

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY TO THE HUMOR TRANSACTION SCHEMA

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*'That's a great deal to make one word mean,' Alice said in a thoughtful tone.
'When I make a word do a lot of work like that,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'I always pay it extra.'*

Lewis Carroll, Alice Through the Looking Glass

Notes:

1. Terms included in this Glossary are given in capital letters here and in the Humor Transaction Schema article, and also abbreviated for convenience. Part 1 terms are specific to the Schema, and Part 2 comprises additional humor research terms in general use. Both Parts are alpha-ordered and cross-referenced.
2. Like the Humor Transaction Schema article, this Glossary is a work in progress: corrections and additions are very welcome. Please contact the corresponding author, Dr. Jennifer Hofmann E: jennifer.hofmann@uzh.ch
3. This Glossary may be cited as: Milner Davis, Jessica and Jennifer Hofmann. 2023. Glossary to the Humor Transaction Schema. Appendix A in J. Milner Davis and J. Hofmann. 2023. The humor transaction schema: A conceptual framework for researching the nature and effects of humor. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 36(2).
4. And by the way, we did pay our chosen words extra.... (JMD and JH)

PART 1: SCHEMA-SPECIFIC HUMOR-RELATED TERMS

COMIC STYLES (HUMOROUS STYLES; see also HUMOR STYLES in Pt 2)

Style is a literary term that identifies the nature or 'flavor' of a creative work such as comedy and humor more generally. In aesthetic studies (e.g., those examining, literary, dramatic or graphic art), different COMIC STYLES (CSSs) are seen as characterizing different genres of comedy and comic art. As aesthetic terms, COMIC STYLE and HUMOR(OUS) STYLE are interchangeable. The usage needs to be distinguished from the way that both terms are now employed in psychological studies where they denote the ways that individuals habitually use humor. Craik et al. (1996) first introduced the term 'styles of humorous conduct' in psychology and 'HUMOR STYLES' was introduced by Martin and colleagues when developing their 'humor styles questionnaire' (Martin et al. 2003). Recently, another research team (Ruch, Heintz, et al., 2018) has adopted the term 'COMIC STYLE' also to refer to ways in which individuals appreciate, use and produce or create humor in their daily lives. Although this kind of terminology does acknowledge the pre-existing meaning that refers to the genres and flavors of humor identified in literary studies, here it is being used to designate behavior-based styles of using humor, not the aesthetic styles of HUMOR PRODUCTS. A recent model describing individual differences in humor has proposed a unifying framework for the various different approaches in psychology to the term 'styles' (see Ruch and Heintz 2019). In the Humor Transaction Schema, when the

traditional aesthetic meaning of comic (or humor) style is intended, the term HUMOROUS STYLE/S (rather than HUMOR STYLE/S) is adopted for clarity.

Examples of aesthetic CSs include: slapstick, farce, and low comedy; the comedy of manners or witty, high comedy; festive, romantic, or sentimental comedy (e.g., sitcoms); pastiche and parodic comedy employing irony, burlesque and parody; nonsense humor and absurdist comedy that employ fantasy with varying degrees of playfulness (some darker than others); satire and satirical comedy conveying a critical message; ‘sick’ comedy and the comedy of disgust (e.g., as employed by twentieth century ‘shock-u’ stand-up comics in the US and elsewhere); ‘black’, existential comedy (Breton 1997) and gallows humor (laughing in the face of disaster); and a range of mixed genres that employ several comic styles within the one humor product, such as tragicomedy. Like flavors (bitter, sweet, acid etc.), each of these styles is experienced differently and conveys a different humor message from its creator and/or communicator (HUMORIST) to its audience (HUMOR RECIPIENT/S). The message concerns the nature and purpose of the laughter associated with that CS and it can vary from tolerant amusement at the world’s follies to savage criticism of an injustice or absurdity demanding urgent reform. In interpersonal exchanges of humor, the flavor and its message can range from light-heartedly entertaining, through mildly ironic to bitterly sarcastic. Some elements of CS derive from the original creation and nature of a HUMOR PRODUCT but others can be added or changed by the communicating HUMORIST, whether consciously or not.

HUMOR CREATION (see also **HUMOR PRODUCTION**, Pt 2)

HUMOR CREATION refers chiefly to the novel and spontaneous perception or production of a HUMOR PRODUCT, but may also include the addition of a HUMORIST’s personal touch or interpretation to pre-existing humorous material. In this way, it shades into HUMOR COMMUNICATION (described in more detail under HUMOR PRODUCTION).

HUMOR COMMUNICATION

HUMOR COMMUNICATION is the sharing of a HUMOR PRODUCT between HUMORIST and HUMOR RECIPIENT. It may or may not be the result of a conscious decision by the HUMORIST to use or share a HUMOR PRODUCT, since humor can just ‘happen’ accidentally (what Carroll 2014 calls ‘found humor’). It may be an isolated instance of shared humor (a laugh together), or it may form part of an extended presentation or exchange (e.g., a stand-up comic’s ‘act’, prolonged banter between friends, or an email or social media cycle of joke-sharing).

HUMOR OUTCOMES

HUMOR OUTCOMES are the short and long-term results of experiencing HUMOR. They affect not only the HUMORIST (H) and the HUMOR RECIPIENT (HR) but also others more widely, possibly society at large. When HRs become HUMORISTS or HUMOR USERS (HUS), their immediate personal responses to experiencing and/or communicating a HUMOR PRODUCT (see RECIPIENT HUMOR RESPONSES) may spill over into longer term impacts over time, e.g., on the health and wellbeing of themselves or others, depending on the success or failure of the HR’s HUMOR USER CHOICES (HUCs). In the short term, a desire to repeat/rehearse HUMOR with others (see also HUMOR USER CHOICES) may make itself felt – or not, as the case may be. Either way, this can have outcomes not only for the H and the HR/HU but also for their family and friends. Their own workplace culture may also be affected when they carry their HUCs

into that arena. Evolving personal patterns in humor use and preference (see HUMOR STYLE/S, TASTE IN HUMOR AND DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS RIDICULE AND LAUGHTER in Pt 2) can be seen as a medium-term outcome. Eventually, however, the impact of humor use is not only on self or even family and workplace culture, but also on society at large, depending on how successfully an H shapes and uses humor and to what extent that is accepted and appreciated, or resisted and censored, by others. In extreme cases, as increasingly happens in today's interconnected world, financial, legal and political forces may become involved in shaping the outcomes of humor use, either positively or negatively, for example in the funding of humorous advertising and protest campaigns, personal law suits by offended parties and the dismissal, jailing or worse of cartoonists and satirists.

HUMOR POTENTIAL

Although many theorists have tried to identify the key elements that make up or define humor, none have fully succeeded. THEORIES OF HUMOR remain partial and descriptive, defeated perhaps by the illimitable range of topics and ways that humor can manipulate them found across all human cultures. Most instances of humor contain elements of but are not fully explained by some or even all of the so-called classical humor theories. These are: superiority, incongruity, and relief of tension, including possible transcendence of the human condition (see THEORIES OF HUMOR in Pt 2). Structural theories of humor (e.g., the GTVH of Attardo and Raskin 1991 and Attardo 2001; Berger 1995; Chafe 2007; the Benign Violation Theory of Veatch 1998 and McGraw and Warren 2010) assist in understanding the logical and emotional mechanisms at work in humor but are not intended to identify the full range of topics, characters, narratives and plots ('scripts' in both dramatic terminology and the GTVH), devices, techniques and manipulative stylistic transformations that can contribute to actual HUMOR PRODUCTS (HPs). In fact, there is no known limit to these various components: under the right circumstances, anything is fodder for a competent HUMORIST.

Thus, it is helpful to regard anything and everything as potentially contributing to the formation of HPs. An individual HP will be the result of a transformative process applied to a selection of these elements, undertaken by an individual HUMORIST or group of humorists, and often requiring considerable creativity. The process employs human perception, creative manipulation and elaboration and is followed by communication of the HP to an audience.

HUMOR PRODUCT (see also **HUMOR STIMULUS**, Pt 2)

HUMOR PRODUCTS (HPs) are the result of a humorist's HUMOR PRODUCTION; or, in the case of accidental humor, of their perception of events around them. HPs employ verbal, visual, aural and other forms of communication, either singly or in combination. They can usefully be classified by methods of communication (i.e., modes and media used) and by their structural and stylistic aspects (i.e., formats, techniques, and the flavors of their humor, i.e., their HUMOROUS STYLE—see COMIC STYLES). Some forms and styles are more prevalent and traditionally associated with one culture than another and some are unique (e.g., the *xiehouyu*, or 'proverb with the second part suspended', a witty construct common in standard Chinese and many dialects, see Chey 2013: 9; or *rakugo*, Japanese 'sit-down comedy', see Shores 2021).

HPs act as stimuli to the detection and experience of humor by a HUMOR RECIPIENT, but the reception of any HP depends on many factors (see HUMORIST FACTORS and RECIPIENT FACTORS -- PERSONAL and ENVIRONMENTAL). HPs can be shaped or improved by the work of a HUMORIST at any of the stages as they progress through the HUMOR TRANSACTION and they

take many shapes, possess many humorous styles and may convey many different humor messages (whether intentionally or not) to their recipients.

HUMOR RECIPIENT

The HUMOR RECIPIENT (HR) is the person, group or audience to whom the HUMOR PRODUCT (HP) is communicated. This is usually a different person than the HUMORIST (H) who creates or produces the HP but, in the case of accidental humor when humorists simply detect an existing HP (or HUMOROUS STIMULUS - see Pt 2) in their environment rather than creating a HUMOR PRODUCT, the H acts as their own HR. When sharing (re-telling) of an HP takes place, HR denotes the person who is then detecting, comprehending, appreciating (or not) and responding to the HP that has been retold by the H. Of course, any HR may subsequently become a HUMORIST and vice versa.

HUMOR RECIPIENT RESPONSES (see also HUMOR RESPONSE and HUMOR SUPPORT, Pt 2)

HUMOR RECIPIENT RESPONSES are the cognitive, emotional and physical reactions by a HUMOR RECIPIENT (HR) to a communicated or detected HUMOR PRODUCT (HP). They consist of several distinct stages which are strongly affected by individual differences on the part of the HR. They begin with recognition of the HP. This process relies on the HUMOR DETECTION and HUMOR COMPREHENSION abilities of the HR as well as social and contextual factors, on the nature of the HP itself and on the performance by the communicating HUMORIST (see PERSONAL FACTORS below). Failure to detect or comprehend the HUMOR will likely result in a puzzled or negative response. Importantly, even if an HP is successfully processed as HUMOR, humor appreciation on the part of the HR may be either positive or negative or a mixed reaction to the experience (see HUMOR RESPONSE, HUMOR APPRECIATION, DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS RIDICULE AND LAUGHTER and HUMOR SUPPORT in Pt 2). Immediate responses include emotional and cognitive changes e.g., in affect, in mind-set from serious into non-serious/paratelic/playful, in change of perception and also changes in physiological patterns and in relationship between recipient and humorist, either for the better or the worse. Immediate humor responses have a wide range of physical expression and can include deliberate withholding of visible signals ('deadpan' reaction) as well as mock-appreciation such as groaning (see also SMILING, LAUGHTER). Longer term responses shade into outcomes of the experience for both HUMORIST and HR (see HUMOR OUTCOMES).

HUMOR TRANSACTION

The HUMOR TRANSACTION is the complete process that an individual humorous episode undergoes, from the points of view of both the HUMORIST and the HUMOR RECIPIENT, and taking into account the environments of both creation and transmission. The three stages of the HUMOR TRANSACTION capture the creation or perception of a HUMOR PRODUCT, followed by its communication and the experience of and response to it by the HUMOR RECIPIENT, with the final stage being the sharing/using of that and/or other HUMOR PRODUCTS.

HUMOR USER and HUMOR USER CHOICES

A HUMOR USER (HU) is a humor recipient-turned-humorist who then shares HUMOR PRODUCTS with others. HUMOR USER CHOICES (HUCs) are decisions and actions taken by the HU about their future use of humor (e.g., in HUMOR PRODUCTION and HUMOR COMMUNICATION; also see HUMOR RESPONSE, all in Pt 2). While such decisions are not always consciously arrived at and are subject to many external and internal factors, the principal influence on them will be the success or failure (from the HU's point of view) of previously experienced HUMOR: was it (mostly) enjoyable or not? A positive experience enhances the likelihood of the HU continuing to search out and communicate HUMOR PRODUCTS, to create new ones and/or to enjoy those offered by others. This is known as offering HUMOR SUPPORT (see Pt 2 below).

Critically, HUs may select either the role of consumer of humor for themselves (with support from others), or that of humor producer i.e., HUMORIST—possibly both. In all cases, their choice will be influenced by their evolving TASTE IN HUMOR (see Pt 2) and also by other personal and cultural factors. In this way, experiences of humor shape the HU's personal style of using it in daily life (see SENSE OF HUMOR and HUMOR STYLES in Pt 2), that is, when, where and with whom to use HUMOR again, and for what purposes, whether benign or more aggressive (see also HUMOR OUTCOMES). Negative experiences with HUMOR, whether as HUMORIST or HUMOR RECIPIENT, and particularly ones occurring at highly impressionable periods of life such as childhood, are more likely to steer a person away from being an HU (see DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS RIDICULE AND LAUGHTER in Pt 2).

HUMORIST

HUMORIST (H) denotes both the person perceiving and/or producing the HUMOR PRODUCT (HP) and the person sharing it with others. Often, these two are the same person at different points of time but other times, they are two different people as provided for in the Humor Transaction Schema Stages 1 and 2. In the case of accidental humor, the HUMORIST detects a stimulus to humor in their environment rather than producing a novel HP. Whether accidental or created, an HP may or may not be shared by the H with others, although it is a common experience to be prompted to share an amusing HP—and sometimes even a really lame one. If sharing does take place, the person detecting, comprehending, appreciating (or not) and responding to the HP is the HUMOR RECIPIENT (HR). The H may be their own HR, initially as in the case of accidental humor, or subsequently as they evaluate their own humorous creation critically in order to improve it as professional Hs do. The HR may subsequently become an H, creating and sharing their own HPs.

HUMORIST and HUMOR RECIPIENT FACTORS

a) PERSONAL FACTORS

Personal factors are variables that apply to both the HUMORIST (H) and the HUMOR RECIPIENT (HR) and affect HUMOR DETECTION, COMPREHENSION, PRODUCTION, COMMUNICATION and APPRECIATION (see entries in Pt 2). They can affect every stage of the HUMOR TRANSACTION from HUMOR PRODUCTION to responses by the HRs including their future use of humor. Some factors are largely voluntary, such as the decision to use relevant skills and abilities, and include both the H's intentions in HUMOR PRODUCTION—which may be either benevolent or corrective (cf. 'benevolent humor' versus 'corrective humor', Ruch and Heintz 2016)—and their individual preferences and TASTE IN HUMOR (in Pt 2). Such individual differences apply

to producing humor as well as to transmitting and using it (see SENSE OF HUMOR, HUMOR APPRECIATION, HUMOR STYLES, DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS RIDICULE AND LAUGHTER and TASTE (CULTURES) IN HUMOR, all in Pt 2).

Other personal factors affecting HUMOR PRODUCTION and transmission are involuntary and/or environmental. These include the H's and HR's personal bodily state and mood (which are not voluntarily controllable); as well as relevant cultural constraints affecting the H and the HRs.

b) ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Environmental factors are variables that apply to both the HUMORIST (H) and the HUMOR RECIPIENT (HR) and affect HUMOR DETECTION, COMPREHENSION, PRODUCTION, COMMUNICATION and APPRECIATION (see entries in Pt 2). They can affect every stage of the HUMOR TRANSACTION from HUMOR PRODUCTION to responses by the HRs including their future use of humor. Many environmental factors are largely involuntary, for example, chance, time, place (e.g., whether that is a laughter-supportive environment like a bar or theatre, or a religious or other ceremonial occasion); presence or absence of stimulants (e.g., alcohol, laughing gas) and of other people including their gender, status, relationships, etc. Other factors vary systematically between people such as their family environment, quality of relationship to interaction partners, cultural and social norms (see Manke 2007). Gender or gender roles are particularly significant in influencing humor production, reception and response and research on these effects is extensive (for a recent review on gender effects in humor see Hofmann et al. 2020).

For practical reasons, here and in the Humor Transaction Schema, the psychological terminology that distinguishes between 'personal' and 'environmental' factors is adopted, but other disciplines studying humor and laughter often recognize an overlap between these two categories.

HUMOROUS STYLES (see **COMIC STYLES** above and **HUMOR STYLES** in Pt 2)

PART 2: GENERAL HUMOR-RELATED RESEARCH TERMS

AMUSEMENT (MIRTH, EXHILARATION etc.)

AMUSEMENT (A) (synonyms: mirth, mirthfulness, merriment, and more intensely, hilarity and exhilaration) is a typical emotional response to a HUMOROUS STIMULUS (see HUMOR PRODUCT, Pt 1). It is normally a state of pleasurable, relaxed excitation. Its induction is subject to social and environmental factors (such as the presence of a companion, time and place) and to organismic or personal factors (moods, traits, frame of mind), as well as to the quality of the stimulus itself. A is subject to introspection and can be assessed in physiological parameters. Most typically, A accompanies facial expressions of SMILING and, in more intense emotional states, true LAUGHTER (L, i.e., Duchenne smiling and laughter). A is the positive emotion most strongly aligned with the expression of L. Some researchers have seen it as essential to the experience of humor (e.g., Chafe 2007). Interpersonal functions claimed for A are bonding, social inclusion and exclusion, and cooperation. Intrapersonal functions include distraction from negative states that are cognitive (e.g., stress), emotional (e.g., anger) and physical (e.g., pain). Most early experimental studies of humor assessed L rather than the experience of AMUSEMENT.

DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS RIDICULE AND LAUGHTER

These DISPOSITIONS identify a cluster of three traits that show how individuals are habitually predisposed to either fearing being laughed at (gelotoPHObia, see Ruch and Proyer 2008, and for a review, Ruch et al. 2014); enjoying being laughed at (gelotoPHilia); or enjoying laughing at others (KATagelasticism). These are inter-individual difference variables that can be assessed in normal populations, but research has shown that one of them, gelotophobia, can also take clinically relevant extreme forms. This trait relates to negative responses towards humor: gelotophobes fear being ridiculed and appearing ridiculous to other people. They have a paranoid sensitivity towards others' LAUGHTER (L) and misinterpret normal humor and L as being weapons; they also show negative emotional responses to L and react by avoiding situations where being laughed at could happen. Importantly, the gelotophobe's interpretation of humor/laughter is independent of intention towards them (i.e., whether harmless or aggressive), meaning that they mis-interpret most instances as being malevolent. Gelotophilia is the disposition towards making oneself the target of jokes and humor and enjoying having others laugh at oneself. Katagelasticism describes the disposition to enjoy laughing at others.

HUMOR

As a current research term, no agreed definition of HUMOR exists. It can be viewed either as a broad umbrella term for all phenomena related to this field (e.g., LAUGHTER, SMILING, AMUSEMENT, jokes and joke-telling, comic stimuli such as cartoons, stage- and film-comedies and novels, varieties of HUMOR such as satire, farce, caricature, etc.); or as a particular worldview in the sense of smiling at the adversities and imperfections of life, following the civilizing tradition that values the ability to laugh at oneself. In this second usage, HUMOR refers more narrowly to benevolent or morally positive aspects, as distinct from more negative comic forms and styles such as using irony, sarcasm or biting wit and has been seen as linked to cultural tradition (see Wickberg 1998).

The psychology of humor refers to the study of HUMOR and people, not to the study of humorous materials or products such as jokes or cartoons. It includes several dimensions such as HUMOR PRODUCTION, HUMOR APPRECIATION, HUMOR COMPREHENSION (or HUMOR COMPETENCE), and HUMOR RESPONSES which include HUMOR SUPPORT or positive responses to others using humor (also included in HUMOR COMPETENCE, see Carrell 2009). The field of humor studies aims at describing, explaining, predicting and controlling (in a research setting) HUMOR and humorous behaviors. As such it overlaps with but is broader than comedy studies which tends to focus on the art of performing comedy. The Humor Transaction Schema article uses HUMOR in its broad umbrella meaning.

HUMOR COMPETENCE

HUMOR COMPETENCE is a concept identified in humor audiences by Carrell (2009) and concerns a person's ability and training in perceiving and responding to humor. Allied to joke competence, the concept was originally put forward as the linguistic ability to decode jokes and find them funny, although it did allow for some affective components such as regarding a topic as inappropriate (taboo) for joking. It is often used in a wider sense than just linguistic ability e.g., in training programs for the improvement of HUMOR DETECTION and comprehension (McGhee 2010). It is equally applicable to a HUMORIST and to a HUMOR RECIPIENT (see Pt 1 for both these terms).

HUMOR COMPREHENSION (HUMOR PROCESSING)

HUMOR COMPREHENSION (HC) denominates the capability to understand HUMOR (e.g., a joke), and that of being able to explain what makes it funny, or to be able (on reflection) to explain the mechanism of a joke's punch line or incongruity resolution. In practice, it is preceded by HUMOR DETECTION but is a separable process. HUMOR APPRECIATION (see HUMOR RESPONSE) is linked to HC but these two are also distinct processes. In incongruity-resolution (see INCONGRUITY THEORIES), the detection of an incongruity is similarly followed by comprehension, consisting of an explanation of the way the incongruity has been resolved plus the insight that while it makes sense, it is nevertheless inconsequential in real terms. HC is affected by the complexity of a stimulus and by its context, and it varies from one person to another, being influenced in part by intellectual ability (this is especially important with respect to children's abilities to comprehend jokes), pathology (such as brain lesions and schizophrenia) and by personality (e.g., gelotophobia, see DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS RIDICULE AND LAUGHTER); also by cultural factors such as personal taste (see TASTE (CULTURES) IN HUMOR) and politeness norms. Nevertheless, HC can be developed by practice, taking account of feedback received.

HUMOR DETECTION

HUMOR DETECTION (HD) is the ability to recognise that one has encountered a HUMOR PRODUCT but it does not necessarily include comprehending or appreciating it, i.e., the ability to recognize humorous incongruities, nonsense, mockery but not necessarily to be able to explain them. Thus, HD is a separate process from HUMOR COMPREHENSION and HUMOR APPRECIATION, although like them, it varies from one person to another and can be developed by life-experience and by practice, using feedback received in the process. In natural environments as opposed to laboratory circumstances, it is subject to cultural factors such as personal taste (see TASTE (CULTURES) IN HUMOR) and politeness norms. This is especially the case with accidental humor (see HUMOR PRODUCT and HUMORIST, Pt 1), as exemplified by Japanese culture (Inoue 2007: 28-9) as compared with British and Australian (Sinkeviciute 2019). Programs to stimulate HD ability include McGhee's Seven Humor Habits (2010). Brain scan studies have demonstrated that there is a distinction between HD and subsequent stages of comprehension, appreciation and response to humor (for an overview, see Hofmann and Rodden 2019).

HUMOR PRODUCTION

HUMOR PRODUCTION (HPn) entails the active generation of HUMOR, whether that is largely reproduction of existing humor (e.g., retelling a known joke) or using novel, often spontaneous methods of HUMOR CREATION (see Babad 1974; Ruch and Heintz 2019). HPn may occur in isolation, in response to conversational partners or as part of the professional work of comedians and writers. The two different abilities that go to make it up vary from one person to another and, to a certain degree, both can be developed by practice, taking account of feedback received. A related concept is the Multidimensional Model of Wittiness (Feingold and Mazzella 1993) which defines wittiness as the ability to perceive the relationship between seemingly incongruous things in an ingeniously humorous manner. Wittiness here comprises the three dimensions of humor motivation, humor cognition and importantly HUMOR COMMUNICATION (see Pt 1). The model embraces HPn as an ability but extends to including as separate aspects

the degree to which the person is motivated to be funny and is able to communicate humor effectively. HPn relates to intelligence and creativity, while motivation and communication are related to social and temperamental variables as well as to cultural factors such as politeness norms and TASTE (CULTURE) IN HUMOR. Tests of HPn ability usually require participants to generate HUMOR (actually a HUMOUR PRODUCT) that is then rated by a group of peers or experts. Despite the fact that individuals appreciate different kinds of HUMOR (i.e. vary in their TASTE IN HUMOR), these ratings of funniness and originality for generated humor have usually proved reliable: in fact, individuals in the tests tended to agree broadly on the cognitive judgement of what is and is not funny, regardless of their own personal TASTE IN HUMOR (see HUMOR RESPONSE).

HUMOR RESPONSE (APPRECIATION OF HUMOR; see also **HUMOR SUPPORT;** and **HUMOR RECIPIENT RESPONSES,** Pt 1)

The term HUMOR RESPONSE (HRes) was coined by McGhee (1979) to denominate the general range of responses to humor, which can vary widely. Most research focuses on whether or not something is perceived as ‘funny’. This is largely a cognitive evaluation of a HUMOR PRODUCT (HP, see Pt 1, i.e., HUMOR STIMULUS or event) and does not address the emotional response to humor which is actually AMUSEMENT (A: exhilaration, mirth etc.). This affective response is accompanied by a generalized state of playfulness, referred to by Chafe (2007: 8-9) as ‘the feeling of being non-serious’. In fact, individuals process HUMOR best in a playful rather than serious frame of mind (McGhee 1979), needing to be in a paratelic (i.e., activity-oriented, playful) motivational state as opposed to a telic motivational state (Apter 2001). HUMOR thus often requires a mode of communication that is non-bona fide (not in good faith) rather than the reverse (Raskin 1985). Behaviorally, SMILING (S) and LAUGHTER (L) may be nonverbal indicators of A; however, A can also occur without S and L. There are also qualitatively and functionally different elicitors of S and L besides HUMOR (see below).

HRes is to be distinguished from HUMOR COMPREHENSION. The latter is the ability to explain what makes an HP funny, independent of appreciation (or lack) of it. HRes can be positive (e.g., experiencing A, finding jokes funny, liking them), negative (e.g., feeling bored, embarrassed, offended) or a mixture of both; and significantly, such emotional evaluations of the HP can be made independently of one another (Ruch and Rath 1993). Positive HRes’s have also been termed HUMOR SUPPORT (Hay 2001). HRes is subject to inter-individual and intra-individual differences (e.g., Ruch, Köhler, and van Thriel 1996; 1997), and is influenced by many factors including the nature of the HP or stimulus (i.e., its content as well as structure, see INCONGRUITY THEORIES), its salience, and social factors (e.g., presence of others, cultural differences, see Schnurr and Chan 2011; Wise 2016; Wise and Velayutham 2019); also by cognitive style and personal TASTE IN HUMOR. A wide range of motivational causes for the response behavior to an HP has been postulated: amongst them, ignorance, boredom with repetition, attraction to novelty and, importantly, mode adoption (i.e., the desire to join in with someone likely to produce more humor). Positive mode adoption may indicate not only appreciation of the humor but also other social processes (e.g., competitiveness, see Attardo 2001).

HRes will also be strongly affected by the competence of any performance or communication by the HUMORIST (see Pt 1) and thus by the ‘polish’ that can be achieved by a combination of skill and rehearsal. While re-exposure to familiar material may result in lower pleasurable responses (e.g., boredom, ‘I’ve heard that one before’), it can also increase positive responsiveness (‘That’s my favorite, I love that one’). In fact, much HUMOR depends on repetition for its effect, despite frequent claims that surprise is an essential ingredient (Attardo 2014; Goel and Dolan 2007; and see INCONGRUITY THEORIES). More plausibly, a combination

of predictability and surprise is likely normal for HUMOR, with the HUMOR RECIPIENT (see Pt 1) experiencing enjoyment when expectations about the trajectory of the humorous narrative and resolution of its incongruities are satisfied in part or in whole. After all, a punchline to a joke is something that is expected, even if its precise nature is unknown and surprising.

Some environmental factors such as the presence of stimulants (e.g., alcohol, laughing gas) can have a strong positive influence on HRes. S and L are also more marked in communal situations (reflecting the presence of an audience as well as the nature of its responses) and also when the HUMOR is communicated within a play-frame or formal demarcation of the circumstances as appropriate for HUMOR. This can be achieved simply by labelling the HP (e.g., billing a play as a comedy or placing a visual frame around a newspaper cartoon or video-clip), but other signals can also serve the same purpose (see e.g., the role of the *warai-no-ba*, or designated laughter time/space, in Japanese culture, see Oda 2007). Other important factors are whether the recipients of the HUMOR are a voluntary or involuntary audience and the nature of their relationships with the H and with other audience members. For example, when a stand-up comedian singles out a member of the audience to be exposed to aggressive HUMOR, a very different (if mixed) HRes is evoked from that individual and from the rest of the audience (see Milner Davis 2009: 45-46 for the surprising HRes's to a specific case of performance by Australian 'ethnic comedians').

HUMOR STIMULUS (see also **HUMOR PRODUCT**, Pt 1)

The HUMOR STIMULUS (HSt) denotes what sparks the detection and appreciation of humor. In form it may be verbal, visual or sensory (e.g., inappropriate odors, tickling or experiences such as being whirled around, or nearly slipping but recovering). HSts vary in intentionality, complexity, content, structure, type or genre, and in modes and media of communication. The last may be personal communications or written formats, static drawings or animations (with or without sound-track), live-stage performances or electronic media. The mode of delivery may be via a carefully planned and prepared HUMOR PRODUCT (see Pt 1) such as an elaborate practical joke (see Marsh 2015) or via improvisation and even accidental humor. While most instances of a HSt require intentionality involving a creator (or HUMORIST, H, see Pt 1) and often an intermediary or performer (i.e., an H, who may or may not be the same as the original creator of the stimulus), Hs can also simply find HUMOR in their perception of the world around them, making an important distinction between an *intentional* and an *accidental* HSt. A facility in locating accidental or unintentional HSts relates to the narrow versus the broad definition of HUMOR (e.g., Lersch 1962, who described HUMOR as a world view that regards everything that is earthly, human and imperfect with lightness and cheerful composure, making a person more likely to spot a HSt around them). The ability to adopt such a world-view underlies what is called 'survival humor' or 'gallows humor': the capacity to laugh at trials and tribulations in life that were certainly not created to be amusing. Humorous stimuli have also been termed 'laughables' (Glenn 2003). Since an HSt's effectiveness often depends on delivery by an intermediary, it is linked to HUMOR CREATION, PRODUCTION and COMMUNICATION as well as to practice, rehearsal and repetition (see HUMOR RESPONSE).

Many categories of HSt have specific structures and names and may be more typical of one culture than another. The joke—so widespread as to be termed the 'fruit-fly' of humor research (e.g., Morreall 2004; Kuipers 2008)—is usually short, pithy and well-adapted to experimentation. It is defined by its form: a tripartite structure, usually verbal, with a set-up, narrative (shorter or longer as the case may be) and punch-line. While common in many cultures, it is not favored by all, e.g., traditional Japanese culture privileges amusing narrative and word-play over the joke format that often ridicules others (Oshima 2007: 107). In humor research, theory has often emerged from the analysis of one particular category of HSt, e.g., the General Theory of Verbal Humor (Raskin 1985; Attardo 1994) which addressed the

construction of standard jokes; although it has been extended to apply to narrative humor (Attardo 1998, 2001) and selected elements have been used to parse televisual humor (Tsakona 2009). Broad classes of HSt are often distinguished in this way by their structure (e.g., single frame cartoons versus strip cartoons with more narrative and story-telling; stage or film-comedies versus tragi-comedies that veer away from being humorous towards eliciting emotional reactions such as pity and alarm). Other classifications can be made on the basis of intentionality or the implied message of the humor e.g., to distinguish between nonsense humor and sarcasm or satire, or between benevolent humor and corrective humor (for these kinds of distinction, see also COMIC STYLES and HUMOR STYLES).

HUMOR STYLES (see also **COMIC STYLES**, **HUMOROUS STYLES**, Pt 1)

Style is a literary research term that identifies the nature or the ‘flavor’ of aesthetic works, including comedy and humor. Within psychology, however, HUMOR STYLE (HS) describes a qualitative difference in the way humor is used by individuals, while the term COMIC STYLE (CS) has been adopted for a more specific range of such uses. Of the two, HS is the more widely used term in psychological studies of humor. Like HS, however, CS is also used in humor research beyond psychology to denominate different types of genres, tonalities and flavors in comedy and humor. To avoid confusion, the Humor Transaction Schema uses HUMOROUS STYLE (see COMIC STYLES, Pt 1) to refer to this aspect of a HUMOR PRODUCT. As it applies to people, HS can be considered on different levels of abstraction, ranging from very specific, narrow HSs that are closely linked to specific behaviors, to more abstract styles that include a wider range of behaviors in daily life. Two prominent approaches to using the term HSs are the Humorous Behavior Q-Sort Deck (Craik et al. 1996) and the conceptualization of HSs by Martin and colleagues (2003). These definitions differ in seeing styles either as clusters of humor behaviors that occur together or as the functions that ways of using humor can have. Both definitions operate at a high level of abstraction.

A more recent concept of HSs identifies eight more concrete, lower-level styles that were first described by Schmidt-Hidding (1963) in his collation of humor-related words found in English. This approximates literary and aesthetic usage, and yields the following: humor, fun, nonsense, wit, irony, satire, sarcasm and cynicism. These form the CSSs of Ruch et al. (2018). Used in psychology, these can apply to both motivation (i.e., behavior in using HUMOR) and instances of HUMOR i.e., the nature or style of an individual HUMOR STIMULUS (HUMOR PRODUCT, see Pt 1). Recently, a model on individual differences in humor has proposed a unifying framework to the different styles approaches in psychology (see Ruch and Heintz 2019). A critique of Schmidt-Hidding’s etymology and its application to modern humor studies is Hempelmann (2017). For how these terms are used in the Humor Transaction Schema article, see COMIC STYLES, HUMOROUS STYLES, Pt 1.

HUMOR SUPPORT (see also **HUMOR RESPONSE**; and **HUMOR RECIPIENT RESPONSES** in Pt1)

Humor support is a positive HUMOR RESPONSE that goes well beyond laughing or smiling in response to a HUMOR PRODUCT or stimulus. Using both words and actions, humor support encourages the HUMORIST to continue to communicate humorously with a HUMOR RECIPIENT and in general signals that the humor supporter favors the sharing of humor (Hay 2001).

HUMOR THEORIES

Keith-Spiegel (1972) identified eight different categories of humor theory: biological theories (theories assuming that HUMOR/LAUGHTER has evolved as a form of communication involving vocal ‘grooming’, appeasement, etc.); SUPERIORITY THEORIES (superiority over others or oneself); INCONGRUITY THEORIES (incongruity of concepts, themes, topics, actions, etc.); RELIEF THEORIES (involving surprise, ambivalence, relief and/or release from tension); configural theories (based on INCONGRUITY THEORY but assuming that the source of amusement is the *insight* into how seemingly unrelated elements, configurations or thought patterns fit together in HUMOR, i.e., the Gestalt); and psychoanalytic theories (focusing on the taboos and tensions that humor can relieve). So far, none of these different theories manages to give a full account of HUMOR. Each focuses mainly on certain aspects of either humor’s contents or its processing or on responses to humor (see HUMOR RESPONSE). Possibly a combination of these and other yet-to-developed theories might give a full picture of HUMOR (cf. Martin and Ford, 2018); but even such an approach is unlikely to provide a testable theory of how HUMOR can be (re)created.

INCONGRUITY THEORIES OF HUMOR

INCONGRUITY THEORIES OF HUMOR are a group of theories that try to explain either the cognitive mechanisms of humor processing (see HUMOR COMPREHENSION) or the structural properties of HUMOR STIMULI (see also HUMOR PRODUCTS, Pt 1). Incongruity (I) is one of the oldest postulated mechanisms of HUMOR, with roots in philosophy dating back to Kant and Aristotle. It refers to a divergence from an accepted cognitive model of reference or from the pattern of a linguistic script or an inconsistency of actual outcome in speech or action with logical expectation (leading to the emotion of surprise among other responses; but see also HUMOR RESPONSE for comment on the ambivalent nature of surprise in much humor). Most accounts of this theory state that in HUMOR the detection of a specific case of I is followed by a resolution of the divergence/inconsistency (e.g., Suls 1972) and there is general agreement about these two stages of the process of perceiving and understanding HUMOR (e.g., McGhee, Ruch and Hehl 1990). However, while the presence of an I is often held to be a necessary (if insufficient) condition for HUMOR, resolution of that I may not always lead to the perception of something as being funny. Indeed, lack of resolution can also be a reason for perceiving something as funny: so-called ‘nonsense jokes’ for example are based on no (or only partial) resolution of their innate incongruities. Some authors even argue that in HUMOR, the resolution of I (often referred to as Inc-Res, e.g., Oring 1992) is always only partial. Further, the two stages (I and resolution) may account for HUMOR COMPREHENSION but not for HUMOR APPRECIATION (cf. McGhee and Goldstein 1972).

A third stage may be required for the experience of HUMOR, in which it is concluded by the HUMOR RECIPIENT (HR, see Pt 1) that the resolution is safely nonserious if not actually nonsensical. According to Ruch (2008), this third stage allows an HR to distinguish humor from a non-amusing problem-solving process. I-resolution and nonsense have been identified as two distinct and underlying structural categories in both verbal jokes and cartoons that are clearly differentiated between in HUMOR APPRECIATION (Ruch 1981). The Semantic Theory of Humor (Raskin 1985) is essentially based on the logic of I-resolution (Attardo 1997). Extended by Attardo and Raskin (1991) as the General Theory of Verbal Humor (or GTVH), it postulates six hierarchically structured ‘knowledge resources’ essential to constructing or appreciating HUMOR: script opposition (I between two verbal scripts); a logical mechanism (approximating the third stage of I-resolution theory or the understanding that the resolution is nonsensical or funny); the situation (situational information that is not itself funny but necessary for

understanding a joke); a target (information about the joke's different target/s); a narrative strategy (originally limited to a formal structure such as a joke or riddle); and language resources (e.g., syntactic and lexical choices). Others have qualified the nature of the I needed for AMUSEMENT to occur: Rothbart and Pien (1976) suggested in their Arousal-Safety account of HUMOR that the I needs to be seen as harmless/non-threatening for amusement to occur. This has been emphasized more recently by Oring (2016; 2003) who points to 'appropriate incongruity' as the key—perhaps the sole—element of the GTVH essential to HUMOR. A similar approach is taken by Veatch (1998) and also by McGraw and Warren (2010) in what has come to be known as the Benign Violation Theory of humor (or BVT). This perspective certainly makes better allowance for the complex combination of predictability and surprise often found in instances of HUMOR.

LAUGHTER (see also SMILING)

LAUGHTER (L) at least in modern humans is an audio-visual expressive-communicative signal (see Ruch and Ekman 2001) that forms part of a possible range of HUMOR RESPONSES. It can also occur in response to non-humorous stimuli such as embarrassment and fear or horror. Several different but inter-dependent systems of the body (including respiration, acoustic production, facial movements, and body movements) are involved in generating this expressive pattern. L serves many different functions, some social and emotion-expressive, and some can be considered as positive and others as negative. It has many different elicitors and some of these are emotional or affective such as AMUSEMENT (A), relief, schadenfreude and derision, while others are key social functions such as topic determination, hierarchy affirmation and social cohesion. Further discrete elicitors include laughing gas and the unpleasant causes of pathological laughter (Lauterbach et al. 2013). Many studies fail to distinguish between L and HUMOR, or use the terms interchangeably. Yet HUMOR may occur without L and vice versa, despite the fact that A is a potent elicitor of L.

Anthropological studies have established that L is an innate behavior (Davila Ross et al. 2009). In humans, it typically displays itself around the fourth month in normal infants (earlier onset is known). L is often claimed to be one of the most important nonverbal human interaction signals, mostly benign in nature, and theories have been advanced that it emerged as an appeasement mechanism in social interaction among early primates (see HUMOR THEORIES, and for a recent survey, see Caruana et al., 2022). It relates to physiological and psychological benefits (e.g., well-being and relaxation). While L is found in humans, laughter-like vocalizations occur in other species (e.g., rats and primates). L can manifest in culturally-bound rituals, some entirely unrelated to the feeling of A (see Abe 2007 on ritual laughter). It can have entirely negative effects, for example on gelotophobes (see DISPOSITIONS TOWARDS RIDICULE AND LAUGHTER) and also in the case of laughter-induced asthma (Liangas et al. 2004).

RELIEF THEORIES OF HUMOR

RELIEF (OR RELEASE) THEORIES OF HUMOR (RTHs) are based on the assumption that in human life tension builds up for an individual or a group over some restraint or pressure, whether that is personal, social or cultural (e.g., respect for a social hierarchy, restrictions on mentioning a taboo subject or word), and that HUMOR and its related LAUGHTER serve to release superfluous (psychological and physiological) energy expended in maintaining that restraint. Freud's study of the similar functions of jokes and dreams (2003 [1905]) is usually read as presenting an RTH. Support for the RTH can be derived from empirical studies of how HUMOR is used, for example in the work-place (Holmes 2000; Wise 2016), and from studies of HUMOR as a stress-coping

measure within tight-knit groups such as emergency professions (e.g., Moran and Massam 1997) and medical settings. Discharge of tension via HUMOR can be both positive and negative in its impact, depending on a number of factors including the nature of the audience, the occasion and the intentions and skill of the HUMORIST. The work of humor therapists such as clown doctors, or modern versions of the traditional court jester (cf. Otto 2001) is informed by this theoretical approach. Cultural historians of HUMOR follow Bakhtin (1986) in regarding folkloric practices such as the observance of Carnival and today's institutionalized ceremonies such as business 'roasts' and 'muck-up' days (e.g., in schools and universities) as illustrating relief via HUMOR, designed to restore the status quo that has temporarily been suspended. The theory has also been extended to account for world-wide waves of jokes (so-called 'joke-cycles') in response to news of disasters and threatening events (Davies 2011).

SENSE OF HUMOR

SENSE OF HUMOR (SoH) serves as an umbrella term for all inter-individual differences related to personal habitual aspects of humor, such as appreciation and use (cf. Ruch 2008). In scientific articles, the term is used in different ways (e.g., referring to a fixed pattern of self-expression; relating to a theory or concept; relating to an assessment tool). There is no agreement on how SoH is best conceptualized. Rather, different concepts coexist, differing in broadness and in theoretical basis. They range from a temperamental basis for the SoH (cf. Ruch, Köhler and van Thriel 1996; 1997) to the hierarchical order of seven humor habits (McGhee 2010), to using the term to denominate a defense mechanism. McGhee's seven habits correlate well with the general concept of SoH, with one habit, playfulness, considered as a necessary pre-condition for it.

Some authors have however questioned whether SoH relates to any set of consistent and specific traits, arguing that it may be a relatively unspecific configuration of socially desirable characteristics (Cann and Calhoun 2001). Eysenck's (1952) ideas on this subject have been extended (Ruch and Hehl 1980) to acknowledge that individuals differ in both the ability to detect and understand HUMOR, the way in which they express AMUSEMENT (quantitatively and qualitatively), the ability to produce HUMOR, the appreciation of certain kinds of HUMOR, the active search for amusement-inducing stimuli, the ability to remember humorous materials and jokes, the ability to create HUMOR as well as the tendency to use it as a coping mechanism. Reflecting these distinctions, the Humor Transaction Schema article uses the term SoH to indicate a general, relatively stable attribute with consistent behavior patterns and habits, and distinguishes SoH from ability-related aspects such as HUMOR DETECTION, HUMOR COMPREHENSION, and HUMOR PRODUCTION.

In English customary usage, the term SoH indicates a positive and pleasant ability in an individual which ideally extends to laughing at one's self. With this sense attached, SoH has been included in psychological profiling since the development of early personality tests in the 1930s by Gordon Allport at Harvard University (see Wickberg 1998 on the evolution of this ordinary meaning of the term). The term is also often applied without great exactitude to national senses of humor, usually for the purpose of patriotic praise, and overlooking the tendency of such national traits (if they do exist) to adapt and modify themselves over time under the influence of foreign contacts and international media (Rolfe 2022).

SMILING (see also LAUGHTER)

SMILING (S) is one of the possible responses to HUMOR and to a HUMOR PRODUCT/STIMULUS (see Pt 1). Between 14 and 18 different qualities of S have been distinguished on a

morphological basis (e.g., by Bänninger-Huber 1996). However, only one type of S is claimed to be a signal of joy (this is referred to variously as a ‘felt smile’, an enjoyment smile, or a Duchenne Display (or DD; Ekman, Davidson, and Friesen 1990; Frank and Ekman 1993). DD is characterized by a joint and symmetric contraction of the zygomatic major muscle and the orbicularis oculi pars orbitalis muscle. It differs from other smiles in timing, coincidence of the S with speech, other motoric behavior (Ekman and Friesen 1982), and also in intensity (e.g., Krumhuber and Manstead 2009). Despite some critical challenges, the DD has repeatedly been shown to relate positively to self-reports on happiness/enjoyment/exhilaration (e.g., Ekman Friesen and Ancoli 1980; Ekman, Davidson and Friesen 1990; Harris and Alvarado 2005; Keltner and Bonanno 1997; Keltner, Ekman, Gonzaga, and Beer 2003; Matsumoto et al. 2008), as well as to the perceived funniness of jokes (and also to DD laughter, see Ruch 1997). A field experiment by Scherer and Ceschi (2000) found that reporting ‘good humor’ after having lost one’s baggage at an airport correlated positively with the expression of DDs, but not with polite smiles.

Besides altering facial expression, S also changes the position of the vocal tract. So-called ‘smiling voices’ can be detected as different from normal speech: smiling increases fundamental frequency (pitch), amplitude, and/or duration while speaking (although the last two hold true only for some individuals, see Haakana 2002; 2010). On the relationship between S and LAUGHTER (L), Ruch (1990; 1993; 1997) found that Duchenne smiling occurred at lower levels of reported amusement and joy and also funniness of jokes and that Duchenne laughter occurred at higher levels of such reports. Consequently, the difference between (true) smiling and laughter may be a difference in intensity of the emotion experienced i.e., amusement/exhilaration. Despite this, many evolutionary biologists claim that S and L evolved through phylogenetic development as different signals (see van Hooff 1972 and for a recent survey, Caruana et al 2022). Evidently, L is a more complex behavior than S, having not only facial parameters but also associations with lacrimation, respiration and body movements. Body posture and vocalization (phonation, resonance, articulation) also need to be taken into account (see Ruch and Ekman 2001). Many studies purporting to measure HUMOR RESPONSES lack detail and precision in measuring these different factors relating to S and L, both of which themselves form only part of the entire range of possible HUMOR RESPONSES.

SUPERIORITY THEORIES OF HUMOR

One of the oldest explanations for the experience of something (or someone) being funny or causing LAUGHTER (L) is based on the feeling of superiority by the HUMOR RECIPIENT (see Pt 1). SUPERIORITY THEORIES OF HUMOR (STHs) do not describe one single theoretical account, but rather a group of theories. They are customarily, if somewhat inaccurately, seen as originating with Aristotle and later Thomas Hobbes (2003 [1651]), and (under one interpretation) include Bergson (1999 [1901]) as well as others. STHs regard the source of AMUSEMENT (A) in humor as the experience (‘sudden glory’ cf. Hobbes) of perceiving somebody else as less smart, beautiful, skillful, socially acceptable, adaptable etc. In fact, for Hobbes, such superiority was not a sufficient condition for L (although he did not differentiate between L and HUMOR, the latter being a concept that post-dates his writings as well as those of Aristotle, especially in its modern research sense, as Condren 2021 has pointed out). Hobbes also stressed the importance of the suddenness of the event (‘without suddenness, the slope of happiness increment would conceivably be insufficiently precipitous to generate amusement’, Hobbes 2003 [1651]: 101), as well as its novelty, thus supporting a key role for surprise (see HUMOR RESPONSE, HRes). Prefiguring the modern concept of SoH, Hobbes also saw self-directed L as achieving superiority ‘over one’s former self’ as being less wise, less capable etc than now.

Gutman and Priest (1969) saw an increase in self-esteem via experiencing superiority as the most important (yet still not sufficient) condition for enjoyment of HUMOR. Other modern accounts relying on this group of theories stress the element of aggression. Zillman and Cantor postulated that humor always includes an element of disparagement: something malicious and potentially harmful must happen, or at least, the inferiority of someone or something must be implied before any HRes can occur (1976: 94). Gruner (1997) extended this idea by seeing HUMOR as a form of playful aggression where L arises from the feeling of victorious triumph over others. Like other theories, past and present, Gruner's is open to the criticism that it is neither falsifiable nor explains all forms of HUMOR and A. Studies that stress the role of transgression and taboo-violation in HUMOR (e.g., Bucaria and Barra 2016) also relate to the concept of HUMOR as playful aggression and link up with the importance of humorous INCONGRUITY being non-threatening to its recipients (Rothbart and Pien 1976; and see INCONGRUITY THEORIES OF HUMOR). Davies (2008) wisely remarked that all HUMOR breaks some rules, even verbal nonsense humor which transgresses the rules of grammar and logic.

TASTE (CULTURES) IN HUMOR

TASTE CULTURES IN HUMOR (TCHs) are identifiable group differences in humor preferences that exist both between different broad cultural groupings such as those defined by language and ethnicity and also within such groups. Studies by Kuipers (2015 [2006]) confirmed that Bourdieu's (1984 [1979]) aesthetic taste cultures hold good for preferences in HUMOR as well as for such things as art and fashion. Highbrow, lowbrow and possibly middle-brow TCHs exist in both the Netherlands and the US, despite their respective self-images as classless societies. Personal preferences vary in what kind of HUMOR is considered good and when and where it should be indulged in; and such preferences are shared with other like-minded individuals, forming a humor taste-culture or cultural group.

In addition to inter- and intra-cultural humor taste differences, observational studies (e.g. by Holmes and her team in New Zealand and elsewhere) have demonstrated that different workplaces and possibly professions are characterized by different approaches to using HUMOR and that this both contributes to and reflects variations in a larger corporate culture (e.g., Holmes and Marra 2002). When several different taste cultures combine (for example in a multi-cultural workplace), some use of HUMOR can risk not only failure in HUMOR DETECTION (HD) and HUMOR COMPREHENSION (HC, due to language limitations etc.) but may also receive negative kinds of HUMOR RESPONSE (Schnurr and Chan 2009; Wise 2016; Haugh 2011). Especially when accidental humor is concerned (see HUMOR STIMULUS; and HUMOR PRODUCT and HUMORIST in Pt 1), differences in politeness norms (e.g., between New Zealand and Chinese cultures, see Schnurr and Chan 2009; and for Japanese cultures, see Inoue 2007: 28-9) can obviate both HD and HC. Both Kuipers (2015) and Holmes stress the flexibility of HUMOR and its many roles, both positive and negative, in social and professional interaction. It can serve to assert the power of the dominant social group but can also 'function as a bouquet, a shield, and a cloak, as well as an incisive weapon in the armoury of the oppressed' (Holmes 2000: 180).

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