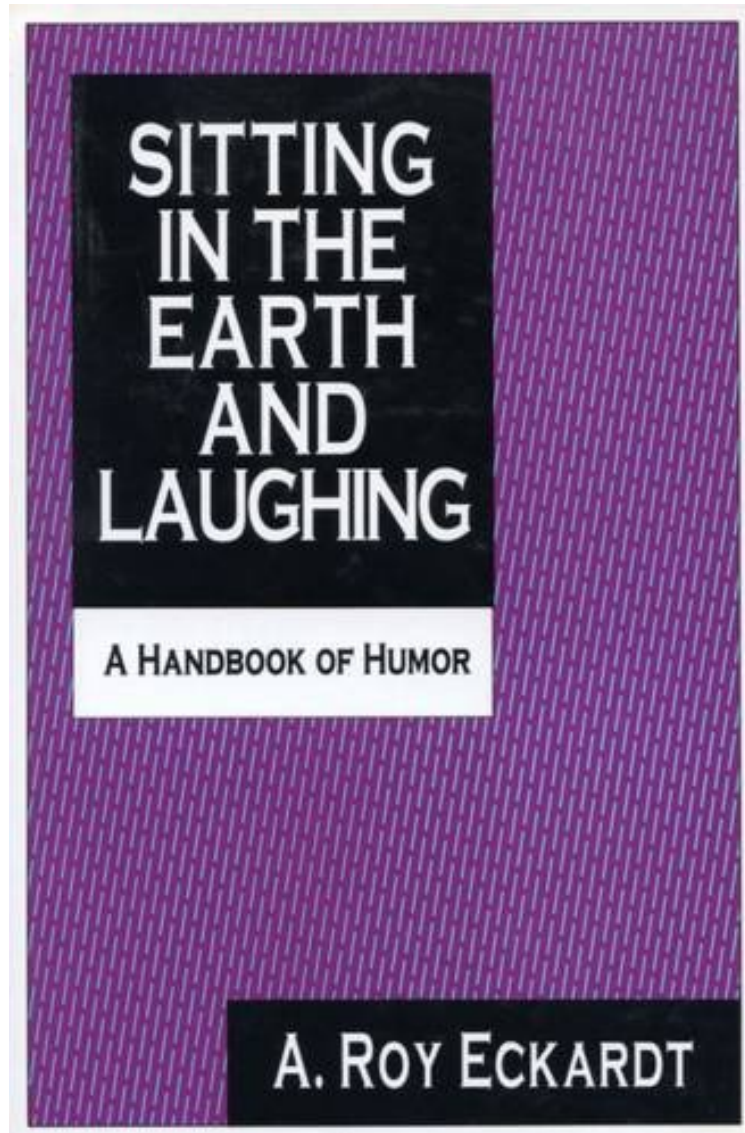


[Mobile book] Sitting in the Earth and Laughing: A Handbook of Humor

Sitting in the Earth and Laughing: A Handbook of Humor

A. Roy Eckardt

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A. Roy Eckardt : Sitting in the Earth and Laughing: A Handbook of Humor before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sitting in the Earth and Laughing: A Handbook of Humor:

To be human is to live with comedy and laughter. This book is at once a serious guide to that form of human incongruity we call humor and an entertaining em-bodiment of humor itself. Designed to cross disciplinary

boundaries, this "handbook of humor" directs itself to the sense and nonsense of humor in contemporary individual and social life. The author examines the phenomenon of comic laughter from a variety of perspectives: philosophic, psychological, social, and religious. Such practical themes are dealt with as the function of human laughter (therapeutic and other), the relation between comedy and suffering, the link between humor and forgiveness, and humor in the aftermath of the Nazi Holocaust. *Sitting in the Earth and Laughing* is organized on the working assumption that humor is born of paradox and contradiction. Hence a book on humor, even a scholarly one, ought to be funny. In that spirit, the author alternates chapters of serious study with chapters composed of illustrative humorous material. "Serious" chapters include distinctive efforts to understand the reality of comic laughter; the laughter of children, the clown, and the fool; the quality of secular humor within the Jewish tradition; and the vexing question of whether there is such a discrete phenomenon as Christian or theological laughter. The work includes many of Dr. Eckardt's own fanciful stories, essays, and verses as well as material derived from student malapropisms, from children, and from professional humorists and comedians. Appearing at a time of burgeoning scholarly and popular interest in the domain of humor, *Sitting in the Earth and Laughing* shows how humor and laughter lie within the realm of human mysteries—together with tragedy, suffering, and love—that can be comprehended and relished.

"A delightful, thoughtful, and funny book. A. Roy Eckardt's writing is elegant, religious, and irreverent. . . . Eckardt understands Jewish humor, Christian humor, and human humor. *Sitting in the Earth and Laughing* has a serious, theoretical side that explores humor in light of the Holocaust and contemporary theology in a profound way."
—Howard Adelman, Smith College "This is a gloriously humane book. Unorthodox in structure, unconventional in approach. . . . Eckardt manages to accommodate a playful sense of life's comic ironies without ever undermining an intense sympathy for the complexities of human suffering. In a world that has placed an almost unbearable strain on one's sense of humor, this book makes a serious case for preserving—and celebrating—the capacity for laughter."
—Graham McCann, Kings College, Cambridge "What is the meaning of laughter? Eckardt probes the anatomy of humor with his usual scholarly insight and creative imagination. . . . [It is] a thoughtful and wonderful contribution that will keep the reader pondering and laughing."
—Egal Feldman, University of Wisconsin-Superior "Sitting in the Earth and Laughing is . . . a book by a noted scholar of religion about humor. . . . As Eckardt demonstrates, scholarship without humor is a distortion of the very humanity being studied and doing the studying. Humor is an important dimension of human nature. . . . Likewise, religion without humor becomes a caricature of itself . . . the book accommodates the paradox of taking humor seriously and dealing with serious subjects humorously."
—Conrad Hyers, Shofar "Eckardt helps us both to laugh and to understand why we laugh. . . . It is all presented and it is all probed, but without losing sight of the realization that 'laughter is more a question than an answer, more a mystery than anything else.'" —Harold Hatt, *Encounter*

About the Author: A. Roy Eckardt is Senior Associate Fellow at the Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, University of Oxford, and professor emeritus of religion studies at Lehigh University. He has been president of the American Academy of Religion and editor of its journal. Among his many books are *Reclaiming the Jesus of History*, *For Righteousness' Sake*, and *Jews and Christians*.