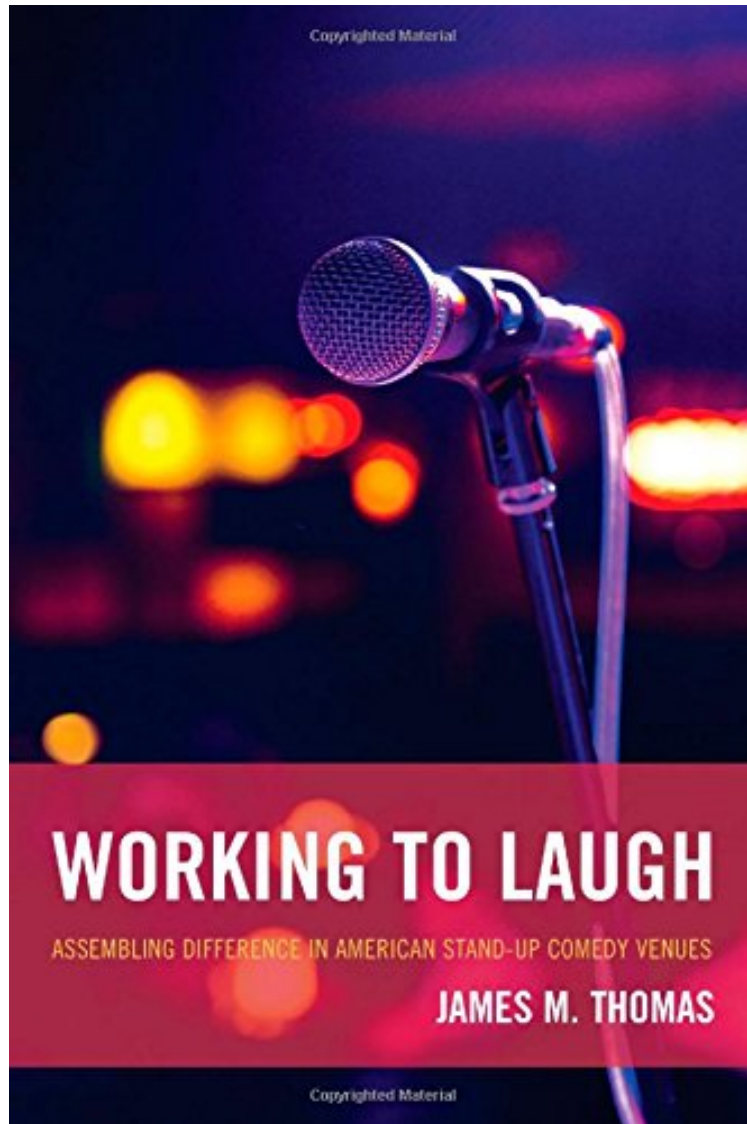


(Get free) Working to Laugh: Assembling Difference in American Stand-Up Comedy Venues

Working to Laugh: Assembling Difference in American Stand-Up Comedy Venues

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James M. Thomas Assistant Professor of Sociology University of Mississippi : Working to Laugh: Assembling Difference in American Stand-Up Comedy Venues before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Working to Laugh: Assembling Difference in American Stand-Up Comedy Venues:

For decades, stand-up comedy has been central to the imbrication of popular culture and political discourse, reshaping the margins of political critique, and often within the contexts of urban nightlife entertainment. In *Working to Laugh: Assembling Difference in American Stand-Up Comedy Venues*, James M. Thomas (JT) provides an ethnographic analysis of urban nightlife sites where this popular form of entertainment occurs. Examining the relationship between the performance, the venue, and the social actors who participate in these scenes, JT demonstrates how stand-up venues function as both enablers and constrainers of social difference, including race, class, gender, and heteronormativity, within the larger urban nightlife environment. JT's analysis of a professional comedy club and a sub-cultural bar that hosts a weekly comedy show illuminates the full range of stand-up comedy in the American cultural milieu, from the highly organized, routinized, and predictable format of the professional venue, to the more unpredictable, and in some cases, cutting edge format of the amateur show.

In a field saturated with hermeneutical accounts of why stand-up comics do as they do, how their discourse functions, and the political efficacy of their work, James M. Thomas's *Working to Laugh* is a welcome re-training of the scholarly lens.... Thomass text...is well-written and describes his sociological study, methods, and results vividly. His forceful but tempered attention to social inequalities, which I suspect stems from his academic background in race and womens studies, is an ever-present companion in this books scrutiny of American comedy. But it is his serious theoretical investment and interest in affect and assemblage theory that really makes this book unique.... *Working to Laugh* is an important contribution to American humor studies. Thomass sociological and ethnographic accounts model a solid academic reading of nightlife comedy that combines theory and practice in an approachable and principled way, providing a lucid and accessible demonstration to scholars investigating American humor, Western capitalism and culture, and race and gender studies. (Studies In American Humor)The author uses a grounded theoretical approach. . . .The book fills a needed gap in the literature. (Symbolic Interaction)Paraphrasing E.B.White, writing about humor is one of the easiest ways to kill it. Fortunately, Thomas is able to keep it alive by showing how humor remains a key site for political discourses of discontent. The places where comedy happens prove to be important mediums for delivering and receiving critical commentary about the multiple social worlds we move in, through, and around. And such commentary along with laughter may be the best medicine for some of the most persistent social ills of urban life. (Michael Borer, University of Nevada, Las Vegas)James Thomas has an incredible eye for ethnographic detail. He manages to move deftly between vignettes and theory, offering vivid examples of what might otherwise be inaccessible concepts. Thomas analysis of race, power, and comedy moves the Sociology of culture in exciting new directions. (William Ryan Force, Western New England University)Through intensive fieldwork lasting over eighteen months, this book demonstrates that the stand-up comedy venue is a dynamic space where social actors contest and reproduce dominant understandings of race, class, and gender in ways that transcend the joke-work performed on stage. Situated within the intersections of popular culture, urban ethnography, and critical race theory, this book is sure to appeal to a variety of academics, students, and general readers.About the AuthorJames M. Thomas is assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Mississippi.