



## What's So Funny?: Humor in American Culture (American Visions: Readings in American Culture)

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Critical studies attempting to define and dissect American humor have been published steadily for nearly one hundred years. However, until now, key documents from that history have never been brought together in a single volume for students and scholars.

*What's So Funny? Humor in American Culture*, a collection of 15 essays, examines the meaning of humor and attempts to pinpoint its impact on American culture and society, while providing a historical overview of its progression. Essays from Nancy Walker and Zita Dresner, Joseph Boskin and Joseph Dorinson, William Keough, Roy Blount, Jr., and others trace the development of American humor from the colonial period to the present, focusing on its relationship with ethnicity, gender, violence, and geography.

An excellent reader for courses in American studies and American social and cultural history, *What's So Funny?* explores the traits of the American experience that have given rise to its humor.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

The essayists in this volume chronicle a complex history and draw attention to the scope of multimedia humor?from the earliest glint of irony and humor in descriptions of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century exploration to the sharp comedy of contemporary film, television, and stand-up routines. The result is an undeniable argument for the central role that humor plays in the development of an American culture shaped by the diverse voices that gained attention through print and electronic media. We have a strong case here that comedy is neither easy nor slight. This collection helps set the foundation for a greater appreciation of humor's influence in American society. (Michael J. Kiskis, Elmira College)

*What's So Funny? Humor in American Culture* is the book we've all been waiting for, and Nancy Walker is the best possible person to give us this volume. She presents us with the essential collection of erudite essays?essays that are themselves witty and entertaining?so that we know where American humor originates and where it's going. (Regina Barreca, author of *They Used to Call Me Snow White, But I Drifted*, editor of *The Penguin Book of Women's Humor*)

The wide-ranging pieces of various scholars in *What's So Funny* provide fine answers to the frank question posed by the title, but the cogent and lucid introduction by Nancy Walker probably does it best. (Cameron C. Nickels, James Madison University, editor of *To Wit*)

The extracts are well-chosen, and provide a tantalizing but satisfying glimpse of the breadth and depth of the subject. They also provide a good sense of the way in which humorous forms have been integral to the American experience. (*American Studies In Europe Newsletter*)

#### About the Author

**Nancy A. Walker** is professor of English at Vanderbilt University.

### Users Review

#### From reader reviews:

##### **Albert Collins:**

Nowadays reading books are more than want or need but also be a life style. This reading habit give you lot of advantages. The huge benefits you got of course the knowledge even the information inside the book this improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of reserve you read, if you want attract knowledge just go with education and learning books but if you want truly feel happy read one along with theme for entertaining such as comic or novel. The *What's So Funny?: Humor in American Culture* (American Visions: Readings in American Culture) is kind of publication which is giving the reader unstable experience.

##### **Ross Adams:**

Why? Because this *What's So Funny?: Humor in American Culture* (American Visions: Readings in

American Culture) is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap this but latter it will jolt you with the secret that inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such amazing way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of gains than the other book include such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking technique. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I were you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

**James Mace:**

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**Susan Arnold:**

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