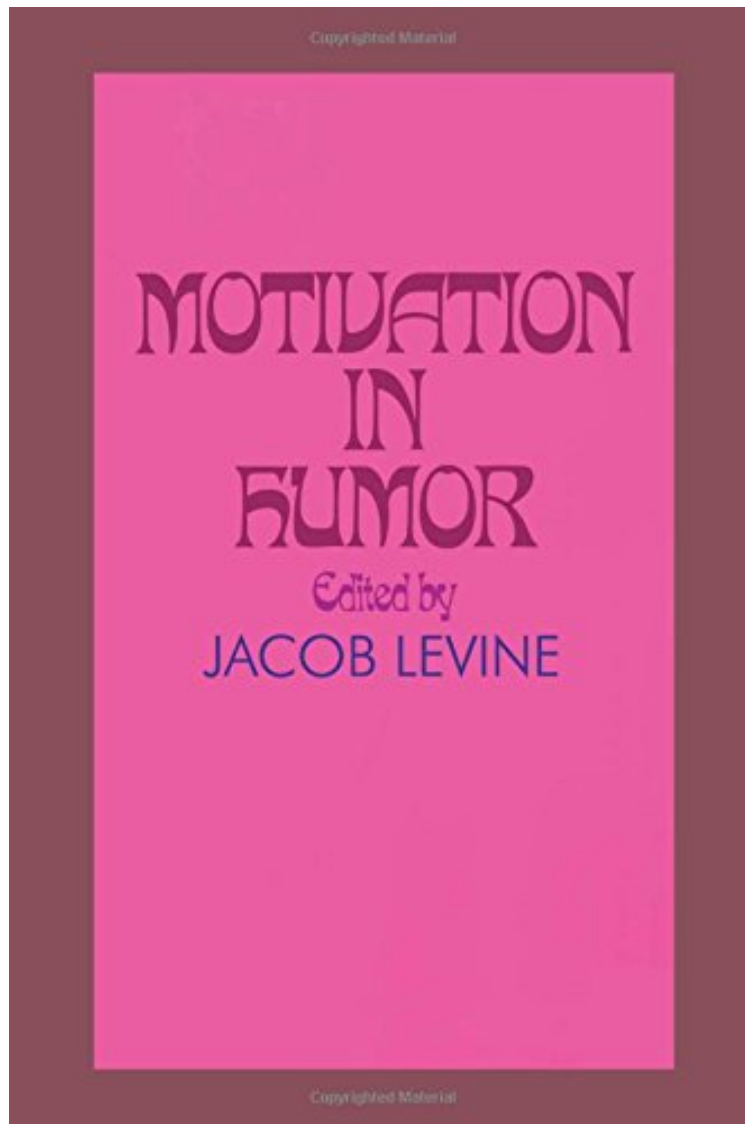


## Motivation in Humor

*Jacob Levine*

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**Jacob Levine : Motivation in Humor** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Motivation in Humor:

This is not a funny book--but it is the first to bring together contemporary experimental studies on humor. The fourteen scholarly papers included here mark an important breakthrough in this vital, complex, and largely unexplored

subject. *Motivation in Humor* shows that humor is researchable by scientific methods and indicates the difficulties involved in such work. Here are samples of the important parameters of behavior and attempts at defining the factors that influence the humor response as well as the effects of this response upon subsequent emotional states. In his expert introductory chapter, Jacob Levine traces the progress of humor research and analyzes the papers that follow. To summarize a few of his findings: Three basic research models--three conflicting models of the motivation of man--have been used to explain the motivational sources of humor: one is positive, one negative, and one mixed. These are: (1) cognitive-perceptual theory, which stresses the successful and surprising resolution of an incongruity, paradox, or double entendre; (2) behavior theory, with its emphasis on stimulus-response learning and the reduction of base drives; and (3) psychoanalytic theory, which emphasizes the gratification of the primary unconscious drives of sex and aggression in conjunction with the pleasures of mental activity that sometimes involve regression to infantile modes of thinking. The development of humor reflects an interaction between innate psycho physiological processes and learned response patterns. Evidence indicates that humor is influenced by such diverse situations and individual dispositions as interpersonal anxiety, prior emotional set, and social setting. Studies also point to the cathartic effects of humor appreciation, particularly with aggressive or tendentious humor. The considerable research prompted by these ideas has begun to throw some light on the positive motives, a reflection of the new approaches to motivation theory. Teachers will find this volume not only fascinating reading for themselves but also an extremely valuable adjunct for courses on human behavior as well as motivation and personality.

**About the Author** Jacob Levine is Chief of the Psychology Service at the Veterans Administration Hospital, West Haven, Connecticut, and Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry (Psychology) at Yale University School of Medicine. He was awarded his A.B. by Clark University and his A.M. and Ph.D. by Harvard University. Dr. Levine has held a number of positions as a psychologist with the United States Government and has taught psychology at the University of Connecticut, Trinity College, Hartford College for Women, Yale and Wesleyan Universities. In addition, he serves as consultant to the Connecticut Commission on Mental Health. He has collaborated with F. C. Redlich and J. Bingham on *The Inside Story* (1952).