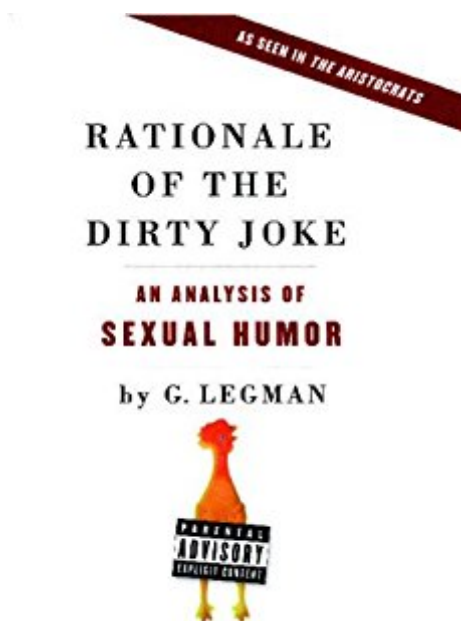


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# Rationale Of The Dirty Joke: An Analysis Of Sexual Humor



## Synopsis

Why do people tell dirty jokes? And what is it about a joke's dirtiness that makes it funny? G. Legman was perhaps the foremost scholar of the dirty joke, and as legions of humor writers and comedians know, his *Rationale of the Dirty Joke* remains the most exhaustive and authoritative study of the subject. More than two thousand jokes and folktales are presented, covering such topics as *The Female Fool*, *The Fortunate Fart*, *Mutual Mismatching*, and *The Sex Machine*. These folk texts are authentically transcribed in their innocent and sometimes violent entirety. Legman studies each for its historical and socioanalytic significance, revealing what these jokes mean to the people who tell them and to the people who listen and laugh. Here -- back in print -- is the definitive text for comedians and humor writers, Freudian scholars and late night television enthusiasts. *Rationale of the Dirty Joke* will amuse you, offend you, challenge you, and disgust you, all while demonstrating the intelligence and hilarity of the dirty joke.

## Book Information

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I was familiar with this book, having had a copy some years ago, but someone stole it. I needed another personal copy to help prepare for a lecture on humor I will deliver later this spring. It's an amazing book, really. The copy I received was clean and tight and will serve my purposes nicely.

A PhD thesis could not have done a better job of analysing the rationale of the dirty joke. I wish part 2 was also available on Kindle

Exhaustive overview of humor up to 1960's--Useful social commentary by a scholar who likes his work  
Puts today's humor in perspective--Book met expectations

Although this may be an extensive and erudite history of sexual humor be forewarned: it is a textbook. This massive and well researched tome would be perfect in a classroom setting or for the academic looking more to indulge in esoterica than humor.

I picked up the dirty old thumbed copy from a salvation army op shop for 30 cents. It looked like all the pages were bent but they had been carefully turned over to mark some of the jokes many years before. I started reading. It was not just a collection of jokes but a beautifully researched and systematic approach. It is to jokes what the oxford dictionary is to the language. It is surprising the change since it was written as amongst my friends many of the jokes are not well known and clearly others have technological adaptation. The surprising issue is how things have changed culturally since it was written. One wonders if menstrual jokes for example are shared within lesbian social groups that would be taboo in other company or if the degree of ethnic jokes that are no longer promulgated in polite company have their early source listed here. If the price was right I would like copies for my friends

Proof that academicians can turn any subject into a scholarly study; Legman, an anthropologist, catalogs dirty jokes by type, then traces their history back to ancient folklore, explaining the sources, variations and history. This is a book that works on two levels; if you're really interested in learning

that farmer's daughter jokes have a precedent in 12th Century literature, then you won't be disappointed. On the other hand, if you just want to read the good parts and skip the analysis, the book's format makes that easy to do, too. It's unfortunate that both volumes of the "Rationale" are out of print, because they belong in the collection of anyone who's interested in the "more things change the more they stay the same" theory of history, as well as those who just want good jokes to tell people around the water cooler or via email.

I read this book when it was new in 1968 and just finished reading it again. I thought it was old-fashioned then and unbelievably out of date now. His description of women is really nasty, based as it is on notions of envy and infantilism. For instance, the reason women resent the toilet seat left up is that it reminds them of the lack that prevents them from urinating standing up. Legman states that any woman of forty or fifty years, or even thirty, knows that she is sexually unattractive, and even considers herself undesirable. Really? But if you just ignore all the psychological bullshit, the jokes themselves are italicized, at least in my 1968 copy, and some are really good. This is one I liked: Seven-year-old Ned tells his daddy, "My girlfriend Joan and I are going to get married." "Oh, that's sweet. But what are you going to live on." "No problem," says Ned. "I have my allowance and Joan has almost a dollar in her piggy bank." Daddy goes along with the innocent child and says, "But what will you do when the children come along. That gets expensive, you know." Says Ned, "Well so far we've been lucky." Another favorite: Two men are recalling their earliest memory. One says that his dad had his wife and the kitchen maid on alternate nights, so "I had to jump from ball to ball trying to be born legitimate." So, read the jokes and skip the commentary.

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