them can help us a little in enjoying and understanding human beings.

"Finally I understand what it is I've been laughing at all these years."? Jimmy Kimmel From the best-selling author of *Why Does the World Exist?* comes this outrageous, uproarious compendium of absurdity, filth, racy paradox, and gratuitous offensiveness? just the kind of mature philosophical reflection readers have come to expect from the ever-entertaining Jim Holt. Indeed, *Stop Me If You've Heard This* is the first book to trace the evolution of the joke all the way from the standup comics of ancient Athens to the comedy-club Seinfelds of today. After exploring humor's history in Part One, Holt delves into philosophy in Part Two: Wall Street jokes; jokes about rednecks and atheists, bulimics and politicians; jokes you missed if you didn't go to a Catholic girls' school; jokes about logic and existence itself . . . all became fodder for the grand theories of Aristotle, Kant, Freud, and Wittgenstein in this heady mix of the high and low, of the ribald and profound, from America's most beloved philosophical pundit. 15 illustrations

From Publishers Weekly A complete history of the joke and its philosophical motivations will perhaps never be written, as Holt admits that the joke is not an unchanging Platonic Ideal, but a historical form that evolves over time. Holt, a contributor to the *New Yorker*, tries anyway, tracking the joke's evolution from the oldest surviving joke book, the surprisingly blue Greek text *Philogelos*, to Freud and Kant in explaining how and why we laugh at jokes. The book's second half occasionally lapses into dryness; even Holt suggests that the more interesting a subject is, the more boring the accompanying philosophy. In examining two overlooked aspects of a common joke, Holt presents some illuminating thoughts—jokes evolve more than they are created; they are an ideal way to expel pent-up aggression—and fascinating fringe figures such as Gershon Legman, the controversial and pioneering dirty-joke archivist who saw himself as the keeper of the deepest subcellar in the burning Alexandria Library of the age; the subcellar of our secret desires, which no one else was raising so much as a finger to preserve. Highly readable, Holt's effort will appeal to the intellectually curious, and the jokes are pretty funny. (July) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Explodes the myth that the high and low brow are more than a couple of inches apart.... Seriously funny stuff. -- Colin McGinn, author of *The Making of a Philosopher* Fast-moving, idiosyncratic... a stocking-stuffer. -- *The New York Times Book Review* Finally, I understand what it is I've been laughing at for all these years. -- Jimmy Kimmel Holt... takes in so much about the history and philosophy of joke-telling in his concise and amiable conspectus of the subject. -- Joseph Epstein, *The Wall Street Journal* Jim Holt manages here to be deadly serious and perfectly hilarious at the same time. -- Billy Collins, former Poet Laureate of

the US Jim Holt riffs in *Stop Me If You've Heard This*. -- *Vanity Fair* Small, witty, and delightful...a worthy successor to Harry Frankfurt's brilliant *On Bullshit*. -- Simon Blackburn, *The New York Sun* The truth behind the glamour. -- Fran Lebowitz Viewed through Holt's complex, concise lens, the joke comes off as a contender for humankind's most profound mode of expression. -- *Elle* Witty and engaging...This is a very funny tale and it produces some marvelous and unlikely heroes. -- *The New York Times Book Review* About the Author Jim Holt, a prominent essayist and critic on philosophy, mathematics, and science, is a frequent contributor to the *New York Times Book Review* and the *New York Times*. He lives in New York City.