Wise, Humane, and Humble:

Psychological Perspectives on Humor as a Virtue

Thesis

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Ursula Beermann

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To Kiki

Abstract

Despite the diverse philosophical accounts of the relation of humor to virtue or vice, this ethical dimension has not been included explicitly in psychological humor research. Some authors have considered laughing at oneself a core component of humor and perhaps the particularly virtuous aspect of it, whereas others even denied its existence. Until now little empirical evidence exists. This thesis deals with humor as a virtue. Main aims are to identify aspects of humor that are seen as representing virtue (and vice) and to investigate which virtues are most compatible with humor. Furthermore, laughing at oneself is studied. It approaches this topic in three strands. In Part I of the thesis, the items from 12 current humor questionnaires, among them one comprehensive measurement (Humorous Behavior Q-Sort Deck, HBQD; Craik et al. 1993), served as a collection of a broad variety of humor behavior manifestations and statements. In Study I of this part, 76 participants rated them for the degree from vice via neutral to virtue. About two thirds of the behavior manifestations and statements within the comprehensive measurement were rated as neutral. About one sixth was rated as representing vice, and also about one sixth was judged as representing virtue. Study II addressed the nature of virtue that were represented in Study I. Therefore, 17 experts rated the degree of each of the six virtues identified as ubiquitous by Dahlsgaard, Peterson, and Seligman (2005) within the virtuous item contents of Study I. All virtues were represented, but wisdom and humanity were the virtues represented most highly. In Part II, lay people were asked directly to rate how often they exert virtue humorously. They were also asked to report situations in which virtue was achieved humorously. Again, wisdom and humanity were shown to be the two virtues judged to be most compatible with humor. But for all virtues situations were reported, and there was no difference in the number of situations between the virtues. Part III focused on the phenomenon of laughing at oneself. It

was assessed using a self- and peer-report measure on laughing at oneself (a subscale of the Sense of Humor Scale, McGhee, 1996) and an experimental approach. In the latter, the participants were confronted with distorted portraits of themselves. Their facial responses were videotaped and analyzed using the Facial Action Coding System (FACS, Ekman, Friesen, & Hager, 2002). Laughing at oneself could be shown to exist, i.e., genuine enjoyment displays were found. Furthermore, a convergence between the methods was shown. It seemed that laughing at oneself in questionnaire measures predicted most strongly laughter at one's own distorted portraits. Even if no final conclusion could be drawn as to which virtue laughing at oneself represents, it seemed to match more the descriptions of the protagonists of laughing at oneself as virtue. In conclusion, this thesis provided a first basis of finer-graded evidence on humor as a virtue from a psychological perspective.

Zusammenfassung

Philosophen verschiedener Epochen haben sich mit der Beziehung zwischen Humor und Tugend bzw. Laster beschäftigt, wogegen in der psychologischen Humorforschung diese ethische Dimension bisher nicht explizit berücksichtigt wurde. Ähnliches gilt für das Phänomen „Lachen über sich selbst". Während manche Autoren es als Kernelement oder sogar als den entscheidenden Aspekt des tugendhaften Humors ansahen, bestritten andere Autoren überhaupt seine Existenz. Bislang gibt es kaum empirische Belege dafür. Diese Dissertation beschäftigt sich mit Humor als Tugend. Die Hauptziele sind, jene Aspekte des Humors zu identifizieren, die als tugendhaft bzw. lasterhaft gesehen werden, weiters zu untersuchen, welche Tugenden insbesondere mit Humor vereinbar sind, und schliesslich das Phänomen „Lachen über sich selbst" zu untersuchen. Die Arbeit nähert sich dem Thema in drei Zugängen. In Teil I dienten Items von 12 gängigen Humorfragebögen als Sammlung einer breiten Auswahl von Humorverhaltensweisen und Aussagen zu Humor, darunter ein als umfassend geltender Humorfragebogen (Humorous Behavior Q-Sort Deck, HBQD, Craik et al., 1996). Die Items wurden in Studie I dieses Teils von 76 Teilnehmenden auf den Gehalt von Tugend und Laster beurteilt. Ein wichtiges Ergebnis war, dass ungefähr zwei Drittel der Items des umfassenden Humorfragebogens als neutral, ein Sechstel davon als lasterhaft und ein weiteres Sechstel als tugendhaft bewertet wurden. Studie II untersuchte die Art der Tugenden, die in Studie I repräsentiert waren. Hierfür beurteilten 17 Experten den Grad jener sechs Tugenden, die von Dahlsgaard, Peterson und Seligman (2005) als in den meisten Kulturkreisen gültig identifiziert wurden. Alle Tugenden waren vertreten, jedoch Weisheit und Humanität am stärksten. In Teil II wurden Laien nach ihrer Einschätzung gefragt, wie oft sie Tugenden auf humorvolle Art und Weise verwirklicht haben, und gebeten, entsprechende Situationen zu schildern. Wiederum erwiesen sich

Weisheit und Humanität als jene Tugenden, die als mit Humor am besten kompatibel bewertet wurden, jedoch wurden für alle sechs Tugenden annähernd gleich viele Situationen berichtet. In Teil III wurde das Augenmerk auf das Phänomen „Lachen über sich selbst" gelegt. Dieses wurde über eine Selbst- und Fremdbeschreibungsskala für Über-sich-selber-Lachen (eine Unterskala der Sense of Humor Scale, McGhee, 1996) und einen experimentellen Zugang erfasst. In letzterem wurden die Teilnehmenden mit verzerrten Portraits von sich selbst konfrontiert. Ihre mimischen Reaktionen wurden auf Video aufgezeichnet und mittels des Facial Action Coding Systems (FACS, Ekman, Friesen & Hager, 2002) analysiert. Es konnte gezeigt werden, dass ein Über-sich-selber-Lachen existiert, d.h., dass manche Personen mit echtem Erheiterungsausdruck reagierten. Weiters konnte eine Übereinstimmung über die Methoden hinweg gefunden werden. Die von den Probanden selbst beschriebene Tendenz, über sich selber zu lachen, schien am stärksten die tatsächliche Lachreaktion auf die eigenen Bilder vorherzusagen. Auch wenn noch keine endgültige Schlussfolgerung gezogen werden kann, welche Tugend nun das Über-sich-selber-Lachen repräsentiert, so scheint es doch den Beschreibungen aus der Literatur von Über-sich-selber-Lachen als Tugend zu entsprechen. Insgesamt konnte diese Dissertation eine erste Basis für einen feinkörnigeren Beleg von Humor als Tugend aus einer psychologischen Perspektive bringen.

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General Introduction

Humor is a phenomenon that we regularly encounter in everyday life. Everybody seems to have an understanding of humor and a sense of humor and considers it an important characteristic of oneself and of others. Also, people want others to be able to "laugh at themselves" and not to take everything so seriously. Yet, it is not entirely clear what humor actually is. When people are asked what they understand "humor" to be, they often say it is a cheerful attitude or serenity that helps us face adversity. This is a notion of humor that was already brought forward by the humanists, five centuries ago. They separated this view of humor from mean-spirited laughter, and put forward the thought of (benevolent) humor as a virtue.

Virtue and vice, in contrast to humor, are not mentioned so much in everyday language and seem outdated. But specific virtues such as humanity, justice, or courage are commonly used. Virtues can be seen as resources for people wanting to lead a good life. Humor—in its benevolent form—can be seen as a resource as well, either in its own right or in service of other virtues. Parents settling a dispute between their children in a humorous way have reached a goal of justice in a way that makes all involved parties feel better. Yet, until now psychological research on humor has not approached humor from the perspective of virtue.

To this day, no consensus on an encompassing definition of humor has been found. Some theories focus on explanations of the essence of humor and *why* something is funny, others speculate about different functions of humor (Keith-Spiegel, 1972). Humor is not in the purview of a single field of research, so several disciplines approach it with their theories and methods: humor is studied from philosophical, sociological,

linguistic, literary, computational, and psychological perspectives, and even more. The conceptualizations of the moral evaluation of humor are equally varied.

This thesis addresses humor as a virtue. This includes the question which aspects of humor are considered to represent virtue or serve virtue, as well as which of the virtues these might be, and in general how virtuousness can be achieved in a humorous way. Furthermore, laughing at oneself, often considered the core component of humor, will be examined. While this thesis addresses humor from a psychological perspective, theories from other disciplines like philosophy or theology have to be taken into account as well, as they have contributed to the shaping of the notion of virtue.

The thesis comprises a general introduction, three parts describing the studies that were conducted, and an overall discussion. In the general introduction, I will first present historical developments of the term *humor*, as this development is connected to considerations of humor as a virtue throughout history as well. I will also describe how current psychological humor research deals with humor. I will then present theoretical considerations on virtue in general, and will introduce literature on the moral evaluation of humor and laughter, as well as on laughing at oneself. Finally, I will narrow down the aims and research questions of the thesis, and provide an overview of the three empirical sections.

Humor and The Sense of Humor

Historical Development of the Term "Humor"

When approaching the topic of humor as a virtue, it is helpful to understand how the term "humor" and its changing connotations developed historically. The term "humor", and also the term "wit", have not always been in the field of the comic.

Humor (lat. *umor* = fluid) constituted the body fluids in medieval pathology referring to blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963; Ruch, 2004, 2007). Unbalanced body fluids produced a certain temperament, depending on which fluid was predominant. Predominance of a certain humor then was considered to influence "unstable behavior", that is, mood, and was referred to as "good humour" or "bad humour" (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963, p. 94). It entered "the comic" and was potentially associated with laughter only in the 16th and 17th centuries, when persons showing eccentric behavior that was thought to be caused by predominant humors were laughed at and called "humorists", whereas "men of humor" imitated this behavior in a funny way. A talent of humor then was the ability to make others laugh (Ruch, 2004; Schmidt-Hidding, 1963; Wickberg, 1998).

By the end of the 17th century, moralists argued that people should not be laughed at because of their oddities, as they are not responsible for them. Those peculiarities should rather be smiled at in an understanding attitude towards the incongruities of the world. "Good" and "bad" humor as well as "true" and "false" wit were distinguished, and "good humour"—later "humour" alone—became the term for the tolerant and benevolent forms of humor (Ruch, 2004, p. 586; Schmidt-Hidding, 1963). It was also only in the 18th century, that "laughing at" and "laughing with" were distinguished (Wickberg, 1998). It was at that time also that the conceptualization of humor shifted to *virtue* (Ruch, 2004). One key person for this shift was Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713). According to him, it was not right to laugh only because something was different in a person. But it was approved to laugh at the fake or the phony. Thus, ridicule could serve as the test of truth. Shaftesbury's "test of ridicule" (cf. Schmidt-Hidding, 1963; Wickberg, 1998) was a way of distinguishing between the true

and the false, and it was a process by means of which, in a discourse, things were defined as ridiculous, rather than a passive response to the ridiculous (Wickberg, 1998). Good humour then was the term for a sovereign attitude to expose oneself to mockery and criticism of others (Ruch, 2004). In the 19th century, finally, humor even became a British cardinal virtue alongside tolerance, compromise, and common sense (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963).

Wit, in contrast to humor, related rather to a cognitive ability (with the German word *Witz*, like the words *wissen* = know and *weise* = wise, stemming from the Indo-Germanic root *ueid-*, Schmidt-Hidding, 1963) and could also be hurtful. Both wit and humor entered the field of "the comic" which, in historical nomenclature, has its origin in the fields of aesthetics (Ruch, 2004, 2007). This nomenclature is mainly established in Europe. There, the comic was one element among other aesthetic qualities like beauty, tragedy, or harmony (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963). Humor, in turn, was only one component of the comic and was differentiated from wit, mockery, fun, or sarcasm. Humor, according to Schmidt-Hidding (1963), was sympathetic and based on the heart, whereas wit was based on the mind.

Based on this distinction, Schmidt-Hidding (1963) consulted literature from antiquity and analyzed the modern vocabulary of humor. He derived eight different comic styles, which received much attention in German humor literature, namely *humor* (in its narrow sense of an understanding towards the incongruities of the world), *wit, irony, satire, fun, nonsense, sarcasm,* and *cynicism*. These comic styles differ with respect to several criteria like their aim, subject, attitude of the one using them, behavior towards the other, or linguistic characteristics. For instance, humor behavior is understanding, gracious, and benign, and includes oneself in judgments, whereas

sarcastic behavior is hostile. The attitude of someone using nonsense is playful, but liking, whereas satire is tensed, critical, superior and often negative.

In a second nomenclature that is prevalent in North America, humor is used as an umbrella term for *everything* that is funny (Ruch, 2004). Aspects like humor creation, coping humor, or aggressive humor, are all subsumed by the term "humor." This broad, multidimensional understanding of humor is prevalent in today's humor research.

Current Humor Research

The conceptualization of humor is not consistent in contemporary humor research either. In everyday language as well, differing ideas of what humor is are present, as a survey by Ruch (2002) in different parts of the world found. Most generally, it has been considered to be a temperament. However, humor has also been considered by some to be a mood, a talent, a frame of mind, and/or a virtue. There are also numerous theories on what humor is or why something is funny. For instance, some theorists suggest that incongruity (cf. Suls, 1972) or superiority (cf. Gruner, 1997) is a necessary condition for humor. A distinction has to be made between "humor" and "the sense of humor" as well. In English, sense of humor as generally understood in humor research is an umbrella term for habitual individual differences in humor (Ruch, 2007). Jokes or cartoons may be an expression of humor, in English sometimes referred to as "canned humor".

The multidimensionality of humor has also influenced the development of its scientific measurement, which began in the 20th century. About 70 psychological instruments, some historical, others in current use, have been developed. Especially over the last 30 years the number of instruments has increased (for a review, see Ruch,

2004, 2007). They measure humor as an ability, as an attitude, as humor appreciation, or, most often, as a temperamental trait, and partially accommodate its differing evaluative character. There is, however, no measurement directly addressing humor as a virtue. Considering that a common notion of humor in everyday language is often connected to a humanistic understanding of humor (e.g., a cheerful attitude that helps us to face the adversity of life) it seems necessary to approach this historical notion of humor—i.e., humor as a virtue—psychologically in order to capture it empirically and close this gap. In order to study humor as a virtue, it is important to also consider what has been said on virtue in general.

Virtue

Why study virtue? The idea of how to lead a good life has also been addressed in antiquity. Aristotle (as cited in Norman, 1998) claimed that the ultimate goal of human action is happiness. He referred to *eudaimonia,* which was not only a state of feeling happy, but also has some connotation of "well-being" and "flourishing" (Norman, 1998). Virtue, (Greek: *areté*) translates as "excellences", and Comte-Sponville (2001) in his classification of virtues therefore mentions "qualities that constitute the essence and excellence of humankind" (book cover) and generally sees virtue as acting morally, humanely, or benevolently. Yearley (1990) defined virtue as "a disposition to act, desire and feel that involves the exercise of judgment and leads to a recognizable human excellence or instance of human flourishing" (p. 13). For Peterson and Seligman (2004) virtues constitute core characteristics that are valued by religious thinkers and moral philosophers (see also Peterson, 2006).

Several classifications of virtue have been considered here. Plato (360 BC/1969) included among the virtues justice, courage, wisdom, and temperance. In the Old

Testament, the Ten Commandments can be seen as a catalogue of virtue (Ex. 20:2-17, Revised Standard Version). The virtues faith, charity, and hope were proposed by Thomas Aquinas (as cited in Peterson & Seligman, 2004) as the theological virtues. There are the Prussian virtues (containing for example sense of order, obedience, and toughness) and values appreciated by religious groups and more. Comte-Sponville (2001) proposed a virtue catalogue with 18 virtues, among which are politeness, courage, justice, generosity, gratitude, love, and humor. Dahlsgaard, Peterson, and Seligman (2005) reviewed philosophical and theological literature in order to find virtues that are ubiquitous. The virtues they found were *wisdom*, *courage*, *humanity*, *justice*, *temperance*, and *transcendence*.

Positive Psychology aims to counterbalance psychological research on human problems, which for decades has dominated the field, with research on positive traits. Practitioners should concentrate on amplifying strengths rather than, or at least in addition to, repairing weaknesses (cf. Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2002; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Thus, Peterson and Seligman developed the Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Strengths (2004) in which they proposed 24 character strengths that were subordinated the virtues. Examples for strengths are curiosity, perspective (subordinated to *wisdom*), kindness and love (assigned to *humanity*), or gratitude, hope, and humor (classified under *transcendence*). The character strengths can be assessed with the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS, Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Character strengths have been found to contribute to life satisfaction. Humor is among those strengths contributing most strongly (e.g., Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004; Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, & Seligman, 2007). Furthermore, beside bravery and

kindness, humor seemed to predict increased life satisfaction after recovery from physical illness (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2006). However, as I have illustrated before, humor is not a unidimensional construct. Therefore, it is necessary to identify those aspects of humor that are able to do so.

Moral Evaluation of Humor and Laughter

The moral evaluation of humor and laughter has not always been the same, but has changed over different periods in history. Some have stressed that humor represents vice, whereas others emphasized its virtuous side, and still others consider it to be morally neutral. In the following section I will illustrate the different views on the moral evaluation of humor.

Humor as Vice

Generally, followers of the superiority theory of humor consider humor to represent vice rather than virtue. Superiority theory states that humor only arises because of a feeling of superiority over somebody else (cf. Plato, 360 BC/1929, Aristotle, 335 BC/1932, Hobbes, 1588–1679, as cited in Morreall, 1987). Besides the loss of rational control when allowing an emotion like amusement in us, Plato (as cited in Morreall, 1987) considered amusement to be malice and disapproved of it. Aristotle (335 BC/1932) considered comedy "a representation of inferior people" and "the laughable […] a species of the base or ugly" (Section 1449a). However, Aristotle was not as strict as Plato, and found that "playful conversation" (335 BC/1934, 4.8) reflects good taste in social behavior, but only in moderation. Hobbes, again, stated that laughter expresses sudden glory when realizing that one is superior to somebody else (as cited in Morreall, 1987). Addison who was a journalist in the 18th century objected to laughing

and ridiculing others and to wit, if it was not "tempered with virtue and humanity" (Geier, 2006, p. 153). Also Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) saw malice in laughing at others, and Baudelaire (1821–1867) considered laughing the most satanic idea ever existing (Geier, 2006). Early Christianity mostly conceptualized humor and laughter negatively as failures in self-mastery (cf. Le Goff, 1997; Verberckmoes, 1997). Laughter was seen as the opposite of the virtue of humility (Le Goff, 1997).

Humor as Virtue

As discussed before, Earl of Shaftesbury's "test of ridicule" and one's attitude of exposing oneself to ridicule and criticism was probably the first notion of humor in a context of virtue. The humanists referred to the humane, benign, and benevolent use of humor, in which 'laughing with' instead of 'laughing at' should be pursued (Ruch, 2004; Wickberg, 1998).

Contemporary theorists referred to humor as a virtue as well. In Comte-Sponville's (2001) classification of virtues, he described humor as one of the last ones. He stated that it is impolite to aggrandize oneself and ridiculous to take oneself too seriously. The humorless, he argued, is lacking "humility, lucidity, and lightness; the humorless person is too full of himself, too self-deceived, too severe, or too aggressive and thus lacks generosity, gentleness, and mercy…" (p. 211). He even went so far as to say that "humorless virtue thinks too much of itself and is thereby deficient in virtue" (p. 211).

This is also brought up by Berger (1998), who made a difference between people who don't have a talent for humor and people who have it but don't use it. Nobody can be accused for not being musical, and this can also be applied to humor. But to have a humorous talent and *not* to use it, Berger (1998) claimed, that is, to make the *decision*

not to use it, would be morally objectionable. For instance, he argued, there is the case of egomaniacs who refuse to find their own megalomania funny, or tyrants who oppress anybody who makes fun of the regime. Berger (1998) saw humor arise from "ontological incongruence" (p. 209). He pointed out that there was a comic contradiction in "the man as a conscious being, suspended in this ridiculous position between the microbes and the stars" (p. 209). Understanding this, for him, was a sign of transcendence.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) also assigned humor as a character strength to the virtue transcendence. However, their allocation of character strengths to virtues was a purely theoretical one and not empirically founded. Humor, within the VIA-IS (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), manifests in the preference to laugh and tease, making other people smile, seeing the light side, and making (not necessarily telling) jokes (see also Peterson 2006).

The theologian Bühler (2007) considered humor to be a means of dealing wisely with everyday life. Webster (2003) viewed wisdom to be multidimensional and suggested five components of wisdom, one of which is humor. He considered recognition of irony, stress reduction, and prosocial bonding processes as those aspects of humor that are related to wisdom. Humor was added as a subscale to the Self Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS, Webster, 2003).

Davies (2006) suggested that jokes might indicate virtue by mocking and reproving those who lack virtue. He doubted, however, that they are a good method of inciting moral indignation. But spontaneous "skillful and witty put-downs can be used to ridicule, control and even express moral criticisms of human weaknesses otherwise best left unadmonished" (Davies, 2002, p. 204). In all those cases, virtuous humor is

directly connected to virtue and is serving virtuousness. This is in contrast to, for instance, Christian humor, which in many cases is not really Christian but only uses stereotypes about Christianity as a theme (Hempelmann, 2003).

Oring (2003) stated that it might be relevant in which context the jokes are told, because this might determine their function in communication. Jokes used as glosses in conversations can convey a critical message, advocate a course of action, support a friend or serve similar goals (Oring, 2003).

Humor as Morally Neutral

It is well possible that some aspects of humor can be seen as receiving no moral evaluation at all. For example, Ronald de Sousa (as cited in Morreall, 1987) stated that laughter is involuntary and that a something involuntary could not possibly be subject of moral evaluation. Kant's explanation of why people laugh does not connote any representation of virtue or vice neither: "Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing" (Kant, 2007/1790, p. 161).

Representing Virtue, or not at all Existing? —The Phenomenon of Laughing at Oneself

Laughing at oneself, as a particular manifestation of self-deprecatory humor, has also been treated differently in the past. Several authors even denied the existence of laughing at oneself. Again, the arguments against it derived mostly from a superiority theory perspective of humor (Aristotle, 335 BC/1932; Hobbes, 1588–1679, as cited in Morreall). For example, Gruner (1997) stated that humor is always a game involving a winner and a loser. Following this argument, at least two persons need to be involved.

La Fave, Haddad, and Maesen (1996) also followed the superiority theory. They listed several arguments against the existence of laughing at oneself or self-deprecatory humor. Laughing at oneself would only be possible when laughing at a former self or a different part of oneself. They also claimed that an event at one's own expense can't be a happy event, and that humor and laughing are not necessarily the same—somebody who is laughing might not experience humor and somebody who experiences humor does not necessarily need to laugh.

Buckley (2003) claimed different ways in which self-deprecatory humor might only reveal hidden superiority as well. One might be joking about a trivial weakness of oneself to show how little one cares (and thus show strength), or one might joke about a handicap, but convey the message that at least one can joke about it, in contrast to the listener who, assumedly, couldn't. Thus, he maintained that a person telling self-deprecatory jokes actually might even more show his or her superiority or even hostility towards the listener.

On the contrary, many descriptions of humor as a virtue refer to a tendency not to take oneself too seriously or laughing at oneself (e.g., Comte-Sponville, 2001; Roberts, 1988; Wickberg, 1998). Furthermore, they suggest that laughing at oneself constitutes a core component of (the sense of) humor (e.g., Lersch, 1962; McGhee, 1996). Allport (1954, p. 437) stated that humor is missing in a "syndrome of the prejudiced personality", whereas it is present in the "syndrome of tolerance". He argues that somebody who can laugh at himself will be less likely to feel superior to others, and, as reasoned by Wickberg (1998), would thus be morally superior.

The tendency to laugh at oneself has also been seen as leading to humility (Comte-Sponville, 2001) in that one is not taking oneself too seriously and important.

For example, Comte-Sponville (2001) proposed a difference between irony and humor. Irony, he stated, laughs at others or, in case of "self-mockery, at itself *as though it were another"* (p. 214, italics added by author) and involves injury, whereas humor is self-reflexive. He argued that lucidity begins with the self and "humor […] can make us laugh at anything provided we first laugh at ourselves" (p. 216), but without hatred. This is also what McGhee (1999) emphasized when he stated that laughing at oneself should not be put-down humor, but lead to acceptingly coexist with one's problems and weaknesses.

There seems to be an utter contradiction between these two positions. Superiority approaches *per se* seem not to be able to value humor as a virtue since the joke teller is considered always superior to the listener, by proving his wit in telling the joke or by the content of a joke that contains a contest between one superior and one inferior (Gruner, 1997). By inferring that pretending to be able to laugh at oneself might only be an even nastier means to actually accuse others or laugh at others' inferiority (because they assumedly *can't* laugh at themselves), it represents vice rather than virtue. The authors who see humor and laughing at oneself as representing virtue claim exactly the opposite: That laughing at oneself as the core component of humor leads to acknowledging that one is *not* too important, "not the center of the universe" (McGhee, 1999, p. 198), and definitely not superior to others.

Thus, it seems to be important to study whether and how the phenomenon of laughing at oneself exists and what it implies. In psychological research, not much attention has been paid to the phenomenon of laughing at oneself. Nevo (1985) operationalized laughing at oneself in a study involving Arabs and Jews by asking them to complete conversations in cartoon-like drawings in a humorous way. In phrasing a

remark within these conversations, participants could either choose the own or the other group to be the butt of the joke. In approximately 11% of the cases, self-aimed humor occurred which led Nevo to the conclusion that self-aimed humor exists. However, one might still argue that laughing at one's own group is not the same as laughing at the own person, whom one could consider as the exception to the laughable stereotype about the group (cf. Davies, 1991, 2002).

Ruch and Carrell (1998) used the only existing questionnaire measuring laughing at oneself (i.e., a subscale of the Sense of Humor Scale, McGhee, 1996) and investigated its relation to components of the temperamental basis of humor, that is, cheerfulness, seriousness, and bad mood (Ruch, Köhler, & van Thriel, 1996, 1997). They found that cheerful persons who don't communicate too soberly but consider everyday ongoings intensely (i.e., two facets of seriousness, one related positively, the other negatively) are the ones being able to laugh at themselves mostly.

However, no experimental approach has been attempted to capture the phenomenon of laughing at oneself. It appears to be crucial in a study investigating laughing at oneself to ensure that—should it exist—genuine enjoyment is involved. An occurrence of spontaneous exhilaration (Ruch, 1993) that does not arise from a planned joke one tells about oneself, but in response to stimuli that might provoke laughing at oneself. Emotion research has means to distinguish between genuine displays of enjoyment and fake, miserable or masking smiles (e.g., Ekman & Friesen, 1982; Ruch, 1997; Ruch & Ekman, 2001). By means of the Facial Action Coding System (FACS; Ekman, Friesen, & Hager, 2002) it is possible to identify what has been found to be the marker of genuine enjoyment, namely the Duchenne display. The Duchenne display refers to the joint contraction of the Zygomatic Major muscle and the Orbicularis Oculi,

Pars Orbitalis muscle without involvement of other facial actions (with exception of the Orbicularis Oculi, Pars Palpebralis, and facial actions involving opening the mouth), in particular indicators of negative emotions. Further markers of genuine facial expressions involve symmetry, duration, and smoothness of the action (Ekman & Rosenberg, 2005).

Summary of Aims of the Thesis

Although there is much literature on humor as vice or virtue stemming from several disciplines, literature is often missing detailed examples of the type of humorous behavior when exerting virtues could look like, but rather stays at a somewhat abstract level. Commonly, humor in psychological research often treats humor as an ability (e.g., humor creation), attitude, or as a temperamental trait. Humor as a virtue, especially in a differentiating manner taking into account its multidimensionality, was largely neglected in psychological research. As humor has been shown to contribute to life satisfaction, it seems to be crucial to study humor and its differing aspects more systematically, in particular with respect to virtue. This thesis is an attempt to approach humor as a virtue in three different strands. First, statements and behavior manifestations out of existing humor questionnaires are rated on their moral evaluation. Second, lay-people are asked about their everyday experience of humor in service of a virtue and virtuous humor. And third, the phenomenon of laughing at oneself is examined using a multi-method approach.

Generally within this thesis, if not indicated otherwise, I am using the term "humor" in its broader meaning. Furthermore, the focus does not lie on the content of canned humor (i.e., jokes or cartoons). Rather humorous behaviors, actions, or attitudes (however possibly also *telling* jokes) are addressed.

Different philosophical theories as well as psychological research have shown that humor (in its broad meaning) is a multidimensional construct. The six virtues identified to be ubiquitous by Dahlsgaard, Peterson, and Seligman (2005) served as framework for this thesis. Questions addressed are, what aspects of humor and the sense of humor are actually seen as representing virtuous behavior? Which are rather seen as transporting vice? Among the virtuous aspects, which are the virtues considered most compatible with humor? Do people and if yes, how often do they actually exert a virtue in a humorous way? And which virtues are those? Furthermore, at a somewhat more specific level, what are ways for people to exert virtue humorously in everyday life? Are there certain comic styles (e.g., humor in a sense of an understanding of the world, fun, satire, sarcasm) that are used more often or less often to exert virtue?

As a specific form of humor that is often mentioned when humor is referred to as a virtue, laughing at oneself should be investigated. If it exists and if it involves genuine enjoyment, it might as well be contributing to aspects of well-being. Thus, this aspect will also be examined. Does it exist? Which behavior does reflect laughing at oneself? Which personality and temperamental traits characterize people who can laugh at themselves?

These questions are addressed in several studies. Within this thesis, the studies are organized into three parts. Each of the parts is briefly described below.

Part I: How Virtuous is Humor? What We Can Learn From Current Instruments

The first part of this dissertation aimed at the investigation of humor as vice or virtue. In order to do this, descriptions of humor behaviors were needed. Current humor questionnaires cover a broad variety of components of humor and allow for investigating their implicit representation of virtue or vice.

Thus, for Study I of this part, items out of 12 current humor questionnaires served as humorous behavior manifestations and attitudes and were composed to the *Humor Rating List*. The *Humor Rating List* included one questionnaire that is intended to describe a person's style of humor comprehensively (Craik, Lampert, & Nelson, 1996). Furthermore, several uni- and multidimensional humor instruments were chosen that comprise a variety of humor manifestations as broad as possible. Two scales were selected that measure humor in the context of virtue (i.e., the subscales *humor* of the VIA-IS (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and of the SAWS (Webster, 2003). Seventy-six participants rated the content of the items on a bipolar rating scale ranging from high degree of vice via neutral to high degree of virtue.

Study II was undertaken to study the nature of virtue covered by the humor behavior manifestations and attitudes. The *Humor Rating List II* consisted of those 73 items that were rated as representing virtue in Study I. Seventeen experts rated them for the degree of each of the six virtues *courage*, *wisdom*, *humanity*, *justice*, *temperance*, and *transcendence*.

Part II: How Virtuous is Humor? Evidence From Everyday Behavior

Part II of the thesis focused on examining humor as a virtue. In contrast to Part I, here lay people were asked directly about their experiences in exerting virtuousness by using humor. The *Humor in Virtue* (Humor in Tugenden, HiT) Questionnaire was developed for the study. It contained ratings on importance of and commitment to the virtues *courage*, *wisdom*, *humanity*, *justice*, *temperance*, and *transcendence*. Furthermore, they rated how often in general these virtues are achieved humorously and how often they do so themselves. In addition, the HiT asked to provide situations for all six virtues in which they or somebody they know or somebody they witnessed used

humor to achieve a virtue. It was considered that comic styles, as proposed by Schmidt-Hidding (1963), would because of their different aims, behaviors, and attitudes of the user, might be usable for virtues in a differing degree. Thus, the participants were also asked to report which of eight comic styles (i.e., *fun*, *humor* [in the sense of appreciation of the world's inconsistency and arousing sympathy], *nonsense*, *wit*, *irony*, *satire*, *cynicism*, and *sarcasm*) were used in the situations.

Part III: Can People Really Laugh at Themselves? Experimental and Correlational Evidence

The objective of Part III was to study the phenomenon of laughing at oneself for the first time experimentally. The focus within this study was one's own appearance. The aims were to examine whether laughing at oneself exists, and what the displayed behavior would be like. Different methods were used as an approach in order to see whether they converged. It was also of interest which personality or temperamental traits underlie the tendency to laugh at oneself and how mood states would be related to showing the behavior. The participants and peers answered a questionnaire measuring "laughing at oneself" within a subscale (i.e., Sense of Humor Scale, McGhee, 1996). The participants also filled in a personality questionnaire (the short form of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised, EPQ-RK, Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985) and a questionnaire measuring the temperamental basis of the sense of humor as state and as trait (i.e., both the trait and state forms of the State Trait Cheerfulness Inventory, STCI, Ruch, Köhler, & van Thriel, 1996, 1997).

Furthermore, in an experimental part, distorted portraits of the participants were shown to them. These were intended to provoke behavior that was possibly laughing at oneself. Additionally, distorted portraits of strangers were used as a comparison.

Participants rated funniness and aversiveness of the stimuli. Their faces were videotaped secretly and their facial responses analyzed using the Facial Action Coding System (FACS, Ekman, Friesen, & Hager, 2002). Furthermore, an Agreement Form was filled in by the participants after having been debriefed about the aims of the study and the camera which determined the degree of readiness of the participants to have their video and photo material shown to others. The Agreement Form ranged from deleting the material at once to the point of showing the material in documentations in television. Beside this obvious purpose, this Agreement Form was also used as an unobtrusive indicator of laughing at oneself.

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Part I

How Virtuous is Humor?

What We Can Learn From Current Instruments

Ursula Beermann and Willibald Ruch

Department of Psychology, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract

Despite the diverse philosophical accounts of the relation of humor to virtue or vice, this ethical dimension has not been included explicitly in psychological humor instruments. Yet, behavior described in humor questionnaires covering a broad variety of components can be used to study an implicit relation of humor to vices and virtues. The main aim of the present paper was, (a) to find humorous behavior and attitudes representing virtues and vices within an item pool of 12 popular humor questionnaires; and (b) to investigate the nature of the virtues represented by their item contents. A comprehensive measure of humor covered the entire range from virtue to vice, with the majority of items evaluated as neutral. Humanity and wisdom were most strongly represented, but the items cover all six core virtues (Dahlsgaard, 2004) to varying degrees. Further research can now investigate the relationship of humor and individual virtues more closely.

Keywords: humor;   vice;   virtue;   questionnaires;   instruments

Introduction

Humor as Virtue: Theoretical Approaches

Throughout history, as well as in current research, the term "humor" has been treated in a multitude of divergent, sometimes even contradictory manners. The differences pertain to its meaning, to theories related to those meanings, and to more exact conceptualizations of those meanings (see Keith-Spiegel, 1972; Martin, 2007; Ruch, 2004, 2007). In particular the main issue of the present paper, namely the position of "humor" on the continuum from vice (in the sense of acting morally bad and maliciously) to virtue (acting morally, humanely, benevolently), has varied from antiquity until today.

In the past, humor has been seen as morally negative, morally neutral, and morally positive. Aristotle (335 BC/1932) considered comedy "a representation of inferior people" and "the laughable […] a species of the base or ugly" (Section 1449a). In early Christianity, humor and laughter were also seen negatively. Expressions of humor were considered failures of self-mastery and were condemned, especially in the religious orders (Le Goff, 1997; Verberckmoes, 1997). Le Goff (1997), for example, described various monastic rules of the early Middle Ages in which laughter was considered the most horrible and most obscene way of breaking the monastic silence, a fundamental virtue. Laughter was therefore the opposite of the virtue of humility. Le Goff assumed that the condemnation of laughter resulted from its strong connection to the body. It is not clear if *humor* per se was condemned (as distinguished from laughter) or just its open bodily expression. Also the Counter-Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a negative attitude towards humor. Verberckmoes (1997) cited Ignatius of Loyola, principal founder of the Society of Jesus, who demanded: "Do not laugh and do not say anything which arouses laughter" (p.79).

In other historical descriptions of the phenomenon of humor, any positive or negative connotation of it was ignored. Kant's explanation of why people laugh, for example, was

rather neutral and technical: "Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing" (Kant, 2007/1790, p.161).

In contrast to this, for the humanists of the eighteenth century humor was a cardinal virtue. Shaftesbury (1671–1713) treated humor (or "good humour") as the benevolent, tolerant form of laughter. For him it denoted the sovereign attitude of exposing oneself to the criticism and mockery of others—to a "test of ridicule" (see Schmidt-Hidding, 1963). Thomas Aquinas (see Verberckmoes, 1997) argued that moderate laughter in the sense of *eutrapelia* (the property of being funny in a civilized way) does not interfere with Christian charity, but rather offers an "honest recreation on the frivolous occasions which the human imperfections offer" (p. 82). Many contemporary philosophers and theologians have considered humor to be virtuous as well. In stark contrast to the attitude expressed in monastic rules (see Le Goff), Comte-Sponville (2001) and Roberts (1988) maintained that humor *leads* to humility by allowing oneself to feel less self-important and by taking oneself less seriously. Roberts (1988), for example, saw a virtuous aspect of the sense of humor in its facilitation of an interpretation of moral failures as mere incongruities. Additionally, according to Roberts, virtue is achieved through the amusement derived from one's own follies, thus enabling one to distance oneself from one's traits. Similarly, Bühler (2007) understood humor as handling everyday life wisely. Furthermore, while humor has been seen as a virtue in itself, it may also be possible that humor is in the service of other virtues such as wisdom (e.g., giving good advice in a humorous way), humanity (e.g., comforting sad people by making a humorous remark), or even more virtues at the same time. Frankl's (1984) accounts of the conscious use of humor between him and his fellow inmates in the concentration camps to keep up morale suggest a connection to humanity (helping each other in this terrible situation), courage (outdaring the fatal conditions), or transcendence (hoping to survive).

Current research in the field of Positive Psychology views character strengths and virtues as determinants of the good life and life satisfaction (e.g., Peterson & Seligman, 2004;

Seligman, 2002). Humor is one of 24 character strengths in the VIA-Classification (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and is understood as part of the virtue transcendence. It is among those character strengths that contribute to life satisfaction most strongly (Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, & Seligman, 2007).

These differences in the appraisal of humor also seem to have shaped the existing differences in the understanding of the term "humor" (Ruch, 2004). One major terminological system considers humor a benevolent world-view, roughly the tendency to smile in the face of adversity (as opposed to other manifestations of *the comic,* such as wit, mockery or fun; Schmidt-Hidding, 1963). Another major terminological system (Ruch, 2004) treats humor as an umbrella term for anything that is funny, including not only neutral and positive, but also negative facets such as cynicism or sarcasm. In current everyday usage, it is also not entirely clear what is meant when people speak of 'humor'. A survey by Ruch (2002) in different parts of the world found that humor has been considered by some to be a mood, a talent, a frame of mind, and/or a virtue. Most generally, though, it has been considered to be a temperament.

Particularly in philosophical literature, humor has been both vilified and praised. However, there are two problems: First, philosophical views are not specific as to humor itself being a virtue or humor rather leading to virtues—and as to what these other virtues may be. And second, the philosophical literature does not provide precise examples of everyday virtuous humorous behavior. Despite this diversity in which humor is discussed by philosophers, and possibly because of it, empirical humor research could benefit from addressing this ethical dimension of humor. This would make it possible to study those humor components that are indeed virtuous and as such can lead to positive effects, for example, on life satisfaction.

To address these issues, in particular in view of the lacking examples, several approaches are possible to obtain facets and examples in which humor can itself be a virtue or

serve a virtue. One way would be to ask experts to provide representative examples of behavior. Another would be to ask lay people to report situations of virtuous humor that they encountered in daily life. A third would be to study the contents of current humor questionnaires with considerable bandwidth. Most humor instruments have not been constructed for the purpose of assessing humor as, or in the service of, a virtue or vice, but are intended to capture underlying theories about a number of different humor-related issues. However, items from these questionnaires can serve as an extensive collection of the most diverse humor-related behaviors. Some of them may be evaluated as positive or even highly desirable, some as neutral or negative. Thus, in order to identify prototypes of humorous behavior representing virtue or vice, a collection of questionnaires should prove to be a good starting point.

Current Approaches to the Measurement of Humor in Conjunction with Virtue and Vice

The multidimensionality of humor has also influenced the development of its measurement, which began in the twentieth century. Especially over the last 30 years a large number of measurements has been constructed. A survey done by Ruch (2007) yielded about 70 historically and currently used psychological instruments. They measure humor as an ability, as an attitude, or, most often, as a temperamental trait, and partially accommodate its differing evaluative character.

Two approaches examined humor in the context of virtue. Webster (2003) constructed the *Self Assessed Wisdom Scale* (SAWS) containing a subscale "humor." Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed a classification of character strengths, which can be assessed with the *Values in Action Inventory of Strengths* (VIA-IS). Here, humor was considered a character strength leading to the virtue of *transcendence*.

Subscales of personality tests portray behavior that potentially could represent vice. The Objective-Analytic Test Kit (*Jokes and Tricks*; Cattell & Schuerger, 1971) provides a

subtest that asks participants to rate the funniness of a series of pranks. A sample item is *Put a frog on someone's neck* (Q.1).

Very few approaches to the assessment of humor exist that can be considered comprehensive. Among them, the *Humorous Behavior Q-Sort Deck* (HBQD; Craik, Lampert, & Nelson, 1993) intends to "give a comprehensive portrait of a person's style of humor" (Craik, Lampert, & Nelson, 1996, p. 276). This instrument consists of 100 non-redundant statements, each identifying a characteristic of humor-related everyday behavior. These statements can be evaluated as elements of ten styles that are organized along five factors. Each factor is characterized by two contrastive styles of humorous conduct, namely: *socially warm vs. cold*, *reflective vs. boorish*, *competent vs. inept*, *earthy vs. repressed*, and *benign vs. mean-spirited*. Due to its bandwidth, such a test might serve as the best instrument for studying whether humor also involves virtue or vice. While its authors did not directly refer to vice or virtue, they did conduct social desirability ratings for the items of the HBQD and found that in particular socially warm and competent humor styles were considered to be socially desirable. Among the noncomprehensive measures, some treat humor as neutral and some as a highly desirable trait.

Studying the instruments briefly introduced above should allow for a first inspection of whether and how humor can be a virtue or serve one. For that purpose, this paper will address the following questions. First, do we find humorous behavioral manifestations and attitudes that are regarded as representing virtue or vice in current humor measures? In particular, what do analyses of a comprehensive measure of humor reveal about the relation of its comprehensiveness to the ethical dimension of virtue vs. vice? And second, which are the virtues represented in these items? These questions were addressed in the two studies.

Study I

The aim of the present study is to address the question of how prevalent virtue or vice is in humorous behavioral manifestations by using existing instruments and to identify those behaviors representing virtue or vice. The items of twelve contemporary humor instruments were combined in the *Humor Rating List* shown in Table 1.

The choice of questionnaires included in the *Humor Rating List* (Table 1) was guided by the following criteria: a) The HBQD (Craik et al., 1993) was chosen as a comprehensive measure of the sense of humor. b) Uni- and multidimensional instruments encompassing the broadest possible variety of humor's manifestations, including aspects of humor that are identified as positive and/or negative, and the phenomenon of "laughing at oneself" were included. c) Two scales were chosen that assess humor in the context of virtue: the subscales *humor* of the VIA-IS (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and of the SAWS (Webster, 2003).

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of $N = 76$ psychology students (16 males and 60 females) of the University of Zurich, Switzerland, between 19 and 47 years of age ($M = 25.39$, $SD = 7.50$). Participants were given credit hours for participation.

Table 1.

Questionnaires Included in the Humor Rating List.

Instrument[a]	Traits measured	No. of Items	No. of answer levels; most strongly agreeing answer
HBQD	10 styles of everyday humorous conduct which are organized along 5 contrastive factors: (1) socially warm vs. cold, (2) reflective vs. boorish, (3) competent vs. inept, (4) earthy vs. repressed, (5) benign vs. mean-spirited	100	9; most characteristic
JOKES	Assumed amusement when hypothetically performing a list of pranks during adolescence	18	2; yes
HSQ	Four unipolar styles of humor: (1) affiliative, (2) self-enhancing, (3) aggressive, (4) self-defeating	32	7; totally agree
SAWS	Humor as one component of wisdom	8	6; strongly agree
SHRQ	The individual's capacity to respond to a variety of pleasant or unpleasant situations with amusement, smiling or laughter; self-perception of humor	21	5; I would have laughed heartily
CHS	The degree to which individuals make use of humor in coping with stressful events	7	4; strongly agree
SHS	(l) Enjoyment of humor, (2) seriousness and negative mood, (3) playfulness and positive mood, (4) laughter, (5) verbal humor, (6) finding humor in everyday life, (7) laughing at yourself, (8) humor under stress	40	4; strongly agree
SHQZ	Two components of the sense of humor: (1) Humor appreciation, (2) humor creativity	14	7; very often

Table 1 (continued).

Instrument[a]	Traits measured	No. of Items	No. of answer levels; most strongly agreeing answer
HUMOR	Frequency with which people use specific humor behaviors with their friends	13	5; constantly
VIA-IS	Degree to which respondents agree to statements reflecting 24 strengths of character; only subscale (23) Humor (defined as liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people) included	10	5; very much like me
STCI-T<60>	The temperamental basis of humor, i.e., cheerfulness, seriousness, and bad mood as habitual traits; only subscale "cheerfulness" included	20	4; strongly agree
SHQ-6	Two components of the sense of humor: (1) Meta-message sensitivity, (2) Liking of humorous situations	6	4; Yes indeed

Note. HBQD = Humorous Behavior Q-Sort Deck (Craik, Lampert, & Nelson, 1993); JOKES = Jokes & Tricks (Cattell & Schuerger, 1971); HSQ = Humor Styles Questionnaire (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003); SAWS = Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (Webster, 2003); SHRQ = Situational Humor Response Questionnaire (Martin & Lefcourt, 1984); CHS = Coping Humor Scale (Martin & Lefcourt, 1983); SHS = Sense of Humor Scale (McGhee, 1996); SHQZ = Sense of Humor Questionnaire (Ziv, 1981); HUMOR = Humor Use in Multiple Ongoing Relationships (Manke, 2007); VIA-IS = Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004); STCI-T<60> = State-Trait-Cheerfulness-Inventory, Standard Trait Version (Ruch, Köhler, & van Thriel, 1996); SHQ-6 = Sense of Humor Questionnaire in the revised version (Svebak, 1996). [a] German adaptations or versions were used.

Material

The *Humor Rating List* consists of 298 items, the contents of which were rated for their degree of vice or virtue on a 9-point bipolar Likert-scale ("Humor Vice Virtue Rating", *HVVR*). The scale ranged from a *very high degree of vice* (= -4) via *neutral* (= 0) to a *very high degree of virtue* (= 4). Each level of the scale was labeled to express the degree of vice or virtue[1]. The items were presented as if a fictitious person had answered them using the highest (most strongly agreeing) answer choice. The items originated from 12 different questionnaires (see Table 1) with differing answer formats. Thus, for each item the top scoring original answer alternative was provided in parentheses. For example, an item was presented in the following way: "[The person] uses good-natured jests to put others at ease. (Most characteristic)." If a rater found that this behavior represents a fair degree of virtue, this item had to be rated as "3". Negatively keyed items remained in the original wording.

Procedure

The participants were asked to fill in the *Humor Rating List* online. In general, results from web-based studies using self-report data converge well in terms of the reliability and the validity with samples from paper-pencil studies (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004). The *Humor Rating List* was arranged in accordance with the guidelines described in Hattie (2006). The participants were informed about the aim of the study. They were instructed to answer the items not as if they applied to themselves, but to rate the humor behaviors and attitudes with respect to "vice" and "virtue" using the *HVVR*. Raters were provided with definitions of these two concepts. They were informed that humor could represent either

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[1] 1.   The German originals for the answer format in Study I were: -4 = sehr lasterhaft, -3 = ziemlich lasterhaft, -2 = lasterhaft, -1 = eher lasterhaft, 0 = weder Tugend noch Laster, 1 = eher tugendhaft, 2 = tugendhaft, 3 = ziemlich tugendhaft, 4 = sehr tugendhaft.

virtue or neutrality or vice and were given very global examples for each of the categories. The items were presented in blocks of 10. For each instrument, which came in their own blocks, the participants were informed about all answer alternatives of the instrument's original answer format. They were instructed to take breaks at their convenience. Every item had to be answered.

Results

The convergence of the 76 raters was calculated by computing a Cronbach's α for the raters (as variables) across all 298 items (as cases). This resulted in an $\alpha = .99$, yielding a confidence interval of +/- 0.31. The average intercorrelation of all pairs of raters was $r = .50$. There were no gender differences (the ratings differed in 15 items which is as much as would be expected by chance). For every item, a mean *Humor Vice Virtue Rating* (mean *HVVR*) across all 76 raters was calculated.

Virtue and Vice in a Comprehensive Humor Instrument

First, the mean *HVVR* was analyzed separately for the HBQD (Craik et al., 1993). The *HVVR* scale was graded into intervals (class width of .5). The frequency distribution of the 100 statements across these intervals was examined. Figure 1 shows the frequency distribution for the HBQD.

Figure 1 shows that the HBQD covered almost the entire span of the continuum from virtue to vice. The majority of the items, though, were perceived as neutral. In fact the mean was -.04 (*SD* = 1.35) and 68% of the responses were in the neutral area (between -1.5 and +1.5). Behavioral manifestations that were rated as positive, but not yet clearly as virtuous (i.e., were *below* 1.5), were, for example, *Enjoys the routines of stand-up comedians* (Q.64), or *Finds humor in the everyday behavior of animals* (Q.16). Negative item contents that were not regarded as representing vice (i.e., were above -1.5) were for example *Recounts familiar,*

stale jokes (Q.45), or *Laughs without discriminating between more and less clever remarks* (Q.84).
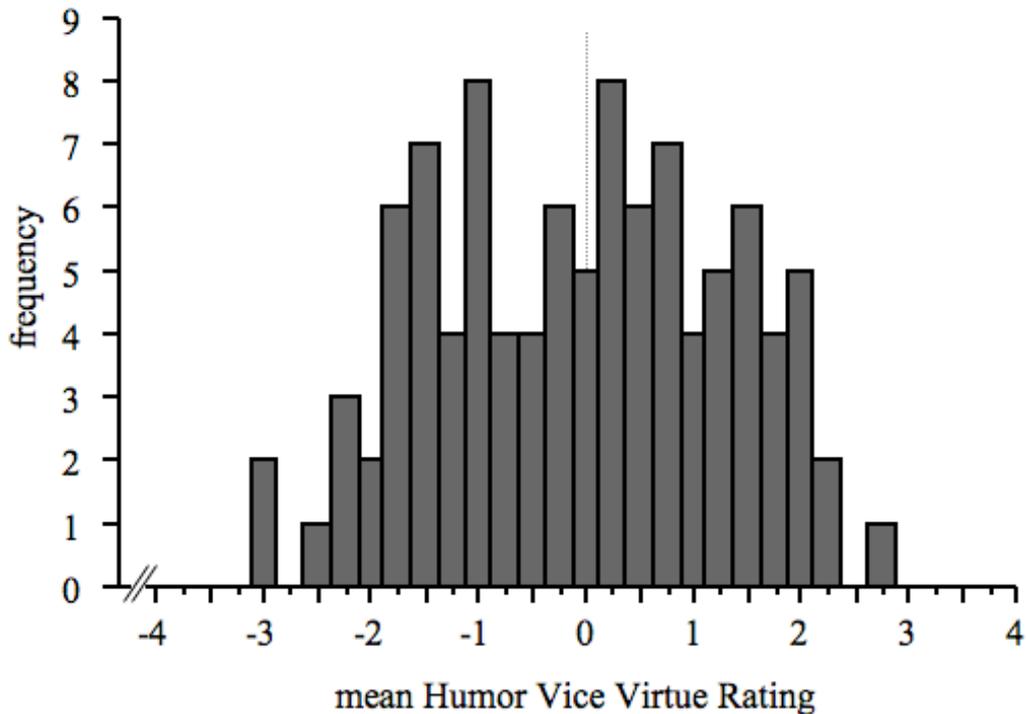
Figure 1. Distribution of the averaged Humor Vice Virtue Rating (HVVR) of the HBQD items.

One third of the item contents were rated as exemplifying virtue or vice (15% of the items were above 1.5 and 17% below -1.5). The item contents considered to be the most highly virtuous were either globally "having a good sense of humor" (i.e., *Has a good sense of humor*, Q.18), or traits that would help maintain or increase the positive feelings of others (e.g., *Maintains group morale through humor,* Q.91) or to be perceptive to humorous aspects of everyday life (e.g., *Appreciates the humorous potential of persons and situations*, Q.1). The item contents considered representing a high degree of vice were *Jokes about others' imperfections* (Q.40) and *Is scornful; laughs "at" others, rather than "with" them* (Q.79).

What are the humorous behavioral manifestations representing vice and virtue?

In order to examine item contents that incorporate vice or virtue, all 298 items of the *Humor Rating List* were included in the analyses. Scales or subscales may serve as vehicles of topics or aspects of humorous behaviors. Thus, frequency analyses were conducted for the complete *Humor Rating List* as well as on the subscale level. For the analyses, the scores of the negatively keyed items were reversed. In multidimensional instruments, the items were plotted separately for subscales measuring positively and negatively evaluated concepts of humor. Figure 2 shows the mean *HVVR* ratings for the items of every instrument.

Figure 2 shows that psychologically positively evaluated concepts were generally closer to virtue, while psychologically negatively-keyed items were generally closer to vice. This can be seen as evidence for the validity of the method used in this study. However, on the positive as well as on the negative side, items also existed that were classified as neutral (i.e., the mean *HVVR* was between 1.5 and -1.5). In total, 183 items (63.32%) were regarded as neutral (108 items or 37.37% between 0 and 1.5, and 75 items or 25.95% between 0 and -1.5). Furthermore, 23 items (7.96%) were evaluated as representing a low degree of vice (between -1.5 and -2), and a further 13 items (4.50%) were rated as representing an at least moderate degree of vice (i.e., with a mean rating below -2). Conversely, 50 items (17.30%) were considered slightly virtuous (between 1.5 and 2) and further 20 items (6.92%) were regarded as virtuous (exceeding 2).

It can be said that behavioral manifestations represented by the items of several scales, both multidimensional (HBQD, HSQ, SHS) and unidimensional (SHRQ, HUMOR), covered the whole range from vice to virtue. For instance, the SHS contains eight subscales, seven of which refer to several aspects of sense of humor and predominantly fell between neutral and virtuous. One subscale refers to lack of humor, namely *seriousness and negative mood.* This subscale was rated between neutral and vice on the *HVVR*.
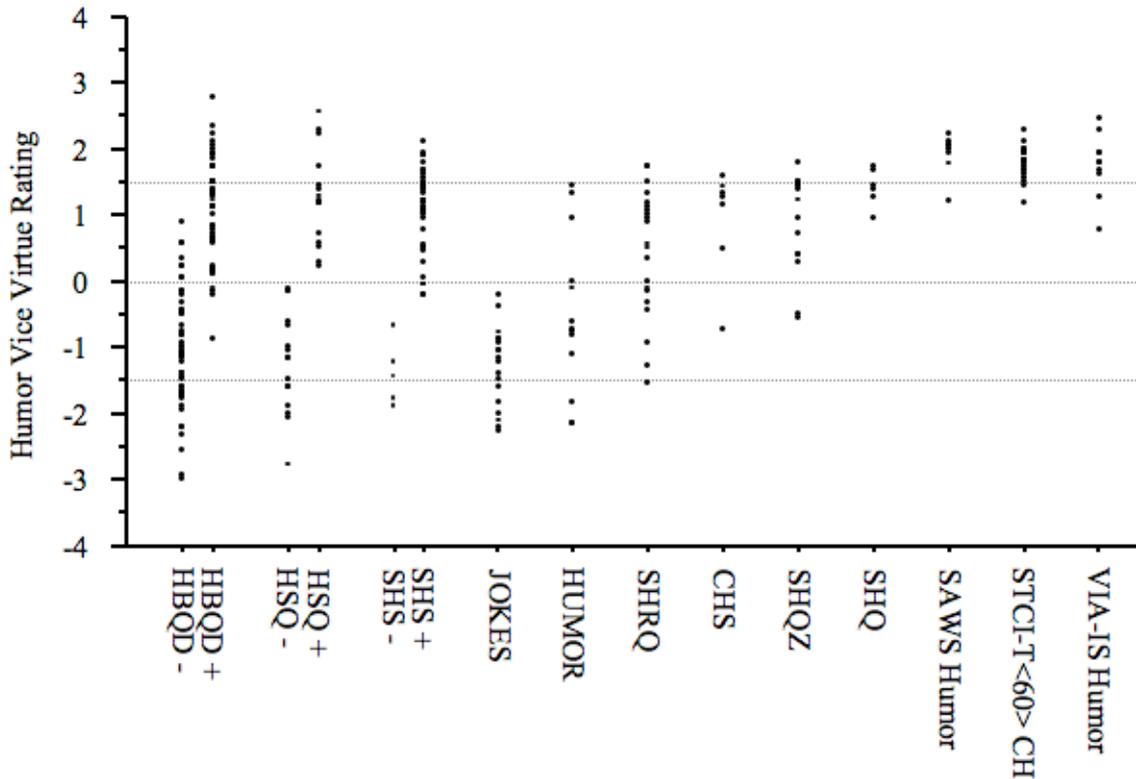
Note. + = Subscales with positive valence, - = subscales with negative valence. HBQD =
Humorous Behavior Q-Sort Deck; HSQ = Humor Styles Questionnaire; SHS = Sense of
Humor Scale; JOKES = Jokes and Tricks; HUMOR = Humor Use in Multiple Ongoing
Relationships; SHRQ = Situational Humor Response Questionnaire; CHS = Coping Humor
Scale; SHQZ = Sense of Humor Questionnaire; SHQ = Sense of Humor Questionnaire;
SAWS Humor = Self Assessed Wisdom Scale, Subscale Humor; STCI-T<60> CH = State-
Trait-Cheerfulness-Inventory, Trait Standard Version, Subscale Cheerfulness; VIA-IS Humor
= Values in Action Inventory of Strengths, Subscale Humor. Negatively scored items were
reversed.

Figure 2. Averaged Humor Vice Virtue Rating (HVVR) for the items of all instruments,
separated for subscales with positive and negative valence.

Furthermore, scales with contents predominantly scoring closer to virtue were found.
Some of them have mostly neutral to positive contents (CHS, SHQ), whereas the items of
some (sub-)scales were primarily rated as representing virtues (SAWS Humor, STCI-T<60>

Cheerfulness, VIA-IS Humor). Expectedly, the Jokes and Tricks scale ranged between neutral and vice.

In more detail, items representing *virtue* strongly (i.e., above 2 on the *HVVR*) belonged to the following sub-scales (percentages relate to the total number of items of the subscale, in descending order): SAWS-Humor (5/8 items; 62.50%), HBQD socially warm humor style (4/12 items; 33.33%), HSQ Affiliative Humor (2/8 items; 25.00%), STCI-T<60> Cheerfulness (4/20 items; 20.00%), VIA-IS Humor (2/10 items; 20.00%), SHS Enjoyment of Humor (1/5 items; 20.00%), HSQ Self-enhancing Humor (1/8 items; 12.50%), and HBQD Reflective humor style (1/16 items; 6.25%). Surprisingly, while all items of the SHS subscale *Laughing at Oneself* were on the positive side, no item was classified as virtuous. *Vice* was strongly (i.e., below -2 on the *HVVR*) represented in the (sub-)scales (in descending order of the percentage) HSQ Aggressive Humor (2/8 items; 25.00%), HBQD Earthy humor style (2/10 items; 20.00%), Jokes & Tricks (3/18 items; 16.67%), HBQD Cold humor style (2/12 items; 16.67%), HBQD Mean spirited humor style (2/12 items; 16.67%), and HUMOR (2/13 items; 15.39%).

Virtue Ratings, Item Means, and Social Desirability

It was examined how the mean *HVVR* related to item means (derived from other studies) of the questionnaires HBQD, HSQ, SHRQ, CHS, SHS, HUMOR, VIA-IS Humor, and STHI-T<60> Cheerfulness and to social desirability ratings for the HBQD items (derived from Craik et al., 1996). The *HVVR* was correlated with the item means ($r = .82$, $df = 241$, $p < .001$), that is, the more the described behavior or attitudes were regarded as virtuous, the more they were reported to have occurred in daily life. Furthermore, high positive values on the *HVVR* went along with high ratings for social desirability for items of the HBQD ($r = .84$, $df = 98$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

The present study revealed that humor as assessed in a comprehensive instrument (the HBQD) was normally distributed with respect to the continuum of vice to virtue. The majority of the humorous behaviors were ethically neutral. About one sixth of the humorous item contents of the questionnaires portrayed vice in attitudes and behavior, and about the same number portrayed virtue. Given the comprehensiveness of humor behaviors within the HBQD, this can be seen as a first hint as to how virtue and vice are represented in humor in general. Within the HBQD, attitudes representing vice were exemplified by mean-spirited humor contents. Virtuous attitudes were often connected with being receptive and ready to appreciate absurdities of everyday life, or with "keeping up people's morals".

Within the complete *Humor Rating List,* behavioral manifestations evaluated as containing vice can generally be described as either mean-spirited or aggressive (for instance, practical jokes or behavior which might hurt another person physically, e.g., putting a tack on a chair, or psychically, e.g., laughing at weaknesses of another person), or as earthy (e.g., bathroom humor). Quite unexpectedly, a socially cold humor style (e.g., inappropriate smiling or fixed smiling without sincerity) and an inept humor style (e.g., chuckling or laughing in an exaggerated way in order to hide one's fears or uncertainty) was also regarded as representing vice. Item contents regarded as virtuous were often connected with spreading good cheer or with being amused by everyday incongruities and absurdities, or intellectual wordplay. Also, items expressing amusement relating to one's own embarrassing episodes (e.g., items from the SAWS) were seen as incorporating virtue. However, no item of the subscale *Laughing at oneself* from the SHS was regarded as virtuous.

Further analyses revealed that the more a type of humorous behavior was considered to be virtuous, the more it also occurred in actual behavior. That is, people seem to show a certain behavior more often when they assume that it is valued as virtuous. In addition, behavior rated as virtuous was also considered socially desirable. Thus, it seems that

virtuousness incorporates social desirability but goes beyond it. The concept of social desirability differs from the concept of virtuous behavior with respect to approval. Social desirability is a response tendency (meaning that people are actually biasing their self-reports when filling out the questionnaire to simulate desired behavior), whereas virtuous behavior is morally prized (implying that people don't bias their answers, but indeed show the indicated behavior when they report it).

The current study identified humor content areas that are indeed perceived as virtuous. In the next step, the nature of virtues connected with humor needs to be examined. In particular, experts on virtues should be involved in order to identify the particular kind of virtue. Here, only items with an *HVVR* rating of 1.5 or higher should be studied. This is the task for the second study reported here.

Study II

Aims

The Nature of Virtue in Humor Questionnaires

Based on lay people's judgments, Study I yielded a list of humor behaviors containing virtuous aspects. Study II involves experts on virtues, i.e., philosophers and theologians, who were asked to identify the specific type of virtue to which these items are related. The following questions are addressed in Study II: (1) Do lay people and experts converge in the degree of their virtue ratings? And (2), what is the nature of the virtues represented by the items? That is to say, given a catalog of six virtues, to what degree do experts see each of these virtues represented by the items?

By reviewing historical texts across several cultures and religions, Dahlsgaard (2004) identified six broad universal virtues that are associated with various character strengths that will form the basis of Study II. These virtues are *wisdom* (cognitive strengths referring to

gaining and using knowledge for good purposes; character strengths involved are creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, and perspective), *courage* (involving emotional strengths concerning the will to achieve goals in the face of external or internal opposition; these strengths are authenticity, bravery, perseverance, and zest), *humanity* (interpersonal strengths involved in relating to another in a kind, empathetic, and benevolent way; i.e., kindness, love, and social intelligence), *justice* (civic strengths which form the basis of a healthy community life, such as fairness, leadership, and teamwork), *temperance* (strengths that master excess; including the character strengths forgiveness, humility, prudence, and self regulation), and *transcendence* (strengths that concern connections to the larger universe and provide meaning; the virtue is realized by exercising appreciation of the beauty, gratitude, hope, spirituality, and humor).

Method

Participants

The expert sample consisted of 17 students (six males and 11 females) at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, at an advanced stage of or with completed degrees in philosophy (with the background in general or applied ethics), or in theology, or in science of religion. The age of the participants ranged from 20 to 64 years ($M = 29.29$, $SD = 11.91$).

Instruments

The *Humor Rating List II* was composed of 73 items from Study I that reached mean *HVVR* ratings of 1.5 or higher. The virtues used for the classification of the item contents were *wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance,* and *transcendence*. Definitions of each of the six virtues and their related character strengths (according to Peterson & Seligman, 2004) that underlie the present study were provided in the instructions. As an exception, humor, which for Peterson and Seligman is subsumed under the virtue of transcendence, was

left out of the list of related character strengths. In addition, a category "other virtue" was provided, which was to be filled out only when none of the listed virtues and their related character strengths sufficiently described the virtuous aspect of the item. Otherwise it was to be crossed out. On basis of the definitions, every item of the *Humor Rating List II* had to be judged regarding the degree of every virtue on a 10-point Likert scale. The following answer alternatives were provided: 0 = *not represented*, 1 = *very slightly represented*, 3 = *slightly represented*, 5 = *moderately represented*, 7 = *strongly represented*, and 9 = *very strongly represented*.[2] The remaining levels 2, 4, 6, and 8 were declared as intermediate levels. The answer format allowed for items to be scored highly in virtuousness in more than one virtue as well as to be scored as not representing any virtue at all.

Procedure

The participants were informed about the aims of the study and that they were approached as experts on virtue. They were given the paper pencil questionnaires in classes or they received them via postal mail and filled them out by themselves. The experts were informed that lay people previously had rated the degree of virtue within the items. It was explicitly pointed out that it is possible that some of the behavior descriptions don't represent any virtue. In this case they should choose "0" for every virtue. They were instructed to choose the answer "1" or higher only if a virtue is represented at least *very slightly*. As a reward for returning the questionnaires participants were given a voucher for coffee.

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[2] 2.   The German originals for the answer format in Study II were: 0 = überhaupt nicht vorhanden, 1 = sehr schwach vorhanden, 3 = schwach vorhanden, 5 = mittelstark vorhanden, 7 = stark vorhanden, 9 = sehr stark vorhanden.

Results

Convergence of the Raters

A reliability analysis for the 17 raters across all 73 items of the *Humor Rating List II* was computed, i.e., with the raters as variables and the items as cases. This revealed a Cronbach's α of .88 with a confidence interval of the ratings of +/-0.99.

How do the Ratings of Study I and II Converge?

A multiple regression analysis with the mean *HVVR* of Study I as the criterion and the six mean virtue ratings as predictors was calculated. The multiple correlation was $R = .53$ ($F[5, 72] = 4.20$, $p < .001$). Thus, despite the reduced variance in Study II, the separate judgments of the experts on the six virtues predict the overall virtuousness as rated by the lay people sufficiently well.

What is the Nature of Virtues Covered by Humor Instruments?

Only one expert used the category "other virtue" in one case. He or she considered the item Q.24 from the SAWS (*At this point in my life, I find it easy to laugh at my mistakes.*) as incorporating the virtue "self-deprecation" (German: *Selbstironie*). Overall, this item was classified as representing wisdom (wisdom score 5.94). The category "other virtue" was thus not integrated for the group analyses.

In order to determine differences in the type of virtues identified by the experts, a one-way ANOVA for repeated measures with the type of virtue as repeated measurement factor for the degree of virtue as a dependent variable was performed. The analysis revealed a significant main effect for the type of virtue ($F[5, 72] = 37.77$, $p < .001$). Figure 3 shows the mean ratings for the six virtues.
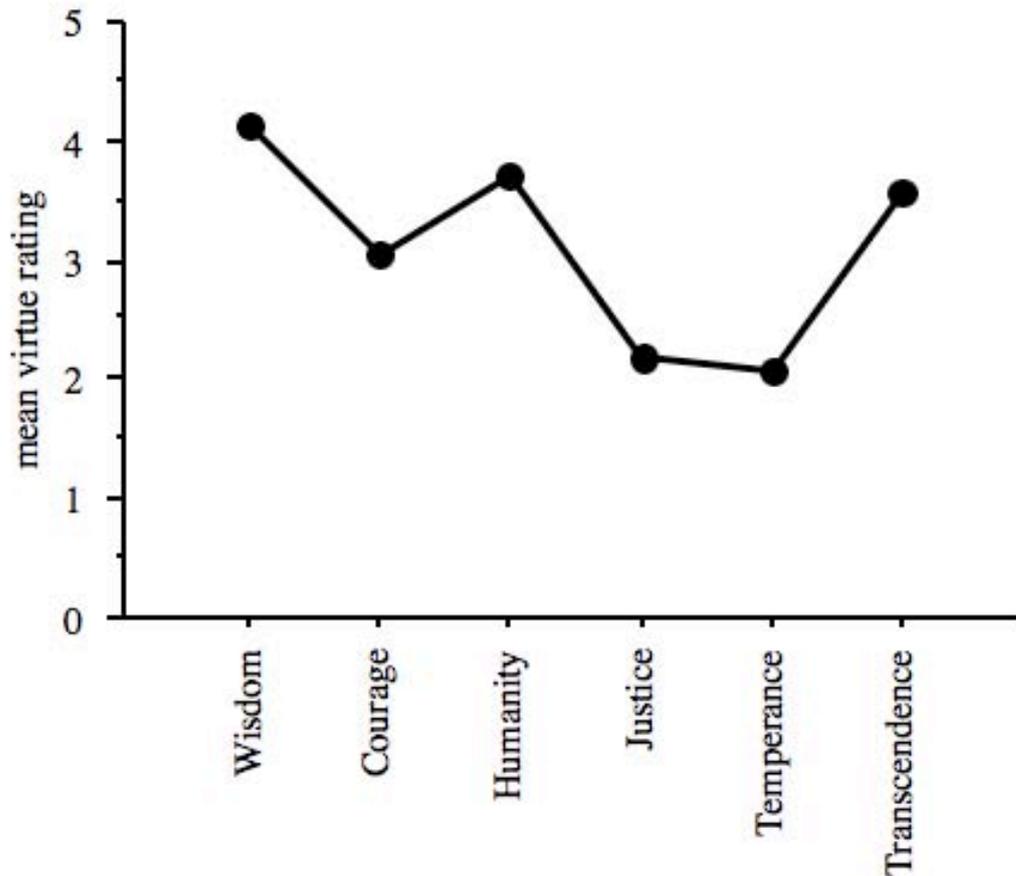
Figure 3. Mean ratings for the six virtues.

Post-hoc tests (Fisher PLSD) revealed that among the six mean virtue ratings, the highest were achieved for wisdom ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 1.12$; see Figure 3). Humanity ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.65$) and transcendence ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.96$) ratings (which were not significantly different from each other) followed, ahead of courage ratings ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.86$). Justice ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.53$) and temperance ratings ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 1.21$) were the lowest and did not differ from each other.

Three cut-off points were defined in order to identify items classified as representing virtue "slightly" (3), "moderately" (5), and "strongly" (7). Table 2 shows the frequencies of

ratings of the 73 items below 3, between 3 and 5, between 5 and 7, and above 7 for each virtue.

Table 2.

Absolute and Relative Number of Items that were Perceived as Not at all, Slightly, Moderately, and Strongly Virtuous, for Each Virtue.

Virtue	not at all		slightly		moderately		strongly	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Wisdom	13	17.81	43	58.90	17	23.29	0	0.00
Courage	33	45.21	40	54.79	0	0.00	0	0.00
Humanity	32	43.84	20	27.40	19	26.03	2	2.74
Justice	56	76.71	11	15.07	6	8.22	0	0.00
Temperance	61	83.56	10	13.70	1	1.37	1	1.37
Transcendence	19	26.03	47	64.38	7	9.59	0	0.00

Note. $N_{Rater} = 17$. $N_{Items} = 73$.

Cut-off points for the degree of virtue: <3 = not at all, 3 = slightly, 5 = moderately, 7 = strongly.

f = frequency.

As can be seen in Table 2, according to the raters only two virtues were represented *strongly* (i.e., exceeding 7) by item contents: Two items were classified as belonging to humanity and one item to temperance. Furthermore, the virtues humanity and wisdom were most frequently represented by the items at least to a *moderate* degree (i.e., exceeding 5), namely by 21 and 17 items, respectively. Although wisdom had the highest mean rating, followed by humanity, and temperance had the lowest of all six mean virtue ratings, the highest *single* ratings were achieved for temperance. The virtue of courage was represented no higher than *slightly* by the item contents. To illustrate the nature of items classified for the different virtues, two sample items for each are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Sample Humor Items Representing the Six Core Virtues.

Virtue	Sample items	Mean Virtue Rating
Wisdom	Uses humor to express the contradictory aspects of everyday events. (HBQD, Q.83)	6.41
	Finds intellectual word play enjoyable. (HBQD, Q.21)	6.29
Courage	Laughs heartily, from head to heel, not just with face and diaphragm. (HBQD, Q.42)	4.94
	I never allow a gloomy situation to take away my sense of humor. (VIA-IS, Q.142)	4.94
Humanity	Even if something is really funny to me, I will not laugh or joke about it if someone will be offended. (HSQ, Q.31)	7.35
	I do not like it when other people use humor as a way of criticizing or putting someone down. (HSQ, Q.15)	7.29
Justice	Achieves a detached perspective on self and others. (HBQD, Q.53)	6.59
	Is squeamish about "sick jokes" (e.g., regarding human deformity). (HBQD, Q.82)	5.82
Temperance	People are never offended or hurt by my sense of humor. (HSQ, Q.7)	5.59
	If I am feeling depressed, I can usually cheer myself up with humor. (HSQ, Q.2)	4.12
Transcendence	I have an optimistic outlook on life. (SHS, Q.11)	6.06
	I try and find a humorous side when coping with a major life transition. (SAWS, Q.14)	5.65

Note. N_{Rater} = 17. HBQD = Humorous Behavior Q-Sort Deck; HSQ = Humor Styles Questionnaire; SHS = Sense of Humor Scale; SAWS = Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale; VIA-IS = Values in Action Inventory of Strengths; Q. = Question number.

Table 3 shows the two highest-scoring items as sample items for the virtues. However, some item contents seemed to be representative for more than one virtue, albeit sometimes to different degrees. If an item ranked highest for more than one virtue, it was only listed under the virtue for which it had the higher mean in order to avoid double entries. For the other virtue(s) the next-highest ranking item was given. For example, the humanity item HSQ Q.31 was scoring highest not only for humanity, but also for temperance (temperance rating = 7.12) and third highest for justice (justice rating = 6.35); likewise, item HSQ Q.15 was also rated highest for justice (justice rating = 6.88). For the two highest-scoring items, these co-occurrences only existed for humanity, justice, and temperance. However, the items given in Table 3 illustrate the different aspects that might have lead the experts to the classification for a certain virtue.

It is instructive to analyze the items of the humor subscales of the SAWS and VIA-IS separately to examine whether they indeed represent wisdom and transcendence, respectively. For Study II, eight of the ten VIA-IS Humor items were included. Experts considered four of them moderately virtuous (with scores higher than 5) for the virtues humanity (three items) and transcendence (one item). However, all VIA-IS Humor items represented virtue at least slightly (above 3). The virtues identified most often to a slight degree only were wisdom (seven items) and transcendence (six items).

Within the seven of the total of eight items of the SAWS that were included in Study II, six items were considered to be at least moderately virtuous by the experts. They incorporated the virtues wisdom (one item), wisdom and transcendence (three items), and humanity (two items). All seven items were regarded as at least slightly virtuous, and they incorporated all six virtues. Wisdom was identified most often (for all seven items), followed by transcendence and courage (both for five items).

Combinations of the Six Virtues Within the Used Item Contents

Several items incorporated more than one virtue. For example, all three items that were rated high for temperance, when representing virtue at least moderately, also represented humanity. One item (1.37%) had four virtues that were represented at least moderately. This was an item from the subscale *Aggressive Humor* of the HSQ (*Even if something is really funny to me, I will not laugh or joke about it if someone will be offended*, HSQ, Q.31.) Three items (2.74%) represented three virtues at least moderately (i.e., above 5), seven items (9.59%) exceeded 5 for two virtues, 29 items (39.73%) incorporated one virtue above 5, and 34 items (46.58%) did not reach 5 for any virtue. Every item, however, had at least one virtue represented at least *slightly* (i.e., exceeding 3). In fact, one item even incorporated all six virtues at least slightly. This was an item from the subscale *Reflective vs. Boorish* of the HBQD *(Achieves a detached perspective on self and others, Q.53)*.

Discussion

Study II showed a high degree of convergence among the experts not only with respect to the virtues to which they assigned the statements but also to their degree of relevance. Also, there was a moderate degree of convergence between the experts' judgments and the lay people's judgments. This convergence could be found despite several differences in the rating situations and formats: The lay people's judgment of a global degree of virtuousness (which was opposed to vice, that is, the degree of virtuousness in the lay people's judgments only ranged from 0 to 4) was related to the expert's ratings for six different virtues (assessed by an answer format ranging from 0 to 9), which reduced comparability.

The main aim of Study II was to examine the nature of virtues in the humor item pool more closely. This yielded two main results. First, the two virtues incorporated most often were humanity and wisdom. And second, all six used virtues were represented to some extent,

i.e., at least slightly, in current humor instruments. When considering a moderate degree of virtue as a minimum requirement, all virtues except courage were incorporated.

The affinity of humor to humanity and wisdom is compatible with philosophical descriptions of humor. For example contemporary researchers like Roberts (1988) and Bühler (2007) view humor as a means for dealing wisely with everyday life. Item contents representing wisdom were present in about half of the scales. Items classified as belonging to wisdom typically referred either to intellectual play on language or to a humorous consideration of everyday incidents or one's own mistakes.

The humanists of the seventieth century distinguished "good humour" from "bad humour", "true wit" from "false wit" (or "put-down witticisms"; Ruch, 2004) and referred to the benevolent forms of humor (laughing *with* in contrast to laughing *at*) based on sympathy (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963). Humanity (in at least moderate degrees) was found in items of nine scales. Among them, the virtues represented at least moderately by the item contents of the VIA-IS Humor scale were mainly humanity according to the experts of the current study. This seems reasonable, as Peterson (2006) refers to humor as a character strength of the heart (as opposed to strengths of the mind), which is compatible with other character strengths of humanity. Items representing humanity were often connected with *not* laughing or joking about others (even if it would be tempting) or with showing of a dislike of this behavior if displayed by others. Furthermore, items describing behavior such as comforting or relaxing others by cheering them up were typically understood to stand for humanity.

Within the VIA-Classification (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) humor belongs to the virtue transcendence. In the present study, transcendence was among the three virtues with the highest means and was (in at least moderate degrees) identified in items of four scales. The subscale humor from the VIA-IS also contained one item representing transcendence. Transcendence was mainly connected with a hopeful or optimistic perspective on life or life crises.

Closely related to humanity, justice and temperance were also often represented by an aversion against using humor to put others down or laugh at them. Typically, items identified as belonging to justice are identified as belonging to humanity to an even higher degree. Temperance reached very high single ratings. However, the mean temperance rating was the lowest. This is surprising, as an oft-cited core component of the sense of humor, the tendency to *laugh at oneself,* is often described as the main virtuous component of humor leading to modesty (and thus to temperance; e.g., Comte-Sponville, 2001). This component, as measured by the SHS (McGhee, 1996), was not perceived as virtuous by the lay people and thus did not enter Study II. However, aspects related to actually laughing at oneself in one item of the SAWS (*At this point in my life, I find it easy to laugh at my mistakes*, Q.24) were identified as virtuous (although as representing wisdom). Items scoring high in temperance seem to highlight the tendency to refrain from doing things, even if they are tempting, because they would offend others. However, items representing temperance at least weakly are often connected to regulating one's emotions.

Although the mean virtue rating for courage was higher than that for justice and temperance, courage did not reach very high ratings among single items. The highest courage ratings were given for items describing open and authentic humor behavior or a brave and composed behavior or attitude in the face of unpleasant situations.

Some of the humorous behaviors and attitudes from the questionnaires incorporated more than one virtue. For example, several items represented temperance, humanity, and justice. The co-occurrence of temperance and humanity or justice might possibly be explained by looking at the wording of the rated material. When temperance means, "to refrain from doing something" (e.g., from laughing at someone else's weakness), *although it would be tempting*, this might well be motivated by humanity or justice (because it would be mean and inhumane to laugh at such a person, and because it's not that person's fault and thus not fair to laugh at him or her).

Whereas future studies should examine whether or not some virtues or configurations of virtues go together with humor more or less often than others, one should not jump to conclusions. On the one hand, these items have not been constructed to measure (single) virtues. Thus, if these items must not necessarily stand for any virtue, or, for instance, only for courage, or only for justice, this does not mean that it is impossible to construct items that do so. On the other hand, it should be noted that the items included in this study are not a random sample of items. Different questionnaires have been included and the percentages of items per questionnaire are not identical. Thus, the statistical results of these studies must be considered with caution.

Taken as a whole then, Study II could not only replicate the judgments of virtuousness, it could also show that six core virtues were represented at least slightly and five virtues even at least moderately. In this study, wisdom and humanity are the virtues connected most strongly and most frequently with humor. Whether these two virtues always have a stronger connection with humor or whether this was just the case for the item pool given in this study, will have to be examined systematically.

General Discussion

In general, the two studies reveal that it is fruitful to examine the connection between virtue and humor. Out of a collection of humor behaviors and attitudes taken from several questionnaires, those behaviors and attitudes were indeed extracted that combine humor and virtue *implicitly*. Some items from the questionnaires used incorporate one virtue or even more virtues, as judged by lay people as well as experts on virtues. Other items were rated as neutral or as representing vice, suggesting that only certain aspects of humor are associated with virtue. The more a given behavior or attitude was evaluated as virtuous, the more it was also reported to be shown.

The approach chosen in the present paper has advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that an existing pool of numerous behavioral manifestations (which are largely missing in philosophical literature about humor and virtue) could be taken as a basis to empirically address the relation of humor and virtues (as well as vices) in everyday life. The disadvantage is that—because of the heterogeneous sampling and wording of the items from the different questionnaires—the results yielded by these studies might be distorted. The item pool of the HBQD made it possible to examine the relation of humor, vice, neutral aspects and virtue *per se*. On the other hand, virtuous aspects not covered by the HBQD could be found by adding additional questionnaires.

It must be kept in mind that virtues are not incorporated *explicitly* and systematically by the items in these questionnaires, i.e., the items have not been constructed in order to assess virtuous humor. However, all virtues are represented by the items, but not to the same extent. Some items represent more than one virtue. No final conclusion can be drawn as to whether it is in the nature of certain virtues to co-occur with certain other virtues more (or less) often in the context of humor or whether all virtues can also emerge distinctly when associated with humor. This is the first step in a broader project to study the relation of humor and virtue. In a second step evidence of humorous and virtuous behavior in everyday situations will be collected and analyzed which will complement the virtuous humor behaviors extracted in the current studies. From there it might be possible to systematically study and assess humor behavior prototypical for each virtue of the VIA-Classification.

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Part II

How Virtuous is Humor? Evidence From Everyday Behavior.

Ursula Beermann and Willibald Ruch

Department of Psychology, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract

Historical as well as contemporary writers across many disciplines have referred to humor as a virtue. However, in psychological research it is not clear in which ways humor can serve (as) a virtue, and for which virtues this holds. The current study addresses this issue from the perspective of lay people's everyday lives. The aims of the study are to investigate (1) how often people achieved each of six core virtues identified by Dahlsgaard, Peterson, and Seligman (2005) by means of humor, also in relation to how important the respective virtue was for the participants, (2) to collect reports of situations where participants actually used humor to achieve any of the six virtues, and (3) to study the use of eight comic styles (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963) within in the reported situations. Whereas justice and humanity were the virtues considered most important, the virtues most compatible with humor seemed to be humanity and wisdom. However, it was possible to report situations for each of the virtues. More benevolent comic styles were used more frequently to achieve virtue than more malevolent styles. But whenever malevolent styles, like sarcasm or cynicism, were used, this was disproportionally often the case in order to exert justice.

Keywords*: virtue, humor, positive psychology, comic styles, situations*

Introduction

There are numerous theories and conceptions of the sense of humor and its function (e.g., Martin, 2007; Ruch, 2004, 2007). Most commonly, humor is conceptualized as a temperament (Ruch, 2002). Not surprisingly, psychologists as well see humor mostly as a temperament or personality trait. But humor is also considered a mood, frame of mind, talent, or a virtue (Ruch, 2002). This latter notion of humor as a virtue can be found in historical as well as contemporary philosophical and theological literature. Despite the prevalence of this notion, psychological research has not paid much attention to humor as a virtue.

Positive Psychology has adopted the concept of virtues and character strengths into psychological research. These are seen as the "inner" determinants of the good life and life satisfaction (e.g., Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2002). As one of the character strengths, humor is among those related to life satisfaction most strongly (Peterson, Ruch, Beermann, Park, & Seligman, 2007, p. 152). However, it is neither entirely clear which aspects or facets of humor can function as virtues or serve other virtues, nor in which ways this could happen.

Humor as Virtue

In the 18th century, humanists treated humor as a cardinal virtue. Shaftesbury (1671–1713) considered humor (or "good humour") a benevolent, tolerant form of laughter that denotes the sovereign attitude of exposing oneself to the criticism and mockery of others—to a "test of ridicule" (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963, p. 108). As Ruch summarized, "While one should not poke fun at those who were simply odd, it was permissible to laugh at the pompous, the unreal, the faked, or the conceited" (2004, p. 586). "Humor" was then distinguished from other elements of the comic, such as wit, fun, or ridicule (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963, p. 48). Also within the Christian church, certain traditions were open to

humor. According to Gilhus (1997, p. 73), in Gnostic myths comic techniques were vehicles to bring forth knowledge (*gnosis*).

More contemporary writers refer to humor as being virtuous as well. According to Comte-Sponville (2001, p. 211-215), for example, humor allows one to feel less self-important and thus leads to humility. Cox found that the only possibility to make sense of a traditional religion is with a playful stance toward it. This playful stance has its basis in the opposition between critical thinking and traditional belief, which may be contradictory. "It [the comic style of the theology of juxtaposition] therefore refuses to trim the symbol to fit the situation because it sees that, precisely in the bizarre conjoining of the two, both symbol and situation break open to disclose newer and richer perceptions of reality." (1969, p. 132). Davies (2006) suggested that many jokes indicate virtue by mocking and reproving those who lack virtue. The context in which the jokes are told, however, might be relevant for their function in communication. Jokes used as glosses in conversations might convey a critical message, advocate a course of action, support a friend or serve similar goals (Oring, 2003, p. 91-92). One might conclude that these glosses can serve virtues.

Philosophical literature only rarely provides examples of how humor served (as) a virtue. But it is possible to come up with examples of persons who act humorously in order to achieve positive effects. For instance, it is possible to comfort sad people by making a humorous remark in an act of kindness or humanity. Furthermore, Victor Frankl's (1984) conscious use of humor in concentration camps suggests a connection with transcendence (hoping to survive).

Virtues in Positive Psychology

Virtuousness is generally seen as acting morally, humanely, or benevolently (e.g., Comte-Sponville, 2001). Yearley (1990, p. 13) defines virtue as "a disposition to act, desire and feel that involves the exercise of judgment and leads to a recognizable human excellence

or instance of human flourishing" (1990, p. 13). In philosophy and in other disciplines,

several virtue catalogues exist. To synthesize these, Dahlsgaard, Peterson, and Seligman

(2005, p. 205) reviewed historical texts stemming from different cultures and religions and

named six broad virtues they claimed to be universal. For Peterson and Seligman (2004) these

six virtues are associated with various character strengths. The virtues are *wisdom* (which is

associated with cognitive strengths referring to gaining and using knowledge for good

purposes; character strengths involved are, e.g., judgment, love of learning, or perspective),

courage (including emotional strengths concerning the will to achieve goals in the face of

external or internal opposition; e.g., authenticity, bravery, or perseverance), *humanity*

(interpersonal strengths involved in relating to others in a kind, empathetic, and benevolent

way; i.e., kindness, love, or social intelligence), *justice* (involving civic strengths that form

the basis of a healthy community life, i.e., fairness, leadership, or teamwork), *temperance*

(strengths which master excess; e.g. forgiveness, humility, or self regulation), and

transcendence (strengths that affect connections to the larger universe and provide meaning;

e.g., hope, spirituality, or humor; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Virtues and Facets of Humor

The question arises whether all virtues are served equally well by all forms of humor

or whether certain comic styles are more conducive to certain virtues but not appropriate for

others. Humor has often been treated as an umbrella term for everything that is funny.

However, with different underlying emotions, it is possible that humor has different "flavors"

(cf. Ruch, 1995, 2001; Milner Davis, 2003). For instance, pure farces may shift their simple,

robust fun either towards romantic sentimentalism, towards bitter, black, existential angst or

towards other satirical ends (Milner Davis, 2003, p. 16). Similarly, Condren, Milner Davis,

McCausland, & Phiddian (2008, p. 403) remark that some examples of satire are so bleak they

are scarcely even humor. Schmidt-Hidding (1963) differentiated humor from other forms of

the funny and suggested that humor (in the sense of an understanding for the incongruities of the world) is based on a sympathetic heart, whereas wit, for example, is based on a superior intellect. Thus, it is also conceivable that humor differs with different underlying virtues.

By consulting literature from antiquity and analyzing the modern language of humor, Schmidt-Hidding derived eight different comic styles, which received much attention in German humor literature, namely *humor* (in its narrow sense), *wit, irony, satire, fun, nonsense, sarcasm,* and *cynicism* (1963, p. 50-51). In 2001, Ruch found that Schmidt-Hidding's comic styles were located in a two-dimensional space with one factor covering affective/motivational elements (good humor vs. bad humor or benevolence vs. malevolence) and one factor covering mental/cognitive elements. Regarding the "affectivity" factor, the comic styles *fun*, *humor* and *nonsense* were located nearer the pole "good humor" (or benevolent humor, "laughing with"; Ruch, 2001, p. 412–413). *Wit* was located rather in the middle between the two poles, and *irony* (as the mildest form among those four), *satire, cynicism* and *sarcasm* were located nearer the pole "bad humor" (or skeptical, malevolent humor, "laughing at"; Ruch, 2001, p. 412–413). In terms of virtue, this would lead to the assumption that the more benevolent a comic style, the more often it is used to show a virtue, and the other way round.

However, one might argue that the malevolent comic styles also have the potential to serve certain virtues. For example, some authors referred to the use of derisive, skeptical comic styles such as satire, sarcasm, or cynicism as a social corrective. Schmidt-Hidding proposed that mockery is based on a moral sense, and for him satire aims to decry the bad and foolish, and at the general "betterment of the world" (German: *Weltverbesserung*, Schmidt-Hidding, 1963, p. 50). Similarly, Davies assumed that jokes, in their common canned form, can indicate moral failure (2006), but he doubted that they are a good method of inciting moral indignation. But spontaneous "skillful and witty put-downs can be used to ridicule, control and even express moral criticisms of human weaknesses otherwise best left

unadmonished" (Davies, 2002, p. 204). Thus, while, in general, the skeptical styles are rarely used for a positive purpose and may be hurtful, they might be employed quite frequently in context of the virtue of justice. Thus, a collection of situations in which lay people describe how they acted virtuously through the use of humor should also ask what comic style was employed. This way it is possible to study whether or not the eight comic styles of Schmidt-Hidding will be affiliated with different virtues.

The Present Study

The present study addressed the question *if, to what extent*, and *how* virtue can be achieved by humor using people's everyday experiences. The study was based on the six virtues found to be universal by Dahlsgaard et al. (2005), namely wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. On this basis, the aim of the present study was threefold. First, it was of interest how often people exert virtues humorously (based on self-reports by the participants) and whether or not certain virtues are expressed humorously more often than others. Such a study needs to take into account that someone who does not consider a virtue important presumably does not show it often, humorously or otherwise. Thus, as an anchor a judgment of the importance of a particular virtue were also assessed, both concerning the participants themselves and people in general.

The second aim was to collect as many examples as possible for any of the six virtues that were achieved through humorous behavior. Here, the "feasibility" of exerting virtue humorously was addressed. In particular, in the current study, the frequency of incidents was of interest. And third, the use of eight comic styles (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963) within humorously-exerted virtue situations was studied. It was expected that more benevolent styles (i.e., humor in the narrow sense, fun, wit, nonsense; Ruch, 2001) occur more frequently than more skeptical ones. Furthermore, if skeptical, derisive comic styles (in particular sarcasm,

cynicism, or satire) were used, participants were expected to apply them disproportionately often in justice-related situations.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of $N = 48$ German-speaking participants (18 males and 30 females) between 25 and 88 years of age ($M = 47.67$, $SD = 18.80$) from Switzerland, Austria, and Germany. Among them, the education level of 6 participants was a completed apprenticeship, 13 participants had a general qualification for university entrance, and 27 participants had a university degree. Two participants did not specify their level of education.

Instrument

The *Humor in Tugenden* questionnaire (Humor in Virtues, HiT) was developed for the current study to assess humorous events that simultaneously served a certain virtue. It consists of two parts. Part A addresses four ratings concerning the attitude to virtue, and to virtue and humor. Part B allows for reporting incidents and for assigning comic styles that participants had used in these incidents. Both parts are organized by the six core virtues identified by Dahlsgaard et al. (2005). In order to counteract sequence effects, two parallel versions of the *HiT* with reversed sequences of the six virtues exist.

Part A assesses the attitude to the six virtues *wisdom, courage*, *humanity, justice*, *temperance*, and *transcendence*. For every virtue, a definition according to Peterson and Seligman (2004) is provided together with a list of those of the 24 character strengths that are hypothesized to lead to the respective virtue. This is followed by four ratings: (1) *How do you evaluate the role of virtue X in daily human interaction?* (Rated "importance"; bipolar 7-point rating scale from -3 = "extremely obstructive" via 0 = "neither obstructive nor beneficial" to 3 = "indispensable"), (2) *How much do you feel committed by virtue X?* (Rated "commitment";

5-point Likert-scale from 1 = "not at all" to 5 = "very much"), (3) *In everyday life, people are sometimes serious and sometimes humorous. This is also the case in situations where virtues occur. When considering all situations in which the virtue X is shown: In how many of them is this done in a humorous way?* (Rated "employment, general"; the frequency has to be estimated; 0 = "never" to 100 = "always"), and (4) *how often have you been able to exert the virtue X in a humorous way?* (Rated "employment, self"; 5-point Likert-scale from 1 = "never before" to 5 = "nearly always").

Part B of the questionnaire aims to collect actual scenarios from everyday life in which each of the six virtues mentioned above was achieved in a humorous way. For each of the virtues, the instruction is designed to help the participants to either remember situations where *they themselves* were the acting persons showing the respective virtue humorously, or where they *witnessed another person* doing so, or situations which they have *been told by someone else*, seen on *television*, read in a *book*, or just can *imagine*. These remembered or visualized situations have to be written down as accurately as possible. In order to facilitate recall and to obtain as detailed descriptions as possible, questions concerning details of the situations are integrated into the instruction (i.e., Where did the situation take place? Who was there? What caused the situation, what was going on, how did it end?). Furthermore, questions regarding the virtuous and the humorous aspects of the situations are added (i.e., What in particular was the virtuous act? Which humorous behavior has been shown that helped to exert the virtue?). For the current study, the frequencies of the situations rather than the actual contents were of interest.

Additionally, for each situation provided the participants were asked to choose one or more of eight comic styles according to Schmidt-Hidding (1963), which they thought was used in a given situation. The comic styles were the following: *Humor* (in the sense of appreciation of the world's inconsistency and arousing sympathy), *wit, irony, satire, fun, nonsense, sarcasm,* and *cynicism*.

Procedure

The participants received the questionnaire via email or postal mail. Each parallel version of the *HiT* was answered by half of the participants. The participants filled in Part A by themselves at home. However, they were allowed to exchange thoughts with their family or friends regarding *Part B*. This should facilitate the relatively complex task of remembering and writing down situations in which they or somebody else was *both* virtuous *and* humorous, and thus combining two aspects in hindsight that they probably were not too aware of at the time. This procedure was chosen because the aim of Part B is not to measure any behavior but to collect as many scenarios as possible.

The participants were asked to report as many situations as possible for each virtue. They were encouraged to take their time remembering virtuous and humorous situations. However, they were reassured that it would be fine if they would not be able to cover all virtues when reporting situations. If they found that more than one virtue was realized in the situation, they were instructed to assign it to the virtue most prominent for them.

Without addressing directly how virtuous the participants actually acted, the virtue ratings assessed a *general* judgment concerning the role of the virtue and their *commitment* to the virtue (regardless of how successful the participants actually were in realizing the virtues). Even so, in order to counteract social desirability effects, it was pointed out explicitly that the aim of this study was *not* to find out how virtuous or how humorous the participants were, but that it was of interest *if*, and if so *how*, humor can be employed in order to realize virtue. Finally, the participants were assured that their data would be handled anonymously.

Results

The Role of Virtue and Humor in Part A of the HiT

Means were computed for rated *importance* of and the participant's personal *commitment* to virtue, and the *employment of humor for virtue in general* and concerning

themselves (Part A of the HiT). Next, differences between the six virtues were studied using one-way ANOVAs for repeated measures with the type of virtue as repeated measurement factor for each of the four ratings as dependent variable. For significant effects, posthoc tests (Fisher LSD) were computed to locate the differences between virtues. Means, standard deviations, and the ANOVAs for each rating are presented in Table 1.

The data in Table 1 confirms that participants indeed found virtues important. Across all virtues, the mean rating was $M = 1.95$ suggesting that the participants tended to judge the role of virtue *very beneficial* (= 2). The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for the type of virtue on rated *importance*. Two of the virtues, namely humanity and justice, were judged to be more important than wisdom, courage, temperance, and transcendence, which did not differ from each other.

The participants felt on average *rather* (= 4) to *very much* (= 5) committed by the particular virtue ($M = 4.18$). The ANOVA for rated *commitment* showed a significant main effect for the type of virtue. Here, posthoc tests yielded that the participants felt especially committed to humanity, justice, transcendence, and wisdom. The judgments for the two virtues temperance and courage followed these four and did not differ from each other.[3]

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[3] Within the *commitment* rating, and only here, there were gender differences, $F(1, 44) = 5.07$, $p < .05$. Females rated their commitment to virtue higher than males (Fisher LSD).

Table 1.

Effects of the Kind of Virtue on the Importance, Commitment, Employment General, Employment-Self Ratings, the Difference Between Commitment and Employment-Self and the Number of Situations.

Variable	Wisdom	Courage	Humanity	Justice	Temperance	Transcendence	Main effects
Importance							
M	1.89^b	1.70^b	2.24^a	2.37^a	1.83^b	1.70^b	$F(5, 45) = 6.97$
SD	0.92	0.70	0.67	0.88	0.83	0.81	$p < .0001$
Commitment							
M	4.26^a	3.89^b	4.37^a	4.46a	3.91^b	4.20^a	$F(5, 45) = 5.70$
SD	0.77	0.77	0.83	0.86	0.84	0.86	$p < .0001$
Employment-g							
M	42.57^a	33.78^b	46.59^a	30.48b	26.87^b	26.69^b	$F(5, 41) = 12.13$
SD	24.25	22.08	22.59	22.13	18.49	18.68	$p < .0001$
Employment-s							
M	3.09^{ab}	3.00^{bc}	3.39^a	3.02bc	2.80^c	2.87^c	$F(5, 43) = 4.95$
SD	0.87	0.71	0.68	0.72	0.86	0.83	$p < .001$

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued).

Rating	Wisdom	Courage	Humanity	Justice	Temperance	Transcendence	Main effects
Commitment — Employment-s							
M	1.14^{ab}	0.89^{bc}	0.98^{bc}	1.43^{a}	1.11^{ab}	1.34^{a}	$F (5, 43) = 3.66$
SD	1.05	0.92	0.79	0.93	0.92	0.91	$p < .01$
Number of situations[1]							
Median	0.60	0.67	0.73	0.60	0.61	0.71	$\chi^2(5, 46) = 1.71$
Mean ranks	3.40	3.52	3.74	3.37	3.30	3.66	$p = .89$

Note. $N = 42\text{-}47$.

Importance = Importance of the role of each virtue in general; Answer format from -3 to +3. Commitment = Felt commitment to each virtue;

Answer format from 1 to 5. Employment-g = Estimate of how often humor is employed for each virtue in general; Answer format from 0 to 100.

Employment-s = Estimate of how often humor is employed for each virtue by participants themselves; Answer format from 1 to 5. Commitment —

Employment-s = Difference between commitment and employment, self-rating. Number of situations = Number of valid situations.

[1] Friedman's ANOVA was computed for the number of situations.

[a,b,c] Means of a column with same superscripts don't differ significantly at $p < .05$ (Fisher LSD).

On average, the participants estimated that in 34.77% of all situations virtue had been shown humorously (*employment, general*). The ANOVA resulted in a significant main effect for the type of virtue. Humor was used most often for humanity and wisdom, followed by courage, justice, transcendence and temperance, which did not differ from each other.

The participants reported having employed humor for virtues themselves *several times* (= 3; *M* = 3.03*)* on average. Conducting the ANOVA for the rated *employment, self* yielded a significant main effect for the type of virtue. Humanity was followed by wisdom, courage, justice, transcendence, and temperance. However, whereas humanity as the highest differed from all five other virtues, wisdom did neither differ from humanity nor from courage and justice. Wisdom was exerted humorously more often than transcendence and temperance, but the latter two were not significantly different from courage and justice.

Relations Among Importance and Commitment to a Virtue and its Humorous Realization

In order to analyze how rated *importance*, *commitment*, *employing humor for virtue in general* and *employing humor for virtue by oneself* corresponded to each other, within each of the six virtues Pearson correlations for all pairs of ratings were computed. The coefficients for each rating combination are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

Pairwise Correlations Among the Four Ratings for Each Virtue.

Virtue	*r* of Importance with			*r* of Commitment with		*r* of Employment-g with
	Commitment	Employment-g	Employment-s	Employment-g	Employment-s	Employment-s
Wisdom	.29	.06	.02	.13	.20	.55**
Courage	.36*	-.16	-.13	.01	.21	.32*
Humanity	.48**	.14	.23	-.13	.45**	.45**
Justice	.57**	.21	.34*	.32*	.34*	.56**
Temperance	.52**	.10	.30*	.20	.44**	.52**
Transcendence	.56**	.37*	.33*	.21	.44**	.55**
Average corr.	.46**	.12	.18	.12	.35*	.49**

Note. $N = 43\text{-}46$.

Importance = Importance of the role of each virtue in general. Commitment = Felt commitment to each virtue. Employment-g. = Estimate of how often humor is employed for each virtue in general. Employment-s = Estimate of how often humor is employed for each virtue by participants themselves.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

The data in Table 2 shows that the more people thought of a certain virtue as important for human interaction (*importance*), the more they also felt committed to that virtue (*commitment*). The average correlation across all virtues was $r = .46$. The correlation was lowest for wisdom and highest for justice. Furthermore, the more people thought it is possible to achieve a certain virtue by using humor in general (*employment, general*), the more they reported to have done so themselves for that virtue (*employment, self*). Not surprisingly, these two ratings yielded a very high mean correlation coefficient ($r = .49$). Courage showed the lowest correlation and justice the highest. Additionally, the more people felt committed to a certain virtue (*commitment*), the more they also sought to exert this virtue by using humor (*employment, self*). There was a moderate average correlation ($r = .35$). It was not significant for wisdom and courage, and highest for humanity. Furthermore, considering a virtue important for human interaction (*importance*) was only weakly related to its humorous realization by oneself (*employment, self*) with an average correlation of $r = .18$. There were, however, significant relationships for the virtues justice, temperance, and transcendence.

Does the use of humor generalize across all virtues? To answer this question, the intercorrelations among the six virtues were computed for rated *employment, self*. It turned out, that no general tendency to employ humor in virtues was found. However, the virtues were not completely independent either, rather clusters of related virtues emerged. First, people who have frequently exerted transcendence humorously, also said they have done so for temperance ($r = .55, p < .01$) and wisdom ($r = .49, p < .01$), with temperance and wisdom yielding a correlation of $r = .30$ ($p < .05$). Second, having shown humanity humorously went along with having exerted courage humorously ($r = .52, p < .01$). And third, the realization of temperance in a humorous way by the people themselves was related to the realization of justice in a humorous way ($r = .41, p < .05$).

Is the relationship between how important a virtue is to how often one employed humor when pursuing that virtue the same for each of the virtues? In other words, are some

virtues more conducive to a humorous treatment than others? In order to answer this question, a 2 (type of rating) x 6 (type of virtue) ANOVA for repeated measures was computed. The profiles are illustrated in Figure 1.
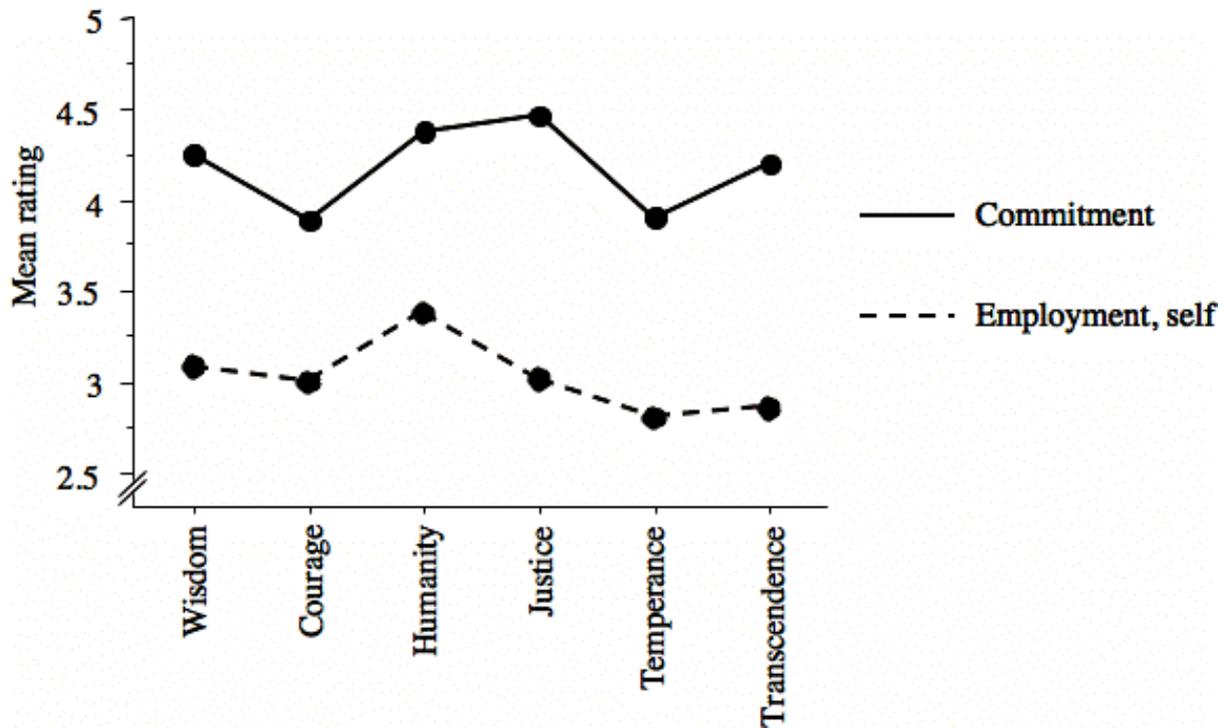
Figure 1. Mean ratings for commitment for virtue and employment of humor for virtue by oneself across the six virtues.

As expected, the ANOVA revealed a significant interaction, $F(5, 43) = 3.66$, $p < .01$, confirming that the frequency of the use of humor does not merely reflect the importance of the virtue (Figure 1). In order to examine which of the virtues were involved in the interaction, difference scores were calculated by subtracting the mean score for rated *employment, self* from the mean score of rated *commitment* for each virtue. A one-way ANOVA for repeated measurement was performed for the resulting six difference scores with type of virtue forming the repeated measurement factor. As Posthoc tests revealed, for justice and transcendence the difference value was larger than for the other four virtues (although for temperance and wisdom, the values failed to be significantly lower; see Table 1). This means that participants, irrespective of how much they felt committed to a virtue, tended to use

humor less frequently in justice and transcendence situations. In other words, humor is relatively infrequently combined with these two virtues.

Number of Situations for Each Virtue—Part B of the HiT

Analysis of Part B showed that of the 48 participants, 42 reported at least one situation in total resulting in a total of 248 situations. However, not all situations contained the criteria the participants had been asked for or were "off-topic". For example, some of the situations represented elements of humor but no virtuous aspects, or *vice versa.* Thus, the first author screened all reported situations and removed the off-topic situations. This yielded 40 remaining persons providing "valid" situations. They reported a number between 1 and 18 valid situations per participant (*Mdn* = 4.25, *MAD* = 1.50) and a total of 210 situations. Per virtue, the participants described between 1 and 6 situations.

For every virtue situations were reported in which humor has been employed. In order to determine whether there were differences in the number of situations between the virtues, a Friedman ANOVA for the number of situations within the six virtues was conducted. The exact medians and the mean ranks for the number of situations for every virtue are given in Table 1. As the coefficients in Table 1 show, there was no difference; the participants reported situations for all six virtues to the same degree.

Comic Styles

For all reported situations, the participants also assigned the situations to one or more comic styles that were used in the situations.[4] In order to assess differences in the use of the

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[4] A researcher familiar with the terminology by Schmidt-Hidding (1963) served as expert and coded 40 of the collected situations for the comic styles. The agreement between the expert and the participants was .64.

comic styles, a Friedman's ANOVA[5] was performed. Indeed, there were significant differences in the frequency of the styles, Friedman's χ^2 (7, 203) = 175.01, $p < .001$. The comic style used most often was *humor* (in the narrow sense). This was followed by *fun*, *wit*, *irony*, *sarcasm*, *nonsense*, *satire*, and *cynicism*, in that order.

Wilcoxon tests were calculated in order to obtain information on significant differences regarding the comic styles. A Bonferroni correction was applied. All reported effects are tested at $p < .002$. *Humor* and *wit* appeared significantly more often than *satire* ($T = 576$ and 520, respectively), *nonsense* ($T = 570$ and 513.5, respectively), *sarcasm* ($T = 768$ and 870, respectively), and *cynicism* ($T = 495$ and 410, respectively, all $p < .002$). Furthermore, people applied *fun* and *irony* significantly more often than *nonsense* ($T = 468$ and 540, respectively), *sarcasm* ($T = 1069.5$ and 396.5, respectively), and *cynicism* ($T = 410$ and 150, respectively, all $p < .002$). *Fun* was used more often than *satire* ($T = 637.5$, $p < .002$).

In the following, the frequencies of the comic styles for every virtue were investigated in more detail. Figure 2 shows the relative frequencies of the comic styles (i.e., profiles for each comic style) for every virtue.

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[5] For dichotomy data like these, usually a Cochran's Q analysis is performed. However, the Friedman's χ^2 had exactly the same power as the Cochran's Q and provided mean ranks which was more appropriate for describing the results.
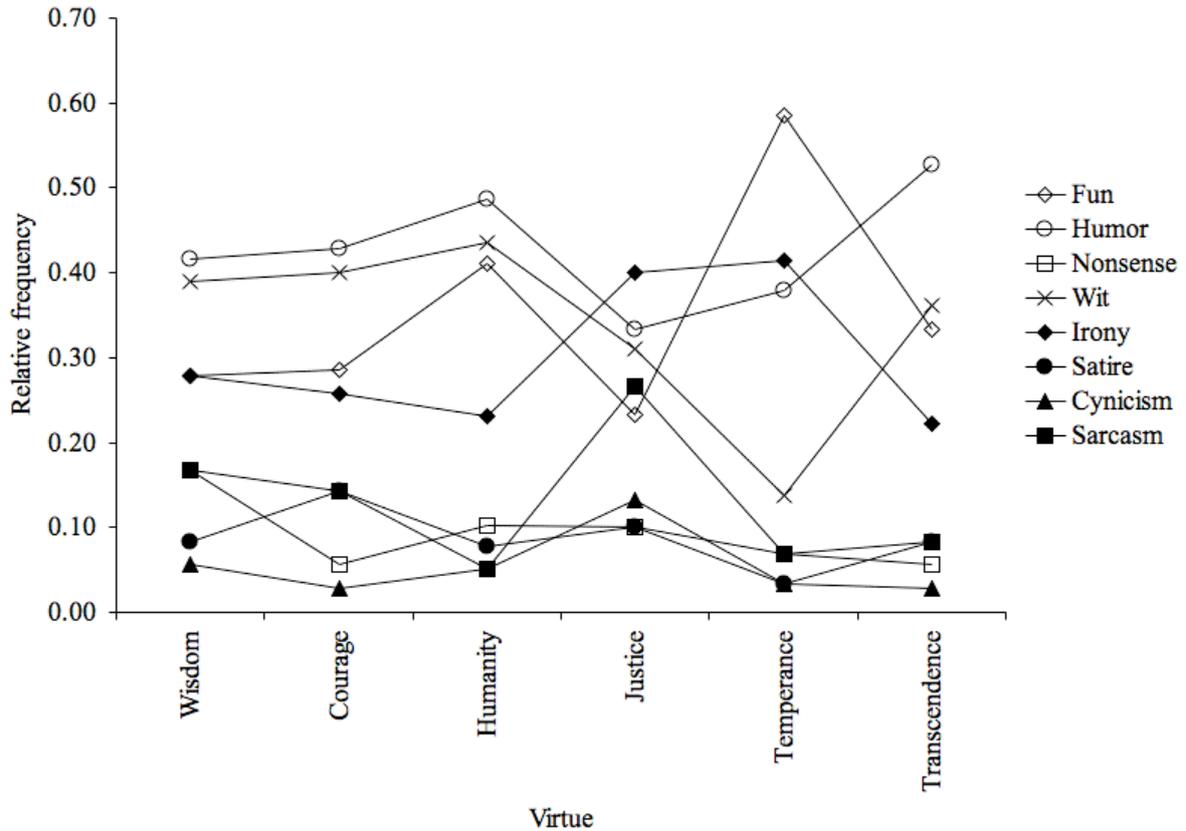
Figure 2. Profiles of the comic styles across the six virtues.

Figure 2 illustrates that, generally, the use of a specific comic style seemed to depend on the virtue that was targeted. In particular, there seemed to be much variance in *fun* depending on the virtue (with a minimum relative frequency of .23 and a maximum of .59); it was used moderately often to show wisdom, courage, or transcendence, rather often to show humanity and even more so for temperance, but less often for justice. The use of *wit* was rather high with the exception of temperance (the relative frequency ranged from .14 to .44 with a mean of .34). The profile of *irony* had a moderate level (ranging from .22 to .44 with an average relative frequency of .30). It was noticeable that the profile of *irony* with respect to virtue mirrored the one of *humor*. Especially comic styles generally regarded as more skeptical (Ruch, 2001, p. 412–413, in particular *sarcasm, irony,* and *cynicism*) had peaks or higher values with respect to justice. However, it must be kept in mind that with respect to comic styles, multiple answers were possible. Comic styles were not entirely independent

from each other. Figure 2 is intended to illustrate the differentiated use of comic styles, but does not show the different configurations among the comic styles.

To test the hypothesis whether derisive humor was used more often in justice situations compared to the other virtues, a χ^2-analysis was undertaken for all justice situations vs. situations for all other virtues with the frequency of dark humor (a variable aggregated from the three derisive comic styles satire, sarcasm and cynicism with 0 or 1 data) as dependent variable. The proportion of derisive humor differed significantly between justice vs. all other situations, $\chi^2 (1) = 5.39$, $p < .05$. Based on the odds ratio, it seems that derisive humor was used 2.57 times more often for justice situations than for situations of all other virtues.

Discussion

The current study is an attempt at addressing humor as one possible means of achieving virtue. By involving lay people, it was possible to study the use of humor for virtues based on everyday experience. Self-reports on virtue independent of humor, on virtue exerted by using humor, as well as actual examples of acting virtuously in a humorous way were assessed. Indeed, the study could show that humor can serve the entire six core virtues identified by Dahlsgaard et al. (2005). Self-reports revealed that it seems to be particularly appropriate to employ humor for humanity and wisdom. Using the performance part of the HiT, each of the virtues examples of everyday situations could be identified. Within these situations, generally benevolent comic styles were used more often. If derisive and skeptical styles were used, this was in particular the case in justice situations.

Virtues and Humor in the Lay People's View

The first goal of the study was to investigate the participants' estimates of how often people have achieved each of the six core virtues according to Peterson and Seligman (2004) in a humorous way. It revealed two virtues that seem to be exceptionally suitable for

implementing them with the help of humor. These "top" (i.e., most frequently realized by humor) virtues are humanity and wisdom. One reason for this may be connected with associations people have concerning humanity and wisdom. Both seem to incorporate something like "goodwill". Helping people and being friendly is associated to smiling and making harmless jokes. Humor is a frequently mentioned desirable attribute of partners and thus contributes to the character strength of love. Wisdom is connected to giving good advice, which might also include advice concerning problems of other people. In movies or books, wise people are often depicted as old, benignly smiling, composed men or women, who teach their younger and still unsettled pupils in a calm and sometimes humorous way, thus realizing sereneness and smiling benevolently in the face of adversities. However, beside these associations, this is also in accordance with philosophical and theological literature. The humanists referred to (good) humor as the benevolent forms of humor (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963; Ruch, 2004). Schmidt-Hidding proposed that humor (as opposed to mock, wit or fun) is based on a "sympathetic heart". Similarly, Peterson considers humor to be a strength of the heart (as opposed to strengths of the mind), which is compatible with other character strengths of humanity (2006, p. 158). Others see humor as a way of dealing wisely with everyday life (cf. Bühler, 2007; Webster, 2003). By asking experts to rate the degree of the six core virtues within the contents of humor questionnaire items, Beermann and Ruch (2009) found wisdom and humanity to be the top virtues connected to humor. One might imagine a person acting humanely and wisely at the same time. But even so, employing humor for wisdom was only weakly related to employing humor to realize humanity. Thus, mostly independent from each other, both virtues seem to be highly compatible with humor.

The kind of virtue applicable for using humor doesn't seem to be entirely congruent with the kind of virtue considered most crucial. The top two virtues considered most important for daily human interactions were justice and humanity, and the top four virtues people felt committed to were justice, humanity, wisdom, and transcendence. Compared to

the commitment to virtue, people seemed to use humor less for the two virtues justice and transcendence. Several explanations are possible for this result. One explanation is that it is more difficult to use humor for justice or transcendence. For example, people might have problems assuring their authority as leaders. When employing humor for leadership, they might fear that they are not taken seriously. Another possibility is that even if they would be able to apply humor for justice or transcendence, the recipient might not acknowledge this. A person who tends to suffer from gelotophobia (cf. Ruch, 2009) might be irritated when he or she is rebuked in a humorous way, even when it was meant to be benevolent. Likewise, situations conveying transcendence were often connected with dying. Some people probably think that when dealing with death humor is not allowed, and feel affronted if someone jokes in this kind of situations. However, there are reports of seriously ill or even dying persons who wish a "normal", humorous communication with nursing staff or family and friends rather than a muted and deadly serious one in order not to feel "as if you were already buried" (e.g., Bischofberger, 2002, p. 129).

As expected, finding a particular virtue important in general relates to feeling committed to the respective virtue. It was also predictable that people who think that virtues have been achieved humorously in general also report that they had employed humor for virtues themselves. Furthermore, feeling committed to a virtue was related to exerting it humorously for four of the virtues. Feeling committed to wisdom or courage, however, does *not* relate highly to applying humor in order to exert these two virtues. What is the difference between wisdom and courage and the other four virtues? It seems that the difficulty in achieving different virtues varies. For example, wisdom might be connected to cognitive strengths, such as intelligence, so that some people might find it difficult to "choose" to act wisely—as compared to, for example, humanity, where you can more easily choose to be friendly, or temperance, where you can more easily choose to moderate yourself. Also, courage might be difficult for some people who, for example, have higher degrees of anxiety.

Thus, it might be possible that the more difficult a virtue putatively is, the less opportunities existed where the respective virtue could be shown, and especially in a humorous way—but only for a part of the participants. That is, in addition to how difficult it is to realize a virtue *humorously,* for these two virtues it might be difficult to show it at all, that is, *humorously or non-humorously*—as it was not asked how often participants succeeded in showing virtue independently from humor.

Examples of Humorous and Virtuous Behavior—The Collected Situations

The second goal was to collect examples of the participants' lives where they actually employed virtue in a humorous way. This was done in order to check for the "feasibility" of doing this. Indeed, it is possible to report a considerable number of situations in which humor has been employed for each of the six virtues. More than 80% of the participants found and remembered ways of using humor to achieve virtue. Most of the examples were detailed and it was possible to get a good impression (some of the descriptions had more than 400 words). This was possible in spite of the complexity of the task. People had to remember situations that they—retrospectively and possibly for the first time ever—had to evaluate as virtuous (and assign to a certain virtue), *and* which contained humorous behavior that was aimed at achieving virtue. In addition, a talent in writing has an influence on the number of reported situations. This performance aspect might also have influenced that, in contrast to the self-reports, there is no significant difference in the number of situations reported per virtue.

What Kind of Humor? —The Comic Styles

The third goal was to study (self-reported) linguistic comic styles that were used in order to apply humor to achieve virtue. The analyses regarding the use of comic styles revealed that any comic style was used in the situations to achieve virtue. However, the rank order of the frequency of use of the styles roughly corresponded to Ruch's (2001) findings on the location of the comic styles on the "good humor" vs. "bad humor" factor. That is,

benevolent comic styles were in general exploited more often in the virtue situations than malevolent styles. Only irony and nonsense seemed to have changed sides. Irony was among the four comic styles used more often—along with three benevolent styles, whereas nonsense was among the four styles used least in the reported situations. As irony is milder and not as "aggressive" as the other skeptical styles, it seems plausible to use it more often in context of virtue. Since the content of nonsense is absurd and literally does not make sense, nonsense does not necessarily seem to have a function with respect to virtue (see also Ruch & Hehl, 1987). Thus it seems understandable that an application with any virtue as a purpose is not easily possible.

However, the analyses of the different comic styles revealed that in comparison to other virtues, more skeptical, "laughing at" comic styles such as satire, cynicism or sarcasm were used in order to achieve justice. This result is in accordance with Schmidt-Hidding who proposes that mock and ridicule are based on moral sense (1963, p. 48), and Long and Graesser who proposed the use of sarcasm or satire in order to enforce social norms (1988, p. 53-54). The following example illustrates a situation where sarcasm was used to exert justice.

> About 40 years ago, when I was a student I had a summer job as a waiter in a hotel. The boss was extremely tough and dealt with the employees as if they were pieces of wood. Especially female foreign seasonal labors were exploited wherever possible (14 hours of work with only one break, which was already before midday after only two hours of work, and during which they had to clean the bedrooms of their male colleagues—the waiters) and often were fired because of the smallest "misdoings". When again a whole series of "sackings" had happened, I was seething with rage about this injustice and xenophobia. But because I didn't dare stand up to it openly, I started humming the melody of "Zehn kleine Negerlein" (An outdated children's song to the tune of "Ten Little Indians", containing ten verses in each of which one boy

dies or "disappears", A/N) while I was cleaning the lounge—loud enough for my boss to hear it. She snarled at me asking what I was singing, and I told her defiantly. She left without another word. —It was due to an older waiter that I wasn't fired after this incident; he told me later that he had spoken to her on my behalf. Here the "humor" of the song served as a vehicle for standing up for justice in a hidden way, because I didn't dare do it openly.

The situation exemplifies a hard situation involving a high degree of injustice (although also courage was probably needed in this situation). The participant described how (self-reported) sarcasm helped him to express his disapproval of his boss' exploitative and xenophobic behavior.

Above, several possible explanations were discussed why justice has been shown less often in a humorous way than what could be expected when considering the high commitment to it. If skeptical styles were used disproportionately often in justice situations, this might be an additional explanation for the reduced frequency of justice and humor. Not everybody is able or ready to use skeptical comic styles.

Of course, not all justice situations involved sarcasm. For example, one participant described how she achieved justice among children pushing around a toy. She settled a dispute among them by imitating their behavior in an exaggerated, funny way, which made the children laugh and pay more attention to all children being able to play with it. The comic style she identified in this situation was *fun*.

The following examples illustrate how further comic styles were used in order to exert virtues. One participant provided the following transcendence situation as an example for the comic style *humor* (in its narrow sense). She reported how her grandmother, when she was about to die, had planned the funeral together with the priest and her family including the guest list and funeral oration. She had intended to "make it a nice day, since all family and friends were meeting there." According to the participant, on the funeral day there was indeed

a lot of laughter, thus the grandmother had succeeded in planning an event in the way she wanted it to be transcending her own death. An example for *wit* and *irony* is given in a situation reported for the virtue temperance. The participant described a friend moving into her tiny room in her accommodation during a weekend workshop, and reducing her demands concerning the size of motel rooms by commenting that luxury doesn't make one happy anyway.

There are, of course, limitations to the study. The analyses were restricted to self-reports of comic styles. However, there was a considerable agreement between the comic styles self-reported by the participants and those coded by an expert for 40 of the situations. This agreement has been found in spite of the fact that the expert was not present in the actual situations (and thus only had the reports varying in veracity with the writing abilities of the participants). It is necessary to replicate the link between skeptical comic styles and justice. Furthermore, there might be further humor styles that were not included in the present list.

Nevertheless, the current study was able to show that humor can be a way of implementing virtue. It yielded a pool of situations covering six universal virtues. It focused on the general feasibility and analyzed the comic styles used in the situations. Based on this study it is now possible to extract more detailed facets on *how* each virtue can be realized. Similarly, the causality is not always clear: does a person exert wisdom in a humorous way, or does a person use humor in a wise and tactful way? This corresponds to Aristotle's' view on humor, summed up by Morreall: "The virtue of engaging in humor to the right degree, and at the right time and place, Aristotle called *eutrapelia*, ready-wittedness" (2008, p. 218). Both directions might be possible and should be investigated based on the examples collected in this study.

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Part III

Can People Really Laugh at Themselves? Experimental and Correlational Evidence

Ursula Beermann and Willibald Ruch

Department of Psychology, University of Zurich, Switzerland

Abstract

Laughing at oneself constitutes a core component of the sense of humor in the theories of several authors (e.g., Lersch, 1962; McGhee, 1996). In McGhee's (1996) eight-step-training program of the sense of humor, laughing at oneself constitutes one of the most difficult levels. However, some have doubted the existence of laughing at oneself, because in their view humor derives from a feeling of superiority (e.g., Gruner 1997; La Fave, Haddad, & Maesen, 1996). Using a multi-method approach, in the current study, 70 psychology students and a total of 126 peers filled in the *Sense of Humor Scale* (SHS, McGhee 1996), containing as a subscale "Laughing at oneself". Additionally, the participants answered the Short form of the *Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised* (EPQ-RK, Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985), and the Trait and State forms of the *State-Trait-Cheerfulness-Inventory* (STCI, Ruch, Köhler, & van Thriel, 1996, 1997). They then were confronted with six distorted images of themselves. Facial responses of the participants were videotaped and analyzed using the *Facial Action Coding System* (FACS, Ekman, Friesen, & Hager, 2002). Four indicators of exhilaration were examined: experienced funniness, AU12 smiles, Duchenne displays, and laughter. Furthermore, fake and masking smiles were studied. Results demonstrated that self- and peer reports of "laughing at oneself" converged moderately. All four indicators of exhilaration were shown, but laughter seemed to be the most strongly predicted behavior. Trait cheerfulness and (low) seriousness, emotional stability, and a cheerful mood state formed further characteristics of persons who laugh at themselves.

Keywords: Laughing at oneself; distorted portraits; Duchenne display; sense of humor; Cheerfulness

Introduction

While the sense of humor incorporates facets like humor production and humor temperament (Ruch, 2004), several authors have argued that a core component of humor is to be able to laugh at oneself (Lersch, 1962). Yet, to this day, despite increasing attention to it as a personality construct (cf. Martin, 2007; Ruch, 2007), there is no authoritative definition of the sense of humor, and it is also not yet clear what "laughing at oneself" is, or if it even actually occurs in people's everyday behavior.

"Laughing at oneself": Theoretical Claims and Empirical Evidence

The concept of "laughing at oneself" has not been thoroughly examined. Some have even argued against its existence, because in their view humor derives from a feeling of superiority (cf. Aristotle, 335 BC/1932; Hobbes, 1588-1679, cited by Morreall, 1987). Hobbes stated that laughing at oneself is only possible when laughing at a "former" self. Gruner (1997) views humor as a playful contest with winners and losers, one being superior to the other one. La Fave, Haddad, and Maesen (1996) considered "laughing at oneself" a "myopic illusion" (p. 79). They reason that a mishap at one's own expense can't be a happy event. One of the possible reasons for laughter when considering one's own follies they provided was self-hatred or masochism, furthermore separating the amusing part of the self from the "butt part" (p. 82). They also pointed out that humor is not necessarily the same as laughter, and that a differentiation between several kinds of smiling and laughter would be necessary.

In contrast to the latter position, in everyday language as well as in philosophical literature the ability to "laugh at oneself" is often considered a core component of the sense of humor and in this manifestation might even "qualify" humor itself as a virtue. Comte-Sponville (2001), for example, stated that humor leads to humility. One should laugh at oneself before laughing at anything else, but without hatred. A person lacking the ability to be

amused by his or her own foolishness develops a kind of rigidity and doesn't have any 'slack' in their personality (Roberts, 1988). Lersch (1962), who saw humor as a world-view, considered the inability to laugh at oneself or to distance oneself from one's problems, and the tendency to take oneself too seriously, indicators for "humorlessness".

Nevo (1985) studied laughing at one's own expense in Jewish and Arab participants, who rated funniness of jokes with a Jewish and with an Arab butt. They were also asked to complete conversations between Jews and Arabs in cartoon-like drawings in a humorous way. Participants aimed 11.3% of the humorous remarks at their own group. Nevo thus concluded that self-aimed humor exists. However, humor aimed at or laughing at one's own group still might be different from laughing at oneself. Apart from the possibility that one might not consider oneself a "real member" of the group, Davies (1991, 2002) argued that one could laugh at one's own group without laughing at oneself even if one does *not* reject or distance oneself from the group. For example, it would be possible to accept a characteristic or so-called "stereotype" about the own group and to make fun of it because one is confident it does not apply to oneself.

McGhee (1979), whose Sense of Humor Scale (SHS, McGhee, 1996) is the only existing questionnaire containing a subscale that measures "laughing at oneself", considers humor a form of play. In his eight-step-training program of the sense of humor (McGhee, 1996), taking oneself lightly and laughing at oneself constitutes one of the most difficult levels of the sense of humor. Among other things, taking oneself lightly means seeing the funny side of one's own circumstances or behavior. But he also emphasized that laughing at oneself doesn't mean put-down humor, but rather to confidently accept problems or weaknesses that one can't change. Using McGhee's scale, Ruch and Carrell (1998) studied the relation of the sense of humor to what Ruch, Köhler, and van Thriel (1996, 1997) consider the temperamental basis of humor: Cheerfulness, seriousness and bad mood. They found that trait cheerfulness and some facets of low seriousness predicted laughing at oneself.

But until now, there is only one description of "laughing at oneself" (i.e., McGhee, 1996), and is largely described *ex negativo*, that is, what it is *not* (e.g., taking oneself *not* too seriously). No experimental approach has been attempted to study the phenomenon of "laughing at oneself" and it is not at all clear what "laughing at oneself" looks like behaviorally.

Until now no studies have been done that evaluated the role of Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Psychoticism in laughing at oneself. But several components of the sense of humor have been found to relate to Extraversion (Köhler & Ruch, 1996), which is defined by components such as susceptibility for positive affect, or smiling and laughter (Ruch, 1999). On the contrary, Neuroticism is a predictor of negative affectivity and has often been related negatively to different sense of humor components (Köhler & Ruch, 1996).

Measuring Behavior—Laughing at Oneself?

What can be considered as behavioral signs of laughing at oneself? Until now, there is no empirical evidence for how people respond to situations in which laughing at oneself would be one of several options. Experimental settings that are able to provoke laughing at oneself may also provoke negative responses—especially in persons who *don't* or *cannot* laugh at themselves. Furthermore, accepting one's problems, embarrassing experiences or weaknesses, or disliked features might still imply negative feelings about them. However, as McGhee (1996) puts it, laughing at oneself should help mastering these emotions by being able to heartily laugh at them. Thus, even if negative emotions occur, they should be alternated by positive emotions or genuine enjoyment and exhilaration[6], unencumbered by

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[6] The term *exhilaration* is derived from its Latin root (hilaris = cheerful) to denote either the process of making cheerful or the temporary rise in cheerful state (Ruch, 1997). Current dictionaries list two meanings for "exhilarate". These are "to make cheerful or merry" and "to enliven; invigorate; stimulate" (Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the

negative emotions. However, the term "hearty laughter" leads to the assumption that the emotion exhilaration is elicited. But it is not yet clear whether literally *laughter* will be shown, or merely *smiling* and finding an own image *funny*, or if it even only means the absence of negative emotions at the sight of distorted images of oneself.

The emotion exhilaration is observable in physiology, emotional experience, and behavior (Ruch, 1993). The experience of exhilaration can be assessed by self-report, whereas the facial expression can be measured by analyses of the facial movements (i.e., the *Facial Action Coding System*, FACS, Ekman, Friesen, & Hager, 2002). FACS is a comprehensive coding system describing 44 minimal facial movements—so-called action units (AUs)—based on the muscular anatomy of the face.

FACS has proven to be useful in humor research as it is capable to differentiate between genuine and fake types of smiling. This is important because failing to identify genuine types of smiling and laughter often led to distorted results in former studies (cf. Ruch, 1997). Using FACS, classifications of smiles were determined that describe up to 18 types of smiles (cf. Bänninger-Huber, 1996; Ekman, 1985), most of which are not smiles of enjoyment. An important marker of *genuine* enjoyment is the *Duchenne display* (Ekman, Davidson, & Friesen, 1990). The Duchenne display refers to a contraction of the Zygomatic Major (pulling the lip corners backwards and upwards, AU12) and the Orbicularis Oculi, Pars Orbitalis, muscles (raising the cheeks causing eye wrinkles, AU6). Symmetry of the facial actions is another marker for spontaneous and genuine facial expressions.

However, Ruch (1990) found that different levels of exhilaration influence the threshold for facial expression of exhilaration. He was able to show that the experience of exhilaration is induced at the easiest. This is followed by an AU12, then by the joint action of AU12 and AU6, and then by laughter.

English Language; 1989). The latter meaning is not referred to by the German term *Erheiterung* on which our coining of *exhilaration* is based.

People who can't laugh at themselves probably experience more negative emotions when provoked to laugh at themselves. This could result in facial expressions of negative or mixed emotions. Smiles of people who are not being able to laugh at themselves could be suppressed or accompanied by signs of contempt or annoyance.

The Present Study

The current study addressed the phenomenon of laughing at oneself using a multi-method approach: (a) self-report, (b) peer-report, and, in an experimental setting, (c) behavioral responses to stimuli which might provoke laughter at oneself. The participants were surprised by distorted portraits of themselves. Thus they were put in a situation where negative or positive responses were possible, including smiling or laughing at themselves. As a comparison, distorted portraits of two strangers were also used. Participants' emotional responses were assessed through funniness- and aversion ratings and video analyses of their facial expression.

Aims of the study were firstly to investigate the convergent validity among methods in the form of a positive relationship among self- and peer-report and behavioral responses—i.e., verbal and facial signs of exhilaration were expected for people who endorse laughing at oneself in a questionnaire. In the current study, four levels of exhilarated behavior are examined. In the strictest sense of *laughing* at oneself, the more participants describe themselves as laughing at oneself, the more they should indeed show laughter when confronted with distorted portraits of themselves. If only true in a wider sense, *smiling* in a genuine way (i.e., the Duchenne display) should go along with self- or peer-reports of laughing at oneself. As a sign of lower intensity of laughing at oneself, genuine AU12 with or without AU6 (i.e., symmetrical and not accompanied by negative emotions) is expected. As the lowest intensity of exhilaration in laughing at oneself, participants who reported to laugh at themselves in the SHS (McGhee, 1996) and whose peers did so as well, were expected to

find their own images funny. In contrast to this, fake or masking smiles, i.e., AU12s that are asymmetric or accompanied by AUs indicating negative emotions, should be negatively related to laughing at oneself in the SHS.

Secondly, relations to the temperamental basis of humor—i.e., cheerfulness, seriousness, and bad mood—and other personality variables (i.e., Psychoticism, Extraversion, and Neuroticism) should be investigated. It was expected that cheerfulness would be related positively to self- and peer-reported laughing at oneself as well as exhilaration responses within the experiment. Furthermore, laughing at oneself should be positively related to Extraversion and negatively related to Neuroticism.

Finally, another measure was considered as an indicator for the tendency or ability of laughing at oneself. Participants have to fill out an agreement form at the end of experiments that involve video recordings. The obvious purpose of the agreement form is to document the readiness to have one's video- and photo material exposed to a wider range of people— ranging from having the material deleted on the spot to allowing its use in television documentaries. The degree of this readiness might also be related to the tendency of laughing at oneself.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 70 psychology students (48 females, 22 males) between the ages of 19 and 65 years ($M = 25.49$, $SD = 7.93$), who were recruited in undergraduate psychology classes and via a mailing list. Each participant asked one to two peers to fill in the peer reports of the SHS. In total, 122 peers (72 females, 48 males, 2 n.n.) between the ages of 18 and 72 years ($M = 31.78$, $SD = 13.80$) were recruited, but two participants did not provide peer ratings. In return for participation, personalized feedback on the results of the questionnaires after the end of data acquisition was provided by request. In three cases, a

camera failure occurred, so that the video material of 67 participants (45 females, 22 males) could be used for the facial analyses.

Instruments

The *Sense of Humor Scale* (SHS, McGhee, 1996) is a 40-item questionnaire with a 4-point answering format (1 = "strongly disagree"; 4 = "strongly agree"). It is aimed at measuring what McGhee considers to be the foundation of sense of humor with eight subscales each of which contains five items. For the current paper, only the subscale SHS-7 (laughing at oneself) was analyzed. An example for an item of the scale is "I have no trouble poking fun at certain physical qualities of myself." In addition, a peer questionnaire form was generated by rephrasing the items in a he/she-version and adapting the instructions accordingly.

The *State-Trait-Cheerfulness-Inventory* (STCI, Ruch, Köhler, & van Thriel, 1996, 1997) assesses *cheerfulness*, *seriousness*, and *bad mood* as habitual traits and as actual states with a four-point answer format from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree". The standard trait form STCI-T<60> contains 60 items (20 items for each dimension). The instructions aim at moods and mentality *in general*. Item examples for the trait version are "I am a cheerful person" (trait cheerfulness), "In my life, I like to have everything correct" (trait seriousness) and "Compared to others, I really can be grumpy and grouchy" (trait bad mood). The standard state form STCI-S<30> consists of 30 items (10 items for each dimension). The instruction addresses the mood state *at this moment*. Item examples are "I feel merry" (state cheerfulness), "I am in a thoughtful mood" (state seriousness) and "My mood is spoiled" (state bad mood).

The short version of the *Eysenck Personality Questionnaire—Revised* (EPQ-RK, Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985) in its German adaptation by Ruch (1999) is a 50-item questionnaire in a yes-no answer format. It assesses the dimensions of the PEN personality

system, namely *Psychoticism* (14 items), *Extraversion* (12 items)*,* and *Neuroticism* (12 items)*,*

and an additional *Lie scale* (12 items). The questionnaire contains items like "Do you take

much notice of what people think?" (Psychoticism, negatively keyed), "Do you enjoy meeting

new people?" (Extraversion), "Are you a worrier?" (Neuroticism), or "Have you ever cheated

at a game?" (Lie scale). Only the content scales are analyzed within the current study.

The *Agreement Form* asks for the permission in different degrees of usage of the

video- and photo material (in anonymized form) produced during the experiment. The five

degrees range from 1 = "The material has to be deleted on the spot", 2 = "The material may

be analyzed in the context of the current study", 3 = "The material may be analyzed and

archived and may be used for future research purposes (e.g., training of experimenters)",

4 = "The material may be analyzed and archived and may be used for future research and

teaching purposes (it may be shown to students)", 5 = "The material may be analyzed and

archived and may be used for future research, teaching and publication or documentation

purposes (e.g., television documentaries)".

Confrontation with Distorted Images of the Participants' Faces: The Distorted Portrait Judgment Task

The *Distorted Portrait Judgment Task* (DPJT) aimed at measuring verbal and facial

indicators of exhilaration at the sight of distorted portraits of oneself and two strangers. It

consisted of 18 distorted images of faces, i.e., of a set of 18 *Distorted Portraits*. There were

six distorted portraits of a woman's face (i.e., a subset of *Distorted Portraits of Woman*), six

distorted portraits of a man's face (i.e., a subset of *Distorted Portraits of Man,* resulting in a

subset of 12 *Distorted Portraits of Strangers*), and six distorted portraits of the participant's

face (i.e., a subset of *Distorted Portraits of Oneself*). The distorted portraits were integrated in

a computer presentation and had to be rated for funniness (1 = "not funny", 7 = "very funny")

and aversion (1 = "not aversive", 7 = "very aversive") on an answer sheet in paper-and-pencil format.

All distorted portraits were created using a web cam and the program "Photo Booth" that is part of Mac OS X. For each distorted portrait within one subset, a different distortion effect (e.g., stretch, twirl) was chosen. The subset of Distorted Portraits of Strangers already existed before the experiment within the DPJT computer presentation. The production of the Distorted Portraits of Oneself and their insertion into the computer presentation took place at the beginning of the experiment, while participants filled in a questionnaire. Each distorted portrait was on a single slide and a sound signaled each slide transition. The distorted portraits of the three subsets (Distorted Portraits of Men, Distorted Portraits of Woman, Distorted Portraits of Oneself) were in a counterbalanced order with respect to the distortion effect and the position of the images of the Distorted Portraits of Man and Distorted Portrait of Woman. A parallel version with a mirrored sequence of the distorted portraits was developed, so that in total two versions existed. However, images from the Distorted Portraits of Oneself were in the same positions in both versions, and both versions started with an image from the Distorted Portraits of Oneself. Figure 1 shows illustrative examples of the subset Distorted Portraits of Oneself.
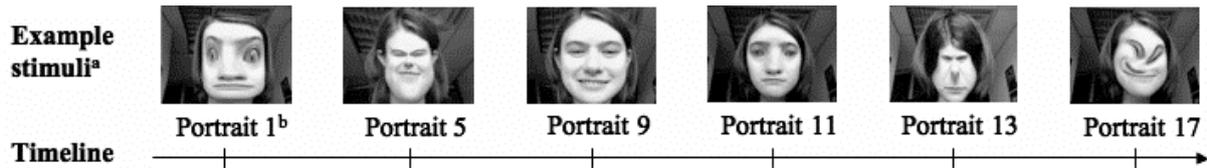
Note. [a] The photographs in the figure demonstrate the distortion effects used for the Distorted Portraits of Oneself. They don't show an actual participant. [b] The image numbers represent the position of the images out of the Distorted Portraits of Oneself within the computer presentation of all 18 stimuli.

Figure 1. Example stimuli of distorted images of the participant's face (Distorted Portraits of Oneself).

Figure 1 shows the distortion effects that were used for the distorted portraits. Furthermore, the position of the images from the Distorted Portraits of Oneself among all 18 portraits is indicated. Mean scores for funniness and for aversion of Distorted Portraits of Oneself (PorO f, PorO a) and Distorted Portraits of Strangers (PorS f, PorS a) were derived.

Facial Measurement

The *Facial Action Coding System* (FACS, Ekman, Friesen, & Hager, 2002) was used as method for measuring facial parameters of enjoyment and other facial reactions to the distorted images. All AUs were coded for frequency, intensity (on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = "minimum intensity" to 5 = "maximum intensity", corresponding to the FACS A = "trace" to E = "maximum") and symmetry. However, analyses focused on AU12 and AU6+12 (the Duchenne display). These AUs could possibly be accompanied by AU 7 (lids tight), AU 25 (lips part), AU 26 (jaw drop), and AU 27 (mouth stretch). Negative emotions must not occur simultaneously for a Duchenne display. Additionally, laughing was defined by coding forced exhalation of air accompanying AU6+12. In agreement with Ruch (1997) and Zweyer, Velker, and Ruch (2004) single vs. multiple (which could be either voiced or

unvoiced) forced exhalations of air were distinguished. Furthermore, "instruction" (for reading the instruction) and "writing" (for performing the ratings on the sheet of paper) were defined as coding units. "Picture" was an additional coding unit coded with every "beep" sound that indicated a change of picture on the participant's screen. Head and eye movements related to these activities were not coded separately. The coding was performed by two certified FACS-coders using the software "Observer" by Noldus. The facial reactions of five participants were coded by both coders to determine the reliability and the resulting coefficient was .93.

For analyses of AU12 as well as AU6+12, the occurrence, frequency, and intensity for Distorted Portraits of Oneself and the Distorted Portraits of Strangers were analyzed. AU12 included all AU12 with or without AU6; however, AU12 and AU6+12 were only taken into account when they were not asymmetric or accompanied by AUs indicating negative emotions, such as AU4 (brow lowerer), AU10 (upper lip raiser), AU11 (nasolabial furrow deepener), AU14 (dimpler), AU15 (lip corner depressor), AU20 (lip stretch), or AU24 (lip presser). *Occurrence* of AU12 and AU6+12 was an index reflecting whether the respective AUs were (= 1) or were not (= 0) displayed at least once per portrait. This resulted in four scores: the averaged occurrence of AU12 when watching Distorted Portraits of Oneself (PorO 12 Occ.), of AU6+12 when watching Distorted Portraits of Oneself (PorO 6+12 Occ.), of AU12 when watching with Distorted Portraits of Strangers (PorS 12 Occ.), and of AU6+12 when watching Distorted Portraits of Strangers (PorS 6+12 Occ.). Likewise, four scores each were built for frequency and for intensity. *Frequency* was defined by the total number of AU12 and of AU6+12 per Distorted Portrait, averaged across the Distorted Portraits of Oneself (PorO 12 fr., PorO 6+12 fr.) and across the Distorted Portraits of Strangers (PorS 12 fr., PorS 6+12 fr.). For *intensity* scores, the mean maximum intensity was taken. That is, the maximum intensity of AU12 and of AU6+12 per portrait was averaged across the

Distorted Portraits of Oneself (PorO 12 Int., PorO 6+12 Int.) and the Distorted Portraits of Strangers (PorS 12 Int., PorS 6+12 Int.).

For laughter, the *frequency* was defined by the total number of a series of single or multiple expulsion of air (accompanying AU6+12) per portrait, resulting in frequency of laughter in response to Distorted Portraits of Oneself (PorO laugh fr.) and frequency of laughter in response to Distorted Portraits of Strangers (PorS laugh fr.). The *iterative rate* of laughter ranged from 0 (no laughter at all) via 1 (single expulsion of air, such as "ha") to 2 (multiple expulsion of air, such as "ha-ha-ha"). This score was coded for each portrait and then averaged across the Distorted Portraits of Oneself (PorO laugh rate) and Distorted Portraits of Strangers (PorS laugh rate).

Procedure

The participants filled in the paper-and-pencil versions of the EPQ-RK, STCI-T, and the SHS at home. The peers answered the SHS Form Peers only. They were instructed to return their questionnaires directly to the Department of Psychology to ensure their anonymity towards those whom they answered the SHS Form Peer for. In addition, the participants were invited to an experimental part at the Department of Psychology for a single testing session during which they also handed in their questionnaires.

The experimental part consisted of the STCI-S<30>, the production of the Distorted Portraits of Oneself, and the Distorted Portrait Judgment Task. For the DPJT, the participants were seated in front of a computer. Answer sheets for the ratings were in paper-and-pencil format. Each parallel version of the distorted portraits in the DPJT was answered by half of the participants to counteract sequence effects. For the assessment of mood states, the participants were seated at another desk and answered the paper-and-pencil version of the STCI-S before and after the task. The experimental part lasted approximately 20-30 minutes.

As a cover story when producing the Distorted Portraits of Oneself for the DPJT, participants were told that the photos were "made for a study evaluating physiognomy hypotheses" and did not know of the distortion. The Distorted Portraits of Oneself were inserted into the DPJT computer presentation without the participants' awareness while they filled in the STCI-S for the first time. They received instructions by the DPJT computer presentation to rate the photographs they were going to see. However, they were *not* informed that they would see distorted portraits, and that some of them would show themselves.

During the whole procedure, a hidden camera recorded their face. At the end of the experiment, the participants were debriefed and informed of the actual goal of the study and that they have been secretly videotaped. They filled in the *Agreement Form* in which they were offered to see the video material deleted in front of their eyes. None of the participants took up the offer.

Results

In a first step, the means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis for each variable and Cronbach Alphas for the questionnaire scales and Distorted Portraits ratings were analyzed. The two peer-reports were averaged and these scores were used for all analyses. When a participant had only one peer report (14 cases), this single measure was used. The means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, and Cronbach Alphas are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Means, Standard Deviations and Alphas of Laughing at Oneself (Self and Peer), State and Trait Cheerfulness, Seriousness, and Bad Mood, Personality, and Responses to the Distorted Portrait Judgment Task.

Variables	*M*	*SD*	*Sk*	*K*	α
Laughing at yourself, Self-report (SHS)	14.80	3.16	-0.90	0.97	.86
Laughing at yourself, Peer-report (SHS)	13.60	2.81	-0.18	-0.33	.82
Trait cheerfulness (STCI-T)	63.23	9.38	-0.74	-0.14	.91
Trait seriousness (STCI-T)	46.52	6.54	-0.13	-0.06	.73
Trait bad mood (STCI-T)	36.91	12.47	0.62	-0.72	.95
State cheerfulness (STCI-S), t1	27.03	5.97	-0.39	-0.19	.92
State cheerfulness (STCI-S), t2	29.58	6.45	-0.83	0.80	.94
State seriousness (STCI-S), t1	22.74	5.49	0.02	-0.39	.85
State seriousness (STCI-S), t2	19.09	6.36	0.99	0.80	.91
State bad mood (STCI-S), t1	13.53	4.65	1.51	1.55	.88
State bad mood (STCI-S), t2	12.64	4.08	1.62	2.11	.89
Psychoticism (EPQ-RK)	3.41	2.53	1.48	2.96	.76
Extraversion (EPQ-RK)	8.01	2.96	-0.72	-0.04	.80
Neuroticism (EPQ-RK)	5.30	3.10	0.40	-0.66	.80
Agreement Form	3.51	1.12	-0.02	-1.35	-
PorO, funniness	4.36	1.17	-0.78	0.53	.76
PorO, aversion	1.94	1.28	1.56	1.63	.87
PorS, funniness	3.83	0.93	0.02	0.33	.84
PorS, aversion	1.57	0.85	1.79	2.51	.92
PorO, AU12 occurrence	0.58	0.28	-0.51	-0.76	-

(table continues)

Table 1. (continued)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	*Sk*	*K*	α
PorO, AU6+12 occurrence	0.38	0.28	0.00	-1.34	-
PorS, AU12 occurrence	0.40	0.30	0.50	-0.82	-
PorS, AU6+12 occurrence	0.16	0.19	1.29	0.77	-
PorO, AU12, intensity	1.70	0.98	0.01	-1.03	-
PorO, AU6+12, intensity	1.43	1.15	0.35	-0.90	-
PorS, AU12, intensity	0.79	0.63	0.60	-0.63	-
PorS, AU6+12, intensity	0.41	0.51	1.27	0.90	-
PorO, frequency of laughter	0.21	0.39	2.80	8.80	-
PorS, frequency of laughter	0.04	0.08	3.37	13.58	-
PorO, laughter rate	0.24	0.36	1.50	1.45	-
PorS, laughter rate	0.05	0.15	2.40	5.41	-

Note. N_{self} = 65-70. N_{peer} = 126.

SHS = Sense of Humor Scale; STCI = State-Trait-Cheerfulness-Inventory; T = Trait part; S = State part; t1 = testing time 1; t2 = testing time 2; t3 = testing time 3; EPQ-RK = Short version of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised (only content scales were analyzed); PorO = Distorted Portraits of Oneself; PorS = Distorted Portraits of Strangers; 12 = AU12; 6+12 = AU6 + AU12 (Duchenne display).

Table 1 shows that all questionnaire scales and the ratings for the portraits yielded satisfactory reliabilities ranging from .73 to .95. Compared to data in former studies, all means were within a range of +/- one standard deviation of the means found in the those studies.

Three of the facial indicators of enjoyment deviated from normal distribution rather strongly, namely frequency and iterative rate of laughter when confronted with Distorted Portraits of Oneself, and iterative rate of laughter when confronted with Distorted Portraits of

Strangers (see Table 1). Following recommendations by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), they were transformed by using a square root transformation in order to counteract distortion of the results in the analyses. In each of the three variables, the transformation resulted in skewness and kurtosis values < 2.56 and were thus assumed as adjusted to normal distribution. In all following analyses the transformed variables were used.

Laughing at Oneself within the Questionnaires: Self- and Peer Ratings, Personality Traits, and Mood States

Pearson correlations were calculated between self- and peer-report of laughing at oneself, trait cheerfulness, seriousness, and bad mood, the PEN variables, and facial and verbal responses to the Distorted Portraits of Oneself and of strangers. They are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that self- and peer-reports of laughing at oneself converged moderately well, $r = .31$, $p < .01$. Furthermore, as expected, those higher in trait cheerfulness reported to laugh more at themselves (i.e., subscale SHS-7 out of the SHS, McGhee, 1996). Those participants who were described with higher scores in laughing at oneself (SHS-7) by their peers were less habitually serious (trait seriousness). Furthermore, extraverts scored higher in self- as well as peer-reported laughing at oneself. Participants who were described to laugh more at themselves by their peers also seemed to be more psychoticistic.

Self-reports of laughing at oneself also predicted mood states. People who had higher scores in laughing at oneself, also were likely to be more cheerful, less serious, and in a less bad mood both prior to and following the DPJT.

Furthermore, the Agreement Form was related to the self-report of laughing at oneself. Participants who reported to laugh at themselves to a higher extent also were more likely ready to have their video- and photo material exposed to a wider range of people ($r = .20$, $p = .05$, one-tailed).

Table 2.

Correlations between Laughing at Oneself (Self and Peer), PEN Variables, Trait and State Cheerfulness, Seriousness and Bad Mood, and Verbal and Facial Indicators of Funniness and Aversion Towards the Different Subsets of Distorted Portraits.

LaY Indicators	LaY self	LaY peer	Trait CH	Trait SE	Trait BM	P	E	N	State CH t1	State CH t2	State SE t1	State SE t2	State BM t1	State BM t2
LaY self	-	.31**	.32**	-.11	-.08	-.02	.20†	-.07	.47***	.40***	-.40***	-.32**	-.34**	-.28*
LaY peer	.31**	-	.13	-.38***	-.06	.24*	.23†	-.02	.09	-.08	-.19	.00	-.12	-.04
PorO laugh fr. [a]	.24*	.28*	.19	.16	-.22†	.17	-.07	-.25*	.13	.19	-.19	-.19	-.07	-.08
PorS laugh fr. [a]	.04	.11	.10	.11	-.22†	.16	-.05	-.24*	.06	.07	-.04	-.03	.11	.09
PorO laugh rate	.20†	.27*	.16	-.05	-.27*	.11	.13	-.23†	.15	.19	-.16	-.20†	-.09	-.11
PorS laugh rate [a]	.07	.10	.21†	-.08	-.29*	.07	.13	-.24*	.14	.14	-.11	-.08	.05	.05
PorO 12 fr.	.12	.10	.17	.12	-.24†	.22†	-.11	-.22†	.06	.18	-.13	-.18	-.10	-.08
PorO 6+12 fr.	.16	.19	.17	.04	-.26*	.24*	.04	-.23†	.06	.20†	-.13	-.20†	-.20†	-.19
PorS 12 fr.	.16	.08	.24*	.10	-.27*	.02	-.09	-.19	.15	.25*	-.25*	-.23†	-.13	-.15
PorS 6+12 fr.	.20†	.18	.23†	.01	-.21†	.09	.03	-.14	.09	.11	-.16	-.13	.03	.03

(table continues)

Table 2 (continued).

LaY Indicators	LaY self	LaY peer	Trait CH	Trait SE	Trait BM	P	E	N	State CH t1	State CH t2	State SE t1	State SE t2	State BM t1	State BM t2
PorO laughing qu.[b]	.30*	.29*	.23†	-.19	-.26*	.09	.31*	-.17	.18	.18	-.19	-.22†	.03	.04
PorS laughing qu.[c]	-.19	.06	-.12	-.19	-.03	.05	.11	-.06	-.06	-.10	.16	.20	.24	.19
PorO 12 occ.	.22†	.09	.28*	.20†	-.30*	.15	-.06	-.21†	.18	.32**	-.19	-.32**	-.23†	-.27*
PorO 6+12 occ.	.21†	.16	.18	.12	-.25*	.17	-.07	-.17	.08	.26*	-.16	-.29*	-.25*	-.29*
PorS 12 occ.	.19	.07	.24*	.07	-.24*	.05	-.07	-.16	.16	.26*	-.25*	-.25*	-.13	-.16
PorS 6+12 occ.	.22†	.18	.20†	.01	-.18	.08	.00	-.11	.09	.11	-.15	-.12	.03	.02
PorO 12 int.	.23†	.13	.15	.11	-.21†	.18	-.17	-.20†	.13	.29*	-.25*	-.34**	-.20†	-.23†
PorO 6+12 int.	.23†	.17	.09	.04	-.17	.24*	-.09	-.15	.07	.25*	-.19	-.30*	-.20†	-.25*
PorS 12 int.	.22†	.07	.26*	.05	-.20†	.04	-.09	-.13	.19	.26*	-.30*	-.28*	-.08	-.09
PorS 6+12 int.	.22†	.16	.21†	.04	-.17	.06	-.05	-.09	.11	.16	-.21†	-.18	.03	.01

Table 2 (continued).

LaY Indicators	LaY self	LaY peer	Trait CH	Trait SE	Trait BM	P	E	N	State CH t1	State CH t2	State SE t1	State SE t2	State BM t1	State BM t2
PorO f	.28*	.15	.25*	.06	-.25*	.03	-.03	-.14	.26*	.49***	-.30*	-.52***	-.39***	-.44***
PorO a	-.16	-.16	.16	-.09	-.14	.09	.29*	-.01	.01	-.08	.01	.05	.00	.00
PorS f	.20†	.04	.24*	.11	-.14	.01	.07	.03	.25	.41***	-.16	-.38***	-.27*	-.32**
PorS a	-.23†	-.26*	.18	.09	-.21†	-.02	.16	-.15	.11	.08	.06	.04	-.04	-.05

Note. $N = 65 - 70$. $N^b = 53$; $N^c = 40$.

LaY self = Self-report of laughing at oneself (SHS, Sense of Humor Scale); LaY peer = Peer-report of laughing at oneself (SHS); P = Psychoticism (EPQ-RK, short version of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised); E = Extraversion (EPQ-RK); N = Neuroticism (EPQ-RK); CH = Cheerfulness (STCI, State-Trait-Cheerfulness-Inventory); SE = Seriousness (STCI); BM = Bad Mood (STCI); Trait = Trait Part of the STCI; State = State part of the STCI; t = testing time. Por = Distorted Portrait; O = Oneself; S = Stranger; f = funniness; a = aversion; 12 = AU12; 6+12 = AU6 + AU12 (Duchenne display); int. = maximal intensity; fr. = frequency; occ. = occurrence; laugh rate = iterative laugh rate (single, multiple); laughing qu. = laughing quotient (laugh fr./AU6+12 fr.).

[a] Variables were transformed using the square root.

† $p \leq .05$ (one-tailed). * $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

Laughing at Oneself within the Experiments: Facial Enjoyment

The task proved useful in inducing exhilaration in the participants. Frequency analyses showed that in total, 63 out of 67 participants (94.03%) responded with at least one AU12 to the Distorted Portraits of Oneself. At least one Duchenne display (i.e., AU6+12) was shown by 53 (79.10%) participants. Furthermore, 27 participants (40.29%) laughed at least once. Regarding the Distorted Portraits of Strangers, 59 participants (88.06%) displayed at least one AU12, and 40 participants (59.70%) had at least one Duchenne display. In 15 cases (22.38%), laughter was shown at least once.

Laughing

One aim of the study was to investigate which levels of exhilaration are shown in the behavior of the participants when looking at their own pictures. Laughing at oneself, when understood in its strictest sense, should involve Duchenne display accompanied by single or multiple forced exhalations. Do people reporting to be able to laugh at themselves literally *laugh* when confronted with distorted images of themselves?

Table 2 indicates that the more people reported to laugh at themselves, the more they showed laughter (*frequency*) when confronted with the Distorted Portraits of Oneself. Also the iterative *rate* of laughter (i.e., whether the forced exhalation of laughter was single or multiple) went along with the self-report. For those whose peers described them with higher scores in laughing at oneself (SHS-7), the correlations were even higher. In contrast to that, there was no significant correlation between frequency or rate of laughter as a response to Distorted Portraits of Strangers and self- and peer-report of laughing at oneself.

Smiling

Frequency of AU12 as well as of AU6+12 when confronted with Distorted Portraits of Oneself did not increase with the scores in self- nor to peer-report (see Table 2). But

displaying either AU12 or AU6+12 (*occurrence*) correlated with the self-report scale. Furthermore, participants who reported to laugh at themselves showed more intense AU12 and AU6+12 (*intensity*). In contrast to laughing, the occurrences of smiling reaction (AU12 alone, AU6+12) as well as intensity of the smiling reaction (AU6+12) as a response to the Distorted Portraits of Strangers were also related to self-reported laughing at oneself (see Table 2).

In order to find out whether the proportion to which exhilaration is expressed by laughing rather than smiling was more distinctive for laughing at oneself rather than *all* distorted images, a *laughing quotient* was built by dividing the frequency of laughing by the frequency of Duchenne display (for those participants with a frequency of laughing greater than 0 only). This was done for the Distorted Portraits of Oneself ($n = 53$) as well as for the Distorted Portraits of Strangers ($n = 40$). Correlations suggested that the higher the laughing quotient was for Distorted Portraits of Oneself, the higher were their self- ($r = .30$, $p < .05$) and their peer- ($r = .29$, $p < .05$) rated laughing at oneself scores within the SHS (McGhee, 1996), each with approximately 9% of overlapping variance (r^2). There were no meaningful correlations between the laughing quotient and self-reported laughing at oneself ($r = -.19$, n.s.) and peer-reported laughing at oneself ($r = .06$, n.s.) for the Distorted Portraits of Strangers.

However, the differentiation of genuine and false kinds of smiles proved to be important. Correlations with AU12 were only found when they were symmetric and not associated with AUs indicating negative emotions. Fake AU12 when watching Distorted Portraits of Oneself, i.e., AU12 accompanied by negative emotions or asymmetric AU12, were *negatively* related to self-reported laughing at oneself ($r = -.27$, $p < .05$). There were no correlations regarding peer-reports ($r = -.14$, n.s.). Neither were there correlations between self- ($r = -.08$, n.s.) nor peer-reports ($r = .09$, n.s.) for fake AU12 when watching Distorted Portraits of Strangers.

Verbal responses

Participants who reported to laugh at themselves within the SHS (McGhee, 1996) also found the Distorted Portraits of Oneself funny (see Table 2). However, they also rated the Distorted Portraits of Strangers as funny, albeit with a lower coefficient. Furthermore, participants whose self- and peer-reported laughing at oneself scores were low found the Distorted Portraits of Strangers aversive.

Personality, Mood States and Laughing at Oneself in the Experiment

Humor Temperament

As shown in Table 2, humor temperament as well as the PEN variables were also related to the responses to the Distorted Portraits within the experiment. Trait cheerfulness predicted in particular occurrence, frequency, and intensity of smiling reactions, with the highest relation for occurrence of AU12 when confronted with Distorted Portraits of Oneself. Trait bad mood was consistently negatively related (however, not all at a significant level), also with the highest relation between occurrence of AU12 when judging the Distorted Portraits of Oneself.

Psychoticism, Extraversion, and Neuroticism

Among the PEN variables, Psychoticism predicted frequency and intensity of the Duchenne display when looking at the Distorted Portraits of Oneself (see Table 2). Furthermore, the more extraverted participants were, the more they expressed their exhilaration by laughter rather than smiling (i.e., the *laughing quotient*) when looking at their own Distorted Portraits. The coefficients between Neuroticism and the facial and verbal responses to the DPJT, as for bad mood, were negative (again, however, some of the coefficients were rather low).

Mood States

Table 2 shows that facial as well as verbal responses to the Distorted Portrait Judgment Task were related to the mood states. Higher states of cheerfulness and lower states of seriousness and bad mood were related with higher funniness of the Distorted Portraits of Oneself. Sate cheerfulness subsequent to the DPJT was also related to both funniness of Distorted Portraits of Oneself and Distorted Portraits of Strangers. Furthermore, occurrence and intensity of both AU12 and AU12+6 in response to the Distorted Portraits of Oneself and of AU12 in response to Distorted Portraits of Strangers went along with subsequent sate cheerfulness.

State seriousness and state bad mood decreased subsequent to the task with increasing funniness of Distorted Portraits of Oneself. Likewise, several facial indicators of enjoyment predicted both state seriousness and bad mood, with the highest relations being again occurrence and intensity of both AU12 and AU12+6 when confronted with Distorted Portraits of Oneself.

Furthermore, a difference score was built by subtracting facial indicators of enjoyment in response to Distorted Portraits of Oneself from facial indicators of enjoyment in response to Distorted Portraits of Strangers. A positive score indicated that a participant found the Distorted Portraits of Oneself funnier than the Distorted Portraits of Stranger, whereas a negative score means that a participant found the Distorted Portraits of Strangers funnier than their own ones. Correlations revealed that showing Duchenne display *more often* and *more intensely* in response to *own* distorted portraits as compared to *stranger's* ones (i.e., a higher difference score) contributed more to enhancement of state cheerfulness, $r = .39$, $p < .001$ for *occurrence* of Duchenne display, and $r = .39$, $p < .001$ for *intensity* of Duchenne display.

Multivariate Relations

It was of interest to examine whether there are multivariate relations between experimental and trait variables related to laughing at oneself. Thus, a canonical correlation was computed between a set of trait "laughing at oneself" variables (i.e., trait variables measured by questionnaires) and a set of experimental positive response variables (i.e., observed responses to the stimuli within the experiment) using the software Statistica 4.1. Only variables with a positive valence were included. For the set of trait variables, scales measuring laughing at oneself directly and scales measuring strongly related traits were chosen. Those were the self- and peer-report of laughing at oneself (SHS, McGhee, 1996), and trait cheerfulness (STHI-T<60>, Ruch et al., 1996), which proved to be the strongest predictor of laughing at oneself among the positively related trait variables. This held within the correlation analyses as well as in the study by Ruch and Carrell (1998). For the set of response variables, for each level of exhilaration in response to Distorted Portraits of Oneself one representative variable was selected. That is, verbal ratings of funniness, occurrence of AU12, occurrence of AU6+12, frequency of laughter, and the *laughing quotient*—all in response to Distorted Portraits of Oneself—were chosen. This resulted in a first canonical correlation of $R = .63$, $\chi^2 (15) = 27.88$, $p < .05$. Thus, there was 40% of overlapping variance (R^2) between the two sets of variables. Subsequent χ^2 tests for the remaining four roots were not significant. Factor loadings are displayed in Table 3.

Canonical factor loadings (see Table 3) ranged from -0.33 (laughing at oneself, peer-report) to -0.85 (trait cheerfulness) with a median of -0.85 for the set of trait variables and -0.16 (PorO 6+12 occurrence) to -0.51 (PorO laughing quotient) with a median of *Mdn =* -0.33 for the set of response variables. All factor loadings were negative.

Table 3.

Canonical Factor Loadings for two Canonical Correlation Analyses with Trait and Response Variables of Laughing at Oneself.

	Canonical factor loadings	
Variables	Set 1 excluding Agreement Form	Set 1 including Agreement Form
Trait variables		
LaY Self	-0.84	0.78
LaY Peer	-0.33	0.72
Trait CH	-0.85	0.61
Agreement Form		0.26
Median	-0.84	0.67
Response variables		
PorO f	-0.33	0.49
PorO 12 occ.	-0.45	0.45
PorO 6+12 occ.	-0.17	0.14
PorO laugh qu.	-0.51	0.39
PorO laugh fr.	-0.31	0.21
Median	-0.33	0.39

Note. $N = 49$.

Only the significant first root of each canonical correlation is shown.

LaY self = Self-report of laughing at oneself (SHS, Sense of Humor Scale); LaY peer = Peer-report of laughing at oneself (SHS); Trait CH = Trait cheerfulness (STCI-T<60>, trait part of the State-Trait-Cheerfulness-Inventory); PorO = Distorted Portraits of Oneself; f = funniness; a = aversion; 12 = AU12; 6+12 = AU6 + AU12 (Duchenne display); occ. = occurrence; laughing qu. = laughing quotient (Laugh fr./AU6+12 fr.); laugh fr. = frequency of laughter.

While the trait variables in the analyses above were selected because of theoretical *and* empirical reasons, a further indicator of laughing at oneself has been discussed before, namely the Agreement Form. The readiness to have one's material shown to a larger audience reflects a further indicator for a tendency of laughing at oneself. Thus, in order to investigate whether the score of the Agreement Form contributed any more to laughing at oneself, a second canonical correlation was calculated. Although the Agreement Form was answered within the experimental part, it was seen as a behavioral trait that was measured unobtrusively, rather than being a response to the images. Thus, for the set of trait variables, Agreement Form was added, while none of the other variables in the two sets were changed. This resulted in a first canonical correlation of $R = .69$, $\chi^2 (20) = 37.31$, $p = .01$, with none of the subsequent χ^2 tests for the remaining roots being significant. There was 47.44% of overlapping variance (R^2). The canonical factor loadings (Table 3) ranged from 0.26 (laughing at oneself, peer-report) to 0.78 (Trait cheerfulness) with a median of 0.66 for the trait variables and from 0.14 (PorO 6+12 occurrence) to 0.48 (PorO funniness) with a median of 0.39 for the set of response variables. Thus, the Agreement Form indeed seems to have additional predictive potential for laughing at oneself.

Discussion

The present study is the first to use a multi-method approach to the phenomenon of "laughing at oneself." Questionnaire measures were used as self- and as peer-reports. Furthermore, by means of distorted images of them, participants were put into a situation where they were provoked to laugh at themselves. Four levels of exhilaration were examined to determine the behavior that is shown when laughing at oneself. Smiles that do not reflect felt enjoyment were also studied.

Convergence Among Methods

Laughing at oneself was measured by self-report, by peer-report, and by observation of behavioral responses to experimental stimuli. All methods converged moderately. Among the exhilaration behaviors, all four levels of exhilaration were shown more strongly/frequently by people who reported to laugh at themselves. The weakest predictor was frequency of both AU12 and AU6+12. Whether or not the participants responded with AU12 or AU6+12 at all, as well as how intensely they smiled, was more predictive. It seems that is more essential whether somebody smiles or does not smile, than *how often* somebody smiles. Experiencing funniness when seeing the distorted portraits, laughing, and especially the proportion of laughter within all exhilaration displays were behavioral responses related strongest to claiming to laugh at oneself in the questionnaire.

However, while participants who reported to laugh at themselves also smiled at distorted portraits of other persons and found them funny, *laughing* at distorted portraits of the strangers did go along *neither* with self- *nor* peer-reported laughing at oneself. Also, finding one's own images funnier than images of others added more to enhancement of state cheerfulness than the other way round. The question arises why self-reported laughing at oneself predicts smiling at the images of strangers. One interpretation could be the following: If people can smile at the sight of their own images, they know that although the images are targeting their own person, they are innocent jokes—perhaps a prerequisite for laughing at oneself. But the same applies to the strangers' distorted portraits, and in accepting these images as innocent jokes, one smiles at one's own pictures as well as at those of the others. However, a more intense level of exhilaration—laughing—can perhaps only be elicited by their own images in persons who can laugh at themselves. Showing the same level of exhilaration at strangers' distorted portraits might be related to laughing at others and thus capture another trait (e.g., the joy from laughing at others: Katagelasticism, Ruch & Proyer, 2009), but it was not correlated with laughing at oneself.

Personality

As for Ruch and Carrell (1998), in the current study high trait cheerfulness and low trait seriousness predicted laughing at oneself. Habitually cheerful participants also responded more likely with AU12 smiles and rated funniness. On the contrary, but not surprisingly, trait bad mood was negatively related with almost all exhilaration behaviors. However, trait seriousness was weakly, but *positively*, correlated with displaying AU12 in response to one's own images. It might be that the task per se also appealed to the serious people, as they did only know that they would have to rate some pictures the content of which they did not know before.

The results concerning the mood states very much corresponded to the findings of previous research on the temperamental basis of humor and sense of humor measures (Ruch & Köhler, 2007). Participants who reported to laugh at themselves arrived for the experimental part in a cheerful, non-serious, and good mood. Also, subsequent to the task, their mood states were related in the expected way, but the correlations were smaller than in the pretest. However, regarding the behavioral responses, for the majority of indicators the correlation increased from before to after the task. In general, experienced and actually displayed exhilaration during the task lead to enhanced mood subsequent to it.

Participants who laughed more at themselves according to their own and their peers' reports, tended to be the more extraverted people. This is not surprising, as Extraversion has been found to be related to sense of humor components before (cf. Köhler & Ruch, 1996). Definitional components of Extraversion include susceptibility for positive affect, smiling and laughter, and enjoyment of entertaining others (cf. Köhler & Ruch, 1996; Ruch, 1999). But there were no correlations with laughing per se and with smiling. Several interpretations are possible. First, even though within the norms of a comparison sample, on closer examination Extraversion scores were somewhat higher in the current sample and variance was lower ($M = 6.67$, $SD = 3.62$ in the data by Ruch, 1999, as compared to $M = 8.01$, $SD = 2.96$ in the

current sample). This could have reduced the coefficients. Second, the Distorted Portrait Judgment Task was perhaps more suitable for introverted people as it was a passive task without social interaction. This might have counteracted the correlation. However, it was also found that extraverted participants expressed their exhilaration by laughter rather than smiling. This result is very much in accordance with the definition of Extraversion as well as results of former studies (cf. Köhler & Ruch, 1996).

Whereas Neuroticism was related neither to self- nor peer-reported laughing at oneself, participants who were less emotionally stable showed less facial signs of exhilaration. The negative relation between humor and Neuroticism also corresponds well to findings of former research (i.e., Köhler & Ruch, 1996) and its definitional relatedness to negative affectivity. The correlations tended to be higher for the Distorted Portraits of Oneself than for those of strangers. Independent of questionnaire measures, neuroticistic (or emotionally unstable) participants did perhaps not enjoy that they had in a way been kidded and images of their faces had been distorted. The results might be different if the participants themselves could control the situation in which they do (or don't) laugh at themselves.

Psychoticism predicted several indicators of laughing at oneself. This was unexpected, as previous research found relations for Psychoticism mainly for humor production (Köhler & Ruch, 1996). Persons with lower scores in Psychoticism, though, tend to be characterized by more conformity than persons with higher scores. Thus, more conformist participants might have less understanding for this kind of pictures and therefore less likely react with facial expressions of enjoyment. Also, people who don't care too much about what other people think of them might be more relaxed and more accepting towards their own weaknesses or peculiarities in their appearance. However, regarding the questionnaire measures, the relation was only true for the peer-reports.

Multivariate relations were found as well: Traits of laughing at oneself, a temperament of habitual cheerfulness, and behavioral responses to distorted images of oneself together

explain 40% of variance. This might mean that laughing at oneself forms a special form or facet within a cheerful temperament. Among the trait variables, self-report of laughing at oneself and trait cheerfulness held the highest factor loadings. In the second analyses, the degree of readiness to have the material shown to a broader publicity (i.e., the Agreement Form) contributed to the prediction of laughing at oneself. In both analyses, among the response variables, laughing indices had rather high factor loadings. In the first analyses, the laughing quotient—i.e., whether a person showed laughing rather than smiling, the laugh quotient—was shown to account most strongly for laughing at oneself. Thus, again, these analyses seem to indicate that behavior shown when laughing at oneself can be literally understood as *laughing* in its general form.

Conclusion

The present approach is the first to examine the phenomenon of laughing at oneself experimentally. In this study, the focus of laughing at oneself was triggered by one's own appearance. Using distorted portraits of the participants, it could not only be shown that "laughing at oneself" exists and different methods of its measurement converge. It was also demonstrated that the behavior is, indeed, laughing. The tendency to laugh at oneself seems to be a trait-like characteristic, and cheerful, not overly serious people who don't tend to be too strongly affected negatively seem to laugh at themselves more. But a cheerful mood state is also helpful for laughing at oneself.

As the participants' images were produced immediately before the task, they could not have possibly laughed at a "former" self, as Superiority theorists would argue. Nor does La Fave's et al. (1996) argument that laughing at oneself could not possibly be a happy event seem to be applicable since participants responded to the distorted portraits with genuine displays of enjoyment, and only those were related with a "laughing at oneself" questionnaire

measure. Fake or masking smiles, i.e., smiles that did *not* reflect enjoyment, were even negatively related to this measure.

However, the task the participants were asked to do was a rather passive task in that they did not have any possibility of control. It would be interesting to investigate laughing at oneself in a more active context in which participants can determine the "intensity" of a stimulus. Also, one's own embarrassing events or mishaps other aspects of laughing at oneself would be worth studying.

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Overall Discussion

Humor as a virtue has received attention in particular in philosophy and theology (cf. Bühler, 2007; Comte-Sponville, 2001; Geier, 2006; Gilhus, 1997; Berger, 1998). However, until now, psychological research has largely neglected to study humor from the perspective of virtues and virtuousness. In other literature on humor as a virtue, examples for how humor can serve a virtue or be a virtue, are rarely provided. Furthermore, humor is not a unidimensional construct (cf. Ruch, 2007; Martin, 2007). Benevolent humor is probably serving virtue to a larger degree than mean-spirited and malevolent humor, as was also stated in philosophical literature (e.g., Aristotle, 335 BC/1932, 1934; Morreall, 1987). But until now there is neither comprehensive knowledge on which aspects of humor are seen as incorporating virtue, nor is it clear which virtue it might be, or incorporating vice, or whether it is neutral.

When humor as a virtue is described several authors refer in particular to laughing at oneself and not taking oneself too seriously (Comte-Sponville, 2001; Roberts, 1988). According to Comte-Sponville, this should lead to the virtue of humility. However, laughing at oneself has not received much attention in psychological research either. It had not even been established whether laughing at oneself exists, nor was it clear, which behavior would be shown. Do people literally *laugh*, do they smile, or is it merely the absence of negative emotions that accounts for laughing at oneself?

This dissertation is the first attempt to systematically examine which aspects of humor, as they are represented in items of questionnaires or reports of everyday situations, are considered to represent virtue (and represent vice), which virtues might be particularly "compatible" with humor, and how humor can be and was actually used to exert a virtue. The phenomenon of laughing at oneself is also studied experimentally for the first time.

Three approaches were taken to study humor as a virtue: First, different humorous behavior manifestations and statements in 12 current humor questionnaires were rated for the

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degree of vice and virtue. In addition, experts on virtue were asked to determine the degree of

each of six virtues in those humor behaviors and statements that were rated as representing

virtue. Second, lay people were asked on their experience with humor as a virtue. They rated

importance of and commitment to each of six virtues. Furthermore, they estimated how often

humor is employed for each virtue in general, and how often they do it themselves. Also, the

participants provided 210 situations in which they actually *had* employed humor for virtues,

which covered all of the six virtues. And third, a particular aspect of humor as a virtue was

investigated for the first time experimentally: namely laughing at oneself.

In the following, the results of the three parts of the thesis will be discussed. Table 1 of

the Overall Discussion summarizes the research questions, methods, and results of each of the

three parts.

Overview

As can also be seen in Table 1, *Part I* and *Part II* had similar aims: to study the

aspects of virtue that are compatible with humor. But they differ with respect to the empirical

approach taken. Part I used items of humor questionnaires as an already existing collection of

humor behavior manifestations and attitudes to examine the implicit representation of vice

and virtue. This approach was chosen because questionnaires should cover as broad a variety

of humor behaviors as possible.

Great care was taken in the selection of questionnaires in order to serve this intention

best. One of these questionnaires, the Humorous Behavior Q-Sort Deck (HBQD, Craik,

Lampert, & Nelson, 1993) was developed to portrait a person's humorous style

comprehensively. Its 100 non-redundant items yield ten styles that are organized along five

contrastive factors, such as socially warm vs. cold, competent vs. inept, or benign vs. mean-

spirited. Further uni- and multidimensional questionnaires were added covering both

generally positively and negatively evaluated aspects of the sense of humor, like temperament

(i.e., Cheerfulness), coping humor, laughing at oneself, and humor styles like affiliative or aggressive humor style. One scale was added because it only contained assumedly negatively evaluated aspects (i.e., Jokes and Tricks, Cattell & Schürger, 1971). Two subscales were added that were developed to measure humor in the context of virtue, namely the humor subscales of the Self-Assessed Wisdom Scale (SAWS, Webster, 2003) and of the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS, Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Analyses of the comprehensive measure, i.e., the HBQD (Craik et al. 1993), revealed that about two thirds of the humorous behavior manifestations were seen as neutral. One third are either seen as representing vice or as representing virtue. It seems that humor behavior manifestations of a comprehensive measure are rather normally distributed with respect to their moral evaluation. Thus, humor *per se* seems to be neutral rather than to incorporate virtue or vice. However, based on the present research it is now possible to analyze the morally negative and positive aspects more closely.

Regarding the complete *Humor Rating List*, behaviors seen as incorporating vice were mainly behavior manifestations that would hurt other people physically or psychologically. In accordance with former literature (e.g., Aristotle 335 BC/1934; Addison, as cited in Geier, 2006) laughing at others' weaknesses was seen as ethically negative. However, some behaviors reflecting inept humor style (as covered by the HBQD) were also seen as representing vice. This is somewhat surprising, because, as Berger (1998) put it, not having the talent is not the fault of the person, only having the talent for humor and not using it is. A closer look at the respective item contents, however, revealed that especially those behaviors that expressed exaggeratedly amused responses or habitual hiding of anxiety by nervous snickering were seen as representing vice, and thus as being unauthentic behaviors, rather than, for example, incompetence in telling jokes. The ethically positively rated humor behaviors included general good cheerfulness when dealing with other persons, or a playfulness regarding language.

Table 1.

Summary of the findings within the three parts of the dissertation.

Section	Part I: How virtuous is humor? What we can learn from current instruments	Part II: How virtuous is humor? Evidence from everyday behavior.	Part III: Can people really laugh at themselves? Experimental and correlational evidence
Aims	How prevalent are virtue or vice in humorous behavioral manifestations out of a pool of current humor questionnaire items?	How often do people exert virtues[a] humorously? Are some virtues more often achieved humorously than others?	Does laughing at oneself exist? Do different methods for measuring it converge? Which verbal and facial responses occur?
	What is the nature of virtuousness[a] represented by those items?	Which examples on exerting virtuousness humorously do people report? (Collection of situations). Use of comic styles[b]?	Which personality and temperamental traits and which mood states predict laughing at oneself?
Methods	Study I: 76 Raters, *Humor Rating List* formed by 298 items out of 12 current humor questionnaires, rated on a continuum for degree from *vice* via *neutral* to *virtue*	48 participants, *Humor in Tugenden* (HiT): - Ratings concerning people in general and participants themselves: How important is each virtue?, How often is it exerted humorously?	70 participants, 126 peers; Self-and peer-report on SHS, self-reports on STCI, EPQ-RK Experimental part using distorted images of participants and strangers
	Study II: 17 experts, *Humor Rating List II* formed by 73 items representing virtuousness, rated for degree of each of 6 virtues	- Instructions to write down scenarios in which humor was used to exert each of the virtues and to report used comic styles	Behavioral data: facial expressions (analyzed using FACS), verbal responses

Table 1 (continued).

Section	Part I: How virtuous is humor? What we can learn from current instruments	Part II: How virtuous is humor? Evidence from everyday behavior.	Part III: Can people really laugh at themselves? Experimental and correlational evidence
Results	Study I: 68% of behavior manifestations of a comprehensive humor measure are neutral; 17% of them represent vice, 15% represent virtue. Study II: Among the 15%, all virtues were represented. But the most strongly represented virtues were *wisdom* and *humanity* (closely followed by *transcendence*.)	*Importance* of virtue was highest for *justice* and *humanity*. Virtues exerted *humorously* most often were *humanity* and *wisdom*. 210 (valid) situations were collected. There was no difference in the number of situations depending on the virtue. The comic styles used most often were *humor* and *wit*. Comic styles like *sarcasm*, *cynicism*, and *satire* were used only to a small degree, but if, then overproportionally often for justice.	Laughing at oneself exists (facial signs of exhilaration were shown). There was convergence among methods (self-report, peer-report, behavioral data). *Laughter* seemed to be strongest related to laughing at oneself. Underlying temperamental traits were cheerfulness and low seriousness. (Partly) related mood states were high cheerfulness, low seriousness, and low bad mood subsequent to the experiment. (Partly) related personality traits were high extraversion, low neuroticism.

Note. [a] The six virtues referred to are *wisdom*, *courage*, *humanity*, *justice*, *temperance*, and *transcendence* (cf. Dahlsgaard et al., 2005). [b] The comic styles are *fun*, *humor* (in the sense of appreciation of the world's inconsistency and arousing sympathy), *nonsense*, *wit*, *irony*, *satire*, *cynicism*, and *sarcasm* (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963).

In Study II, the experts rated the degree of each of the six virtues (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005) within the item contents that had been rated as representing virtue in Study I. Two main results should be emphasized here: First, *all* of the six virtues were represented at least slightly. And second, as summarized in the title of this thesis, the virtues represented *most strongly* were wisdom and humanity. These were closely followed by transcendence.

This result is not only in accordance with theoretical literature on humor as virtue. The humanists of the 17th century emphasized good-natured humor (Schmidt-Hidding, 1963; Ruch, 2004). They distinguished "good humour" from "bad humour" (Ruch, 2004) and opposed put-down witticisms and thus advocate humane humor. Furthermore, contemporary authors like Webster (2003) saw humor as one of five ways to achieve wisdom, or Bühler (2007) who viewed humor as a mean to deal wisely with everyday life.

One might wonder why the participants of Study I were asked to rate the representation from virtue or vice, rather than positive vs. negative valence of the behaviors. As the participants were lay people, they might have had difficulties in understanding the concepts of "virtue" or "vice". However, the focus of interest was on virtue and vice. Positive and negative valence of a behavior would have been rather broad and unspecific in comparison to virtue and vice, and would not have revealed the information that was aimed at with this study. My assumption is that "virtue" is more specific than "positive" behavior, and the same applies to "vice" and "negative" behavior. Not everything that is positive can be considered a virtue. In contrast to that, behavior that is considered to represent virtue is assumed to be positive. A solution for an empirical test of this assumption would have been to include both a rating on a dimension of positive to negative valence of the behavior as well as a dimension on representation of virtue to vice. In that way it would have been possible to compare the two ratings. The counter-argument is an economical one: With the contents of 298 item contents to rate, the effort invested by the participants was already rather high, and

doubling the ratings would have overstrained the willingness for participation in this study. Thus, the best way seemed to ask for ratings on virtue and vice. In order to make sure that the participants understood the concepts of virtue and vice, the instructions contained easily understandable definitions of the concepts of virtue and vice. The high convergence of Study I and Study II, which was achieved in spite of different kinds of samples and differences in the ratings, corroborated the approach taken in Study I.

Part II of this thesis confirmed the result obtained in Part I (see Table 1 of the overall discussion). This part's study had lay people rate how often they themselves would exert each of the six virtues (Dahlsgaard et al., 2005) in a humorous way, and how often they thought this would be done in general. The lay people, again, reported to use humor in order to exert a virtue for humanity and wisdom most often. Transcendence, on the other hand, was rather low in the ratings of this study.

Part II also asked people to report situations in which they (or another person they know) exerted virtue in a humorous way. For all virtues, situations were found, and there was no difference in the number of situations between the virtues.

The participants were also asked to report comic styles proposed by Schmidt-Hidding (1963; i.e., *fun*, *humor* [in the sense of appreciation of the world's inconsistency and arousing sympathy], *nonsense*, *wit*, *irony*, *satire*, *cynicism*, and *sarcasm*). That way, not only specific examples could be collected, but also first evidence for "mechanisms" could be assessed that were used to achieve a given virtue. Good-natured comic styles like fun or humor (in a broader sense) were typically used more often than dark humor styles (i.e., satire, sarcasm, cynicism). It was nevertheless remarkable that dark humor styles still occurred in the situations. But dark humor styles seemed to be used in particular to achieve justice. It seems that put-down humor might be ethically acceptable when used to ridicule unethical—specifically, unjust—behavior.

One peculiarity seemed to apply to both Part I and Part II of the thesis. In both parts, humor behaviors and situations sometimes seemed to match more than one virtue. In these cases, it seemed that single aspects of the item or situation contents accounted for one virtue, and other aspects for another. For example, the statement "Achieves a detached perspective on self and others." (HBQD, Q.53) achieved high ratings for justice, humanity, and wisdom (with justice rated highest). In this statement, the justice aspect might be to look at others without prejudice. The humanity aspect might be that somebody approaches other people good-naturedly and without distrust, and thus is kind and enables a good relationship with that person. And the wisdom aspect could reflect the knowledge and perspective that, for instance, the first impression doesn't always have to be the most accurate one and that it is wise to get to know people better and not to judge them too quickly. The combination of justice, humanity and temperance also occurred quite often.

In the collection of situations in Part II, some participants remarked that they did not know which virtue to assign their situation to. They then decided for a virtue according to which aspect they thought to be the most important one. Reading those situations also made thinking of more than one virtue. For example someone's grandson at the age of five stumbled and hit the corner of a wall and cried loudly. The grandfather checked the small wound that his grandson had received, and then exclaimed that, thank Goodness, the corner of the wall had not been hurt. The boy was so baffled that the crying seamlessly turned into loud laughter. This situation has been assigned to the virtue of wisdom because of the clever idea of the grandfather on how to cheer his grandson up again. But there might also be a humane aspect in humorously comforting his grandson. However, the participants themselves have assigned the situations they had provided and it might be fruitful to let them be rated by experts as well.

Another aspect that was noticed when looking closer on the material of the studies of Part I and Part II was that the "direction" or causality between humor and virtue was not

always clear. For example, within wisdom, items and situations occurred that emphasized knowledge about humor (for example, knowing that a certain aspect of humor has a comforting effect and other aspects might be hurtful). Other items and situations focused more on a humorous way of dealing with knowledge. This was the case, for example, when humor was used in teaching, i.e., to explain some subject matter in a humorous way. In other words, there seemed to be wise humor, and there seemed to be humorous wisdom.

Furthermore, contents of some items and situations reflect a third aspect: To be wise enough to detect incongruities, absurdities, or ironies in everyday situations or even in difficult life situations seem to *lead* to a humor *experience*. This is exemplified in this item: "I often find that the small things in everyday life are really funny and amusing" (STCI, Ruch, Köhler, & van Thriel, 1996, Q.26).

Part III was dedicated to the investigation of the phenomenon laughing at oneself (see Table 1). As the title of this thesis suggests, laughing at oneself is considered to lead to humility (cf. Comte-Sponville, 2001). The aim of the study the third part lay rather in experimentally examining how laughing at oneself manifests in behavior. The focus of this study was on laughing at one's appearance. Stimuli used in this study were distorted portraits of the participants and distorted portraits of strangers. Participants had to indicate funniness of and aversion to the distorted portraits and were secretly videotaped in order to record their facial responses. Using the Facial Action Coding System (Ekman, Friesen, & Hager, 2002), it was possible to show that genuine exhilaration (Ruch, 1993, 1997) is involved when people laugh at themselves (at least in the case of their own appearance) as participants showed genuine smiles and Duchenne display. Even more, *laughing* at their *own* distorted portraits was predicted by a questionnaire measure of laughing at oneself, whereas laughing at *strangers'* distorted portraits wasn't. Also, finding one's own distorted portraits funnier than those of strangers, contributed more enhancement to the participants' state cheerfulness than the other way round. In contrast to this, fake smiles (i.e., asymmetrical smiles, smiles

accompanied by facial actions indicating negative emotions like lowering one's brows or pressing lips together), did occur in people who had low scores in laughing at oneself.

However, a complication in this study might have been the distorted portraits of strangers. As they were indeed complete strangers to the participants, the participants didn't know how the strangers looked like when "undistorted". Because of this missing incongruity distorted portraits might just not be as funny as their own ones, or as distorted portraits of people the participants know. Furthermore, the degree of familiarity or intimacy with the person on the distorted portrait might influence the participants' responses. There is however no easy solution to this issue. To take distorted portraits of friends would have meant to incur logistical problems, because the participants themselves were not to know about the kind of portraits before the experiment. Also, it would have been necessary to control for the degree of familiarity or intimacy of the participants and their friends, relatives, or partners. Distorted portraits of celebrities could have possibly been by a person not known by some of the participants; in addition, some participants might have liked the celebrity displayed on the portrait and some might have disliked them, which would have further distorted the results. Portraits of complete strangers had the advantage of providing the same conditions for all participants. Also, there *were* participants who found complete strangers' portraits funnier than their own ones (the difference score of funniness ratings of their own and strangers' portraits ranged from -1.92 to 2.83, $M = .53$, $SD = .78$). Furthermore, finding their own ones funnier than the strangers' ones went along with a personality variable, namely neuroticism ($r = -.24$, $p < .05$). Thus, not only were actual mood states affected by the stimuli, but habitual neuroticism also predicted the tendency of the participants to differ in funniness ratings, depending if these were their own or not.

One additional possibility would have been to take portraits of the experimenter as the stranger's portraits. Each participant would know this person from the experiment (unless there is more than one experimenter). This solution is currently implemented in a subsequent

study (Hofmann, 2010). For future studies it might be advisable to do pilot studies in order to optimize the kind of stimuli taken for the strangers' portraits.

The complication described above not withstanding, the results of Part III indicate that La Fave, Haddad, and Maesen's (1996) argument that an event at one's own expense can't be a happy event, do not apply. Genuine smiles imply that there is in fact happiness and fun. Also, superiority theory (e.g., Aristotle, 335 BC/1932; Hobbes, as cited in Morreall, 1987; Gruner, 1997; La Fave et al., 1996) would imply that participants who can laugh at themselves would also laugh hard at the stranger's distorted portraits. But this did not seem to be the case. The enhanced state cheerfulness after the task and a habitual emotional stability, which related to finding one's own distorted portraits funnier than those of strangers, indicate that there was no feeling of superiority involved. Taking the incidents into account where strangers' portraits were rated funnier than the own ones, it seems illogical that superiority toward the "butt part" of oneself (cf. La Fave et al., 1996) would contribute more to a subsequent cheerful mood state than would superiority toward strangers. Buckley's (2003) argument of laughing at oneself as a way of telling the others how inferior they are because they cannot laugh at themselves does also not apply, as the experimental setting did not involve social interaction, but merely spontaneous responses to stimuli. The results of Part III rather fit to the descriptions of laughing at oneself by Comte-Sponville (2001) and McGhee (1996, 1999) who emphasize that no self-hatred or put-down should be involved.

Part III itself did not involve virtue ratings. Thus, we don't really know yet if laughing at oneself is really seen as a virtue and which kind of virtue that might be. We have, however, clues from the results in Part I. Item contents from the laughing at oneself subscale of the Sense of Humor Scale by McGhee (1996) did not enter Study II of Part I. However, all of them were clearly on the positive side of the Humor Vice Virtue Rating (*HVVR*). The highest among those was the item "I often tell others about the funny side of my blunder or embarrassing incidents" (SHS, Q.39), and the lowest was "I find it easy to laugh at others'

jokes when I am the butt of the joke" (SHS, Q.23). It might be that the phrasing of the latter item was rather ambiguous with regard to put-down humor, that is, it was not clear in this item how good-natured the jokes of others are.

Other scales contain items that focus on laughing at oneself, e.g., "I can chuckle at personal embarrassments" (SAWS, Webster, 2003, Q.4) or "I often find the slight mishaps of everyday life amusing, even if they happen to me" (STCI, Ruch, Köhler, & van Thriel, 1996, Q.44). In contrast to what Comte-Sponville (2001) suggested, these items had their highest ratings for the virtue of wisdom rather than temperance. However, it seems that aspects of laughing at oneself are considered as virtues, even if it remains unclear which one. It might well be a virtue in its own right.

Is virtuous humor still humble? Both in Part I and Part II, all virtues were represented, and so was temperance. Furthermore, even if the mean ratings of items in Part I were rather low for temperance, single items reached high temperance ratings. The focus of items that were rated highly for temperance was on *restraining* oneself from laughing or making fun in order not to hurt others, and on self-regulation in the sense of regulating one's emotions, rather than humility. Also in Part II the focus of the strength self-regulation occurred frequently. However, several situations were reported where humility was achieved by using humor. This was the case, for example, for the director of the company of one of the participants. When the participant guided visitors through his rather big company they sometimes met the company's director, who was a man well known from the media. When they did so, the director would introduce himself humbly as the "caretaker" of the company. This, for example, would match the idea of humor as a way to humility.

Conclusions and Outlook

This thesis is the first in psychology to systematically study humor as a virtue. While humor *per se* seems rather neutral, there are aspects of it, that is, humor behaviors and ways to

employ humor that can function to achieve virtuousness. As the title "Wise, Humane, and Humble" suggests, wisdom and humanity seem to be the virtues most compatible with humor. Humility, or temperance, on average did not seem to be among the highest rated virtues. However, there were several examples of humor as employed to achieve humility, and ratings of single items were, together with humanity, among the highest ones. Laughing at oneself does exist, and even if it is not possible reach a conclusion as to which virtue might be represented by laughing at oneself, laughing at oneself as measured in this thesis seems to match the description of philosophers.

The analyses reported here revealed information on the mechanisms through which virtue is achieved by humor. It might be the case that the use of certain comic styles is more appropriate for certain virtues. Fun, or humor in its broader sense, seemed to be useful for most virtues and was used more often than dark comic styles (e.g., sarcasm, cynicism). However, dark styles appeared to be rather useful in order to achieve justice. But the specific mechanisms have to be studied in more detail.

It would be fruitful to examine the contents of the items and situations more closely for each virtue. It would thus be possible to figure out similarities of groups of items or situations assigned to one virtue, and thus to work out the different aspects of humor to achieve humanity, or courage, or wisdom. This could result in a questionnaire that makes it possible to measure humor as a virtue directly. Whether it is feasible to construct items that are distinct for one virtue, remains open. But a questionnaire or test measuring humor as a virtue might also make it possible to study the essential nature of humor as a virtue. It is not clear if it is a personality or a temperamental trait, an ability, or a question of humor appreciation. Such a test would also permit to study the effects of the use of virtuous humor on well-being variables like life satisfaction (cf. Diener, 2000) or the absence of psychological or physical troubles. It might be that humor in the service of certain virtues is more related to well-being than others. Different, dark humor that is used to achieve justice

might involve negative emotions and might thus, for example, be less beneficial than comic

styles that were used in order to achieve humanity. To know which of the humorously

achieved virtues contribute particularly to well-being, and which humorous ways work best,

might even make it possible to train these aspects. For all of these further approaches to

humor as a virtue, the present thesis is hoped to have provided the first basis.

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Selbstständigkeitserklärung

zur wissenschaftlichen Arbeit an der Fachrichtung Persönlichkeitspsychologie und Diagnostik am Institut für Psychologie der Universität Zürich

Ich erkläre ausdrücklich, dass es sich bei der von mir eingereichten Dissertation mit dem Titel

"Wise, Humane, and Humble: Psychological Perspectives on Humor as a Virtue"

um eine von mir selbst und ohne unerlaubte Beihilfe sowie *in eigenen Worten* verfasste Originalarbeit handelt.

Ich bestätige, dass die Arbeit als Ganzes oder in Teilen weder bereits einmal zur Abgeltung anderer Studienleistungen an der Universität Zürich oder an einer anderen Universität oder Ausbildungseinrichtung eingereicht worden ist noch zukünftig durch mein Zutun als Abgeltung einer weiteren Studienleistung eingereicht werden wird.

Verwendung von Quellen

Ich erkläre ausdrücklich, dass ich *sämtliche* in der oben genannten Arbeit enthaltenen Bezüge auf fremde Quellen (einschliesslich Tabellen, Grafiken u. Ä.) als solche kenntlich gemacht habe. Insbesondere bestätige ich, dass ich *ausnahmslos* und nach bestem Wissen sowohl bei wörtlich übernommenen Aussagen (Zitaten) als auch bei in eigenen Worten wiedergegebenen Aussagen anderer Autorinnen oder Autoren (Paraphrasen) die Urheberschaft angegeben und gemäss geltender Richtlinien zur Manuskriptgestaltung (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychologie, APA) zitiert habe.

Sanktionen

Ich nehme zur Kenntnis, dass Arbeiten, welche die Grundsätze der Selbstständigkeitserklärung verletzen – insbesondere solche, die Zitate oder Paraphrasen ohne Herkunftsangaben enthalten –, als Plagiat betrachtet werden und die entsprechenden rechtlichen und disziplinarischen Konsequenzen nach sich ziehen (gemäss §§ 7ff der Disziplinarordnung der Universität Zürich und Studienordnung der Universität Zürich).

Ich bestätige mit meiner Unterschrift die Richtigkeit dieser Angaben.

Name und Vorname: BEERMANN, Ursula

Matrikelnummer: 04723359

Datum: 28. August 2009   Unterschrift: ....

Curriculum Vitae

Mag. rer. nat. Ursula Beermann

born on February 16, 1976, in Graz, Austria

Research and Professional Experience

- July 2004 – Dec. 2009: Teaching and research assistant at the Department of Psychology of the University of Zurich, Personality and Assessment [*Fachrichtung für Persönlichkeitspsychologie und Diagnostik*]

Education

- October 2009: Preliminary conferment of the doctoral degree (Dr. des.)

- September 2009: Successful PhD Thesis defense, Prof. Dr. Willibald Ruch and Prof. Dr. Veronika Brandstätter-Morawietz, Department of Psychology of the University of Zurich; Thesis: "Wise, humane, and humble: Psychological perspectives on humor as a virtue".

- July 2004 – September 2009: PhD student of Prof. Dr. Willibald Ruch at the Department of Psychology of the University of Zurich, Program in Personality and Assessment [*Fachrichtung für Persönlichkeitspsychologie und Diagnostik*]

- 2004: M.A. in Psychology [*Magistra Rerum Naturalis der Psychologie*]; Thesis: "Emotional Intelligence: MET—A test measuring emotional perception using simple and morphed pictures". [*Emotionale Intelligenz: MET—ein Test zur Messung der emotionalen Perzeption mit Hilfe von einfachen und gemorphten Bildern.*], supervised by Prof. Dr. Aljoscha C. Neubauer

- 1994 – 2004: Student of Psychology at the Karl-Franzens-University of Graz, Austria; Secondary areas: Linguistics (specialization in Austrian Sign Language) and Psychotherapy

- June 1994: Matura (a degree above high school)

Further professional training

- February 2005: FACS Final Test—a certificate for FACS-coding (Facial Action Coding System by Ekman, Friesen, & Hager, 2002) after having attended a FACS training workshop in 2004 (conducted by Erika Rosenberg)

- January/February 2005: Course for Writing Research Papers for Publication

Teaching experience (University of Zurich)

- Diagnostics of emotional behavior: *Übung* (graduate-level course) (spring 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)

- Humor and laughter: *Seminar* (graduate-level course) (fall 2005, 2006)

- Seminar in research methods: *Seminar* (graduate-level course) (fall 2007)

- Experimental psychology lab class: *Praktikum* (course for bachelor-level students) (spring 2008, 2009)

- Supervision of student research projects, bachelor theses, and master theses (since fall 2004)

- Psychological Assessment: *Vorlesung* (general introductory course for bachelor-level students), supplementary teaching for Prof. Dr. Willibald Ruch and Dr. René Proyer (spring 2007, 2008, 2009)

Academic and University Service

- Since 2009
  Referee for the journal *Pragmatics and Cognition*

- Since 2009
  Referee for the journal *Psychology Science Quarterly*

- 2008 – 2009: Webmaster of the Humor Research Site (http://www.humorresearch.org/)

- 2005 – 2009: Co-examiner in assessment and final exams of several departments of the Faculty of Arts (*Philosophische Fakultät, Universität Zürich*), including the Department of Psychology, English, Indo-European Studies, History, History of Technology, Neurobiology, Slavic Studies

- 2004 – 2009: Webmaster of the Homepage of the Program in Personality and Assessment, Department of Psychology, University of Zurich (http://www.psychologie.uzh.ch/perspsy/home/)

- 2004 – 2009: Coordination of internships for students of the Program in Personality and Assessment, Department of Psychology, University of Zurich

- 2004 – 2009: Country representative of Switzerland of the European Network for Positive Psychology (ENPP)

- Spring 2007: Setting up a video analysis laboratory for FACS coding

- 2004 – 2006: Responsible for the library of the Program in Personality and Assessment, Department of Psychology, University of Zurich

- Summer 2006: IT coordinator of the Program in Personality and Assessment, Department of Psychology, University of Zurich

- Summer 2006: Coordination of the relocation of the Program in Personality and Assessment, University of Zurich

Membership in Professional Societies

- International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS)

- International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA)

- European Network for Positive Psychology (ENPP)

- American Psychological Association (APA)

Further professional experience

- 2003 – 2004: OMEGA Graz, Austria: Social work with immigrant refugees (children and adults; internship)

- 2002 – 2004: *Pflegeelternverein Steiermark* (Styrian support association for foster parents), Austria: *Sozial- und Lernbetreuung* (social work and tutoring of children with social and learning difficulties)

- 2002 – 2003: Psychological research methods (tutorial for graduate-level students), Department of Psychology, Karl-Franzens-University of Graz, Austria

- 1999/2000: Psychological assistant in the *Kuratorium für Verkehrssicherheit* (Austrian Road Safety Board), Linz and Wels, Austria (summer jobs)

- 1999, January – June: MOSAIK GesmbH Graz, Austria: *Heilpädagogischer Kindergarten und Tageswerkstätte* (kindergarten and adult remedial teaching; internship)

Publications

Beermann, U., & Ruch, W. (2009). *Can people ever laugh at themselves? Experimental and correlational evidence*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Ruch, W., Köhler, G., Beermann, U, & Deckers, L. (2009). *The Weight-Judging Paradigm as a model for humor? A FACS-Study*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

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Beermann, U., Gander, F., Hiltebrand, D., Wyss, T., and Ruch, W. (2009). Laughing at oneself. In D. Peham, & E. Bänninger-Huber (Eds.), *Proceedings of the FACS-Workshop 2007*. Innsbruck, Austria: Innsbruck University Press, 31-35.

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Beermann, U., & Ruch, W. (2009). Haha, that's me!—Laughing at caricatures of oneself: A FACS-Study. In A. Samson & M. Weber (Chairs), *Current Research on Humor and Laughter. Symposium conducted at the 11th Congress of the Swiss Psychological Society (SSP), August 19th-20th, 2009,* University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland.

Beermann, U. (2009). Laughing at oneself: Experimental and correlational evidence. Paper presented *21st International ISHS Humor Conference, June 17th-20th, 2009,* California State University, Long Beach, CA, USA.

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Harzer, C., Beermann, U., Weber, M. & Ruch, W. (2008). Emotion, personality, humour production, thought action repertoire, and affectivity. Paper presented at the *8th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications, June 23-28, 2008,* Galati, Romania.

Beermann, U., Hiltebrand, D., Gander, F., Wyss, T. & Ruch, W. (2007). If you were a joke - would you find yourself funny? Or: Measuring „Laughing at oneself". Paper presented at the *International Meeting "Current and future perspectives in facial expression research: Topics and methodical questions", September 28-29, 2007.* University of Innsbruck, Austria.

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Beermann, U. & Ruch, W. (2007). Gelotophobes and their Humor. Paper presented at *The 19th International ISHS Humor Conference, June 28th – July 1, 2007.* Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island, US.

Hempelmann, C. F. & Beermann, U. (2007) What Freshmen Laugh About: Frequent Themes in College Humor. Paper presented at *The 19th International ISHS Humor Conference, June 28th – July 1, 2007.* Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island, US.

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Beermann, U., & Ruch, W. (2006). Measurement of facial responses to humour. Workshop held at the *6th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications, July 10 - 15, 2006.* University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

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Beermann, U., & Ruch, W. (2006). The assessment of facial responses to humour: From the mirth index to the Duchenne display. Poster presented at *The 18th International ISHS Humor Conference, July 3 – 7, 2006.* The Danish University of Education, Copenhagen, Denmark.

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Beermann, U., & Ruch, W. (2005). How to measure facial responses to humour. Workshop held at the *5th International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications, July 25 - 30, 2005.* Tübingen University, Germany.

Beermann, U. (2005). Freuung und Überraschde, Wauer und Trut—Morphen als Technik für gemischte Emotionen in Fotos. [Hurprise and sappiness, angness and sader—morphing as a technique for picturing mixed emotions in photos.] Poster presented at *The Gradual Student congress [LizentiandInnen- und DoktorandInnen-Kongress (LiDoKo)] of the Department of Psychology of the University of Zurich, June 15, 2005.* University of Zurich, Switzerland.

Beermann, U., Huber, A., & Ruch, W. (2004). Ways to happiness: Do character strengths enable the good life? Poster presented at the *2004 International Positive Psychology Summit, September 30 – October 3, 2004.* Gallup Institute, Washington DC, USA.

Invited Talks

Beermann, U. (2008, März). FACS: Facial Action Coding System: Ein Kodiersystem für die Mimik. [FACS: Facial Action Coding System: A Coding System for Facial Expression.] Presentation held in the *University of Zurich, Department of Psychology, Personality and Assessment (Zürcher Stärkenprogramm – Zurich Strengths Program)*, March 03, 2008.

Beermann, U. (2008). Humor und Lachen [Humor and laughter]. Presentation held in the *Kolingesellschaft Zug*, March 13, 2008.

Beermann, U. (2008). Humor als Tugend [Humor as a virtue]. Presentation held in the *Kolloquium zu aktuellen Forschungsthemen (Mittelbaukolloquium) des Psychologischen*

Instituts [Colloquium on current research topics of the Department of Psychology], University of Zurich, November 11, 2008.

Awards, Grants

- 2009: Graduate Student Award of the International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS)
- 2006: Suzanne and Hans Biäsch Foundation for Applied Psychology (Zurich, Switzerland): "*Neuerstellung und Adaptation bzw. Neuübersetzung von Web-Seiten zur Online-Forschung zur Positiven Psychologie*" (Construction, adaptation, and retranslation of websites for online research on Positive Psychology; U. Beermann, W. Ruch und R. Proyer)

Appendix

The Appendix contains samples of the materials used in this thesis. Note that for copyright reasons the materials will not be given in their entirety. The *Humor Rating List I* (Part I, Study I) and the *Humor Rating List II* (Part I, Study II) will only be exemplified using the items of the State Trait Cheerfulness Inventory (STCI, Ruch, Köhler, & van Thriel, 1996). For Part III, the distorted portraits will be exemplified using representative examples for the Distorted portraits of Oneself that don't show a participant. For the questionnaires used in the studies, please refer to the publications or authors of the respective questionnaires.

Table of Contents

Part I, Study I

Example of the Humor Rating List

(provided to the participants online via SurveyMonkey)

Part I, Study I

Wie tugendhaft ist Humor?

Meine Doktorarbeit an der Fachrichtung Persönlichkeitspsychologie und Diagnostik des psychologischen Instituts der Universität Zürich beschäftigt sich mit dem Thema „Humor und Tugenden". Humor ist ein häufig verwendeter Begriff. Manche sagen, er sei eine Tugend, und viele wünschen sich Humor bei ihren Partnern und Freunden. Manche anderen sagen oder sagten aber auch, Humor entsteht aus einem Überlegenheitsgefühl: man lache andere Menschen aus. Diese Art von Humor wird von einigen als lasterhaft abgelehnt. Manchmal hat Humor aber auch gar nichts mit Tugenden oder Lastern zu tun. Diese Befragung stellt eine Voruntersuchung im Rahmen meiner Doktorarbeit zur Frage dar: Wie sehr wird der Aspekt „Tugend" oder „Laster" in bestehenden Humorfragebögen behandelt? Helfen Sie mir, diese Frage zu beantworten. Vielen Dank!

Ursula Beermann

Diese Untersuchung läuft bis zum Donnerstag, dem 15. Juni 2006.

Bei Fragen können Sie mich über u.beermann@psychologie.unizh.ch erreichen.

<u>Hintergrund</u>

Humor gilt allgemein als eine sehr positive Eigenschaft oder Charakterstärke. Er wird von vielen als eine Haltung angesehen, den Widrigkeiten der Welt mit einem milden Lächeln zu begegnen.

In der Geschichte vor allem Englands galt diese Art von Humor einige Zeit lang als eine *Kardinaltugend*. Dabei versteht man unter „Tugend" die Art und Weise, menschlich zu sein und zu handeln, unsere Fähigkeit, gut zu handeln (Comte-Sponville, 2004). Zu Tugenden zählen z.B. auch Mut, Weisheit, Mässigung, Gerechtigkeit, Humanität und Transzendenz (Peterson & Seligman, 2001). Ein *Laster* bzw. eine Untugend hingegen ist das Gegenteil davon: tadelnswertes, schädliches Handeln, eine schlechte Angewohnheit, von der jemand beherrscht wird; Verhaltensweisen, die zum Schaden des Einzelnen bzw. von Gruppen oder Gesellschaften führen bzw. führen sollen. Es geht dabei nicht um pathologische Verhaltensweisen, sondern die moralische bzw. ethische Wertung steht im Vordergrund.

Humor könnte nun einerseits *im Dienste einer Tugend* stehen, indem jemand auf humorvolle Weise z.B. Mut oder Humanität oder Gerechtigkeit verwirklicht. Beispielsweise könnte man eine traurige Person auf humorvolle Art und Weise auf hellere Gedanken bringen und somit human handeln. Wenn andererseits *Humor selbst eine Tugend* darstellt, ist auch die Fähigkeit wichtig, sich selbst nicht so ernst zu nehmen und über eigene Fehler lachen zu können oder sich (humorvoller) Kritik anderer auszusetzen. Allerdings kann weiters Humor auch gegen andere eingesetzt werden, z.B. indem man über Schwächen anderer Menschen lacht oder spottet. Das wäre dann ein Beispiel für *lasterhaften Humor*. Humor kann aber auch *gar nichts mit Tugenden oder Lastern* zu tun haben, z.B. wenn man über einen lustigen, harmlosen Witz lacht. Der Kontext und die Art und Weise, wie Humor zum Ausdruck kommt, sind oft entscheidend dafür, ob Humor Tugend, Laster oder keins von beidem ist. Darüber, wie häufig diese einzelnen Arten von Humor vorkommen, weiss man bislang noch nichts.

Sinn für Humor kann nun ganz generell auf verschiedene Arten gemessen werden. Es kann z.B. gefragt werden, was jemand lustig findet oder ob jemand lustige Pointen produzieren kann, oder auf welche Art und Weise er in bestimmten Situationen mit Humor reagiert. Ich habe viele „Sinn für Humor"-Fragebögen zusammengesammelt und stelle mir die folgende Frage: Inwieweit ist der Tugend- bzw. Lasteraspekt in diesen Fragebögen enthalten?

Viele der Fragebögen wurden von amerikanischen Forschern erstellt. Daher muss ich noch darauf hinweisen, dass der Begriff „Humor" hier gemäss amerikanischer Tradition in seinem weitesten Sinne gebraucht werden muss: Humor bezeichnet in dieser Untersuchung alles, was komisch ist.

Ihre Aufgabe

Im Folgenden finden Sie einige **Aussagen, die humorvolles Verhalten oder Einstellungen beschreiben**. Die Aussagen wurden verschiedenen Fragebögen zu Sinn für Humor entnommen. Das beschriebene Verhalten oder die Einstellung können tugendhaft, lasterhaft oder keins von beidem sein.

Ich bitte Sie jeweils, **einzuschätzen**, **ob** und **wie sehr tugend**- oder **lasterhaft** Sie das beschriebene Verhalten finden. Dafür steht Ihnen eine 9-stufige Skala von -4 = „sehr lasterhaft" über 0 = „weder noch" bis 4 = „sehr tugendhaft" zur Verfügung. Diese Befragung ist aus verschiedenen Fragebögen zusammengesetzt, die in ihrer ursprünglichen Form unterschiedliche Antwortformate enthalten. Diese werde ich jeweils zu Beginn einer Gruppe von Fragen anführen. Die Antwortalternative, die jeweils die grösste Zustimmung zur Frage/Aussage darstellt, ist die, die für Ihre Beurteilung ausschlaggebend sein soll; Sie finden sie jeweils in Anschluss der Frage/Aussage in (Klammern).

Sehen wir uns das folgende Beispiel an:

„Wann immer ich einen guten Witz höre, muss ich lachen."

Stellen Sie sich vor, eine Person beantwortet diese Aussage mit „**ja**".

Wie schätzen Sie das humorvolle Verhalten dieser Person ein? Sie haben folgende Skala zur Einschätzung zur Verfügung:

-4 = sehr lasterhaft
-3 = ziemlich lasterhaft
-2 = lasterhaft
-1 = eher lasterhaft
0 = weder Tugend noch Laster
1 = eher tugendhaft
2 = tugendhaft
3 = ziemlich tugendhaft
4 = sehr tugendhaft

Wenn Sie z.B. der Meinung sind, dass dieses Verhalten eher tugendhaft ist, dann kreuzen Sie in der Skala 1 für „eher tugendhaft" an:

	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Die folgenden Fragen bzw. Aussagen haben in ihrem ursprünglichen Fragebogen die 2 Antwortmöglichkeiten ja/nein. Jeweils in Klammern finden Sie die für Aussage bzw. Frage zutreffende Antwort. Bitte beurteilen Sie die derart beschriebenen Verhaltensweisen oder Einstellungen jeweils anhand der Skala von „-4 = lasterhaft" über „0 = weder Tugend noch Laster" bis „4 = tugendhaft".									
Wann immer ich einen guten Witz höre, muss ich lachen. (ja)	O	O	O	O	O	⊗	O	O	O

Wenn Sie der Meinung sind, es ist weder eine Tugend noch ein Laster, dann kreuzen Sie 0 für „weder Tugend noch Laster" an:

	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Die folgenden Fragen/Aussagen haben in ihrem ursprünglichen Fragebogen die 2 Antwortmöglichkeiten ja/nein.									
Wann immer ich einen guten Witz höre, muss ich lachen. (ja)	O	O	O	O	⊗	O	O	O	O

Wenn Sie finden, das Verhalten ist sehr lasterhaft, dann kreuzen Sie -4 für „sehr lasterhaft" an:

Die folgenden Fragen/Aussagen haben in ihrem ursprünglichen Fragebogen die 2 Antwortmöglichkeiten ja/nein	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Wann immer ich einen guten Witz höre, muss ich lachen. (ja)	⊠	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Achtung

Es geht nicht darum, die Aussage für sich zu beantworten, als wenn Sie sich selbst bezüglich der Aussage beschrieben.

Es geht darum, ob Sie das Verhalten einer Person, die so handelt, wie es in der Aussage beschrieben wird, als **lasterhaft** (in den Stufen „ein bisschen" bis „sehr") oder **tugendhaft** (in den Stufen „ein bisschen" bis „sehr") oder **keins von beiden** einschätzen.

Es gibt hierbei keine falschen und richtigen Aussagen.

Versuchspersonenstunden

Studierende der Psychologie an der Universität Zürich können sich für die Teilnahme an dieser Untersuchung Versuchspersonenstunden anrechnen lassen. Als Nachweis der Teilnahme gilt der **Versuchspersonencode**; Bitte notieren Sie ihn sich und bringen Sie ihn mit, um eine Bestätigung für die Versuchspersonenstunden zu erhalten. Sie bekommen eine halbe Stunde für die Teilnahme angerechnet. Kommen Sie dazu bitte ab Montag, den 19.6.2006, zur Fachrichtung Persönlichkeitspsychologie und Diagnostik, Treichlerstr. 10, 1. Stock.

Die Daten werden in keiner Weise mit Ihrer Person in Verbindung gebracht, sondern anonym behandelt.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Mitarbeit!

Bitte machen Sie hier noch ein paar Angaben

Versuchspersonencode:
(Wenn Sie Psychologie an der Universität Zürich studieren und diese Untersuchung für Ihre Versuchspersonenstundenkarte angerechnet bekommen möchten, notieren Sie sich dazu bitte Ihren Code.)

Bitte bilden Sie den Code nach folgendem System und geben Sie ihn dann in das freie Feld ein:

1. Buchstabe Vorname d. Vaters (1-st.)	1. Buchstabe Vorname der Mutter (1-st.)	eigener Geburtstag (2-st.)	Eigener Geburtsmonat (2-st.)

Code 6-stellig: ☐☐☐☐☐☐

(Z.B. Vorname Vater: Hans, Vorname Mutter: Gerda, eigener Geburtstag: 15.04., Code: HG1504)

Geschlecht   O männlich   O weiblich

Alter_____

Höchster erreichter Bildungsgrad:

O Kein Schulabschluss

O Pflichtschulabschluss

O Lehrabschluss/Berufslehre

O Matura/Abitur

O Fachhochschul-/Hochschulabschluss

Nationalität:

O Schweiz

O Österreich

O Deutschland

O sonstiges, und zwar_____

Muttersprache_____

Land des Wohnsitzes:

O Schweiz

O Österreich

O Deutschland

O sonstiges, und zwar_____

Die folgenden Aussagen bzw. Fragen haben in ihrem ursprünglichen Fragebogen die 4 Antwortmöglichkeiten trifft gar nicht zu/ trifft eher nicht zu/ trifft etwas zu/ trifft sehr zu.
Jeweils in Klammern finden Sie die für Aussage bzw. Frage zutreffende Antwort.
Bitte beurteilen Sie die derart beschriebenen Verhaltensweisen oder Einstellungen jeweils anhand der Skala von „-4 = lasterhaft" über „0 = weder Tugend noch Laster" bis „4 = tugendhaft".

		-4 = sehr lasterhaft	-3 = ziemlich lasterhaft	-2 = lasterhaft	-1 = eher lasterhaft	0 = weder Tugend noch Laster	1 = eher tugendhaft	2 = tugendhaft	3 = ziemlich tugendhaft	4 = sehr tugendhaft
264	Auch schwierige Situationen gehe ich leichten Herzens an. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
265	Mein Alltag bietet mir oft Anlass zum Lachen. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
266	Ich lächle häufig. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
267	Die gute Laune anderer wirkt ansteckend auf mich. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
268	Die kleinen Dinge des Alltags finde ich oft komisch und erheiternd. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
269	Ich gehe unbeschwert durchs Leben. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
270	Ich bin oft in heiterer Stimmung. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
271	Ich bin ein fröhlicher Typ. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
272	Es fällt mir leicht, gute Laune zu verbreiten. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
273	Ich lache gerne und viel. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
274	Ich unterhalte meine Freunde gerne mit lustigen Geschichten. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
275	Lachen wirkt auf mich sehr ansteckend. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
276	Ich bin ein lustiger Mensch. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
277	Ich habe die Erfahrung gemacht, dass an dem Sprichwort "Lachen ist die beste Medizin" wirklich etwas dran ist. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
278	Ich bin ein heiterer Mensch. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
279	Ich bin leicht zum Lachen zu bringen. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
280	Ich nehme die Dinge, wie sie kommen. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
281	Ich bin häufig in einer vergnügten Stimmung. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
282	Ich habe ein sonniges Gemüt. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
283	Die kleinen Missgeschicke des Alltags finde ich oft amüsant, selbst wenn sie mich betreffen. (trifft sehr zu)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Part I, Study II

Example of the Humor Rating List II

Part I, Study II

Liebe Untersuchungsteilnehmerin, lieber Untersuchungsteilnehmer

Vielen Dank, dass Sie sich bereit erklärt haben, an meiner Untersuchung teilzunehmen.

Meine Doktorarbeit an der Fachrichtung Persönlichkeitspsychologie und Diagnostik des Psychologischen Instituts der Universität Zürich beschäftigt sich mit dem Thema „Humor und Tugenden."

Es ist eines der Ziele meiner Doktorarbeit, herauszufinden, ob und wenn ja, welche Aspekte oder Bereiche des Humors als tugendhaft angesehen werden können. Dafür sind mehrere Schritte notwendig.

In einem ersten Schritt mussten bestehende Fragebögen zu Humor danach durchsucht werden, wie stark Tugenden darin überhaupt berücksichtigt wurden. Dieser Schritt wurde von Laien durchgeführt und ist bereits abgeschlossen.

In einem zweiten Schritt geht es nun darum, die im ersten Schritt als tugendhaft bewerteten Aussagen genauer zu untersuchen und herauszufinden, welchen Tugenden sie zugeordnet werden können. Dieser Schritt soll mit der vorliegenden Studie gemacht werden. Ich bitte Sie als Experten/Expertin, diese Zuordnung vorzunehmen. Lassen Sie sich dabei vor allem von Ihrem hohen fachlichen Allgemeinwissen leiten und sehen Sie über Ihre spezielle philosophische Ausrichtung eher hinweg.

Auf den folgenden Seiten finden Sie genauere Erläuterungen zum theoretischen Hintergrund und zu Ihrer Aufgabe in dieser Studie. Das Ausfüllen des Fragebogens nimmt in etwa eine Stunde in Anspruch.

Bei Fragen können Sie mich unter oben stehenden Kontaktdaten erreichen.

Bitte senden Sie mir den ausgefüllten Fragebogen bis spätestens **23.11.2007** im beigelegten Antwortkuvert zu.

Als Dank für Ihre Teilnahme möchte ich Ihnen gerne einen Getränkegutschein von Starbucks zukommen lassen. Zu diesem Zweck schreiben Sie bitte Ihre Adresse auf dieses Blatt und senden Sie es mir gemeinsam mit dem ausgefüllten Fragebogen zu. Sie bekommen den Gutschein dann an diese Adresse gesandt. Name und Adresse werden nicht mit dem Fragebogen in Verbindung gebracht, sondern nach Versand des Gutscheins umgehend vernichtet.

Name:_____

Strasse:_____

PLZ/Ort:_____

Vielen herzlichen Dank für die Teilnahme!

Ursula Beermann

Tugendhafter Humor

Was wird unter Humor verstanden?

„*Humor*" und „*Sinn für Humor*" sind häufig verwendete Begriffe. Darunter wird einerseits die Haltung verstanden, den Widrigkeiten des Lebens mit einem Lächeln zu begegnen. Manche sagen, Humor sei eine Tugend, und viele wünschen sich Humor bei ihren Partnern und Freunden. Im Humanismus des 19. Jahrhunderts in England galt Humor sogar als eine Haupttugend (z.B. bei Shaftesbury, siehe Schmid-Hidding, 1963). Andererseits bezeichnet Humor auch häufig einfach alles, was lustig ist. Für Aristoteles war ein Gefühl der Überlegenheit ein essentieller Faktor im Humor, während es manche zeitgenössischen Forscher sogar für den einzig relevanten Faktor halten (Gruner, 1997). Darunter fällt zum Beispiel auch das Auslachen anderer. Diese Art von Humor wird von vielen als lasterhaft abgelehnt. Andere würden sich sogar scheuen, in diesem Zusammenhang von „Humor" zu sprechen, sondern dies eher als „Spott" oder „Sarkasmus" bezeichnen. Manchmal hat Humor aber auch gar nichts mit Tugenden oder Lastern zu tun. Die unterschiedlichen Ansichten zu *Humor* existieren nebeneinander. Vor diesen unterschiedlichen Hintergründen wurden von Psychologen und Psychologinnen verschiedene Fragebögen bzw. Messinstrumente erstellt, wobei den meisten Messinstrumenten für Humor lediglich die Definition „Humor ist alles, was lustig ist" zugrunde liegt.

Was geschah bisher? – Schritt 1

Es gibt eine grosse Menge an Testverfahren, die unterschiedlichste Aspekte von Sinn für Humor messen. Jedoch ist keines der Testverfahren direkt dafür konstruiert worden, Humor als Tugend zu messen. Trotzdem interessierte mich, inwieweit der Tugendaspekt dennoch gelegentlich in den Aussagen der wichtigsten Fragebögen enthalten ist.

Zu diesem Zweck wurden für eine Studie, die im Sommer und Herbst 2006 stattfand, die Aussagen aus 12 gängigen Fragebögen zu Sinn für Humor herangezogen. Das darin beschriebene Verhalten oder die Einstellung wurde auf einer Skala von „sehr lasterhaft" bis „sehr tugendhaft" eingeschätzt. 76 Laien nahmen an dieser Untersuchung teil. 73 der insgesamt 298 Aussagen zu Humorverhalten und Einstellungen wurden im Schnitt zumindest mit „eher tugendhaft" bis „tugendhaft" bewertet.

Was soll nun geschehen? – Schritt 2

Das Ziel dieses Schrittes soll sein, jene 73 Aussagen mit (eher) tugendhaftem Inhalt nun konkreten Tugenden zuzuordnen zu lassen. **Das wird Ihre Aufgabe sein**. Ich habe dafür ein Raster bereitgestellt, das ich im Folgenden genauer erklären werde.

Das Tugendraster

Aus Sicht der Positiven Psychologie sind *Tugenden* Gruppen von Eigenschaften oder Handlungsweisen, die von den meisten Menschen als positiv und moralisch wertvoll wahrgenommen werden. Es existieren verschiedenste Tugendenkataloge, wie zum Beispiel die platonischen Tugenden, jene von Thomas von Aquin oder taoistische Tugenden. Nach den Forschern Dahlsgaard, Peterson und Seligman (2005), die eine historische und kulturübergreifende Analyse verschiedenster philosophischer und religiöser Schriften durchführten, kristallisieren sich insbesondere sechs universell auftretende Haupttugenden heraus: *Weisheit, Mut, Humanität, Gerechtigkeit, Mässigung* und *Transzendenz*. Diese Tugenden bilden auch das Raster der vorliegenden Untersuchung. Bitte beachten Sie, dass es sich bei den Tugenden mehr um „*Tugendfamilien*" handelt; jede „Tugendfamilie" hat den Namen der Tugend als Überbegriff und zeichnet sich durch bestimmte *Charakterstärken* aus. Auf den folgenden Seiten finden Sie genauere Beschreibungen dieser Tugendfamilien.

Auf dem Extrablatt mit dem Namen „Übersicht der Tugenden" finden Sie noch zusammengefasst die Tugenden mit den dazugehörigen Charakterstärken. Nehmen Sie dieses Blatt gerne als Hilfe für die Zuordnung der 73 Aussagen zu den Tugenden zur Hand.

Tugendenbeschreibungen

Mut

Unter „Mut" wird die Bereitschaft verstanden, eigene Angst zu überwinden und Ziele zu verfolgen, auch wenn sich dabei äussere oder innere Widerstände in den Weg stellen. Dabei gibt es vor allem drei Typen von Mut:

- *Physischen Mut* (Mut, der zum Tragen kommt, wenn man die Angst vor körperlichen Verletzungen oder vor dem Tod überwindet, um sich selbst oder andere zu retten)
- *Moralischen Mut* (Mut, Authentizität zu bewahren, auch mit der Gefahr, Freunde, eine Anstellung, die Intimsphäre oder Prestige zu verlieren – Stichwort „Zivilcourage")
- *Psychischen Mut* (Mut, den man braucht, um sich einer Krankheit oder einer hinderlichen Gewohnheit oder Situation entgegenzustellen; die Tapferkeit, die man hat, wenn man sich den inneren "Dämonen" stellt)

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend „Mut" gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Authentizität*: die Wahrheit sagen und sich natürlich geben
- *Tapferkeit*: sich nicht einer Bedrohung oder einem Schmerz beugen, Herausforderungen annehmen
- *Ausdauer:* beendigen, was begonnen wurde
- *Enthusiasmus:* der Welt mit Begeisterung und Energie begegnen

Gerechtigkeit

Unter „Gerechtigkeit" versteht man das, was das Leben fair macht: den Versuch, jedermann moralisch angemessen zu behandeln. Gerechtigkeit ist für die Beziehung zwischen der Einzelperson und der Gruppe oder Gemeinschaft und dabei sowohl für Mitglieder als auch für Führungspersonen einer Gruppe bedeutsam.

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend „Gerechtigkeit" gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Fairness:* alle Menschen nach dem Prinzip der Gleichheit und Gerechtigkeit behandeln
- *Führungsvermögen*: Gruppenaktivitäten organisieren und ermöglichen
- *Teamwork*: gut als Mitglied eines Teams arbeiten

Humanität

Sowohl Gerechtigkeit als auch Humanität betreffen das Verbessern des Wohlergehens der anderen; trotzdem handelt es sich hier um unterschiedliche Tugenden. „Humanität" bezeichnet eine humane Gesinnung und Haltung, die in Beziehungen zu anderen Menschen zum Tragen kommt. Sie kann bedeuten, mehr als nur das tun, was fair ist, und grosszügig, liebevoll und nachsichtig gegenüber anderen zu sein. Humanität beruht auf Empathie und Mitgefühl und kann sogar manchmal dazu führen, gegen die Regeln der Fairness zu handeln.

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend „Humanität" gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Freundlichkeit*: jemandem einen Gefallen tun und gute Taten vollbringen
- *Bindungsfähigkeit*: menschliche Nähe herstellen können
- *Soziale Intelligenz:* sich der Motive und Gefühle seiner selbst und anderer bewusst sein

Mässigung

Normalerweise wird der Begriff „Mässigung" für Abstinenz betreffend Essen, Trinken, Rauchen oder Sexualität verwendet. In der vorliegenden Untersuchung hat er eher die Bedeutung von „allgemeiner Selbstbeherrschung". Dazu zählt auch die Fähigkeit, die eigenen Emotionen und Motivationen ohne äussere Hilfe erkennen und damit umgehen zu können und sein Verhalten zu regulieren.

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend Mässigung gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Vergebungsbereitschaft*: denen vergeben, die einem Unrecht getan haben

- *Bescheidenheit*: das Erreichte für sich sprechen lassen

- *Vorsicht*: nichts tun oder sagen, was später bereut werden könnte

- *Selbstregulation*: regulieren, was man tut und fühlt

Transzendenz

Das Transzendente ist nach Kant das, was über menschliches Wissen hinausgeht, die Verbindung zu etwas Höherem. Diese Beziehung zu einer höheren Instanz erlaubt es Menschen, Sinn fürs Leben zu gewinnen. Transzendenz ist nicht das Gleiche wie Spiritualität oder Religiosität, schliesst sie aber mit ein. Sie kann auch etwas Irdisches sein und ist nicht an die Ausübung von Religion gebunden.

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend „Transzendenz" gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Sinn für das Schöne*: Schönheit in allen Lebensbereichen schätzen

- *Dankbarkeit*: sich der guten Dinge bewusst sein und sie zu schätzen wissen

- *Hoffnung*: das Beste erwarten und daran arbeiten, es zu erreichen

- *Spiritualität*: stimmige Überzeugungen über einen höheren Sinn des Lebens haben

Weisheit

„Weisheit" bedeutet eine durch Lebenserfahrung und Abgeklärtheit gewonnene innere Reife. Weisheit ist nicht identisch mit Intelligenz. Weise Menschen wenden Intelligenz an, und zwar nicht nur, um die eigenen Interessen oder die der anderen zu maximieren; sie stellen auch eine Balance zwischen verschiedenen Eigeninteressen und den Interessen anderer her. Dazu zählt auch der Kontext, in dem man lebt: die eigene Stadt, das eigene Land, die Umwelt oder sogar Gott. Weisheit ist Wissen, das für Gutes eingesetzt wurde oder wird.

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend „Weisheit" gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Kreativität*: neue und effektive Wege finden, Dinge zu tun

- *Neugier*: Interesse an der Umwelt haben

- *Urteilsvermögen*: Dinge durchdenken und von allen Seiten betrachten

- *Liebe zum Lernen*: neue Techniken erlernen und Wissen aneignen

- *Weitsicht/Durchblick*: in der Lage sein, guten Rat zu geben

Was ist nun Ihre Aufgabe?

Jeder Fragebogen enthält eine bestimmte Anzahl an Fragen, die in einem bestimmten Antwortformat beantwortet werden sollen. Z.B. könnte die Frage lauten: "Lachen Sie gerne?" und die Antwort könnte sein: "Stimme zu". Bei verschiedenen Fragebogen werden unterschiedliche Antwortformate verwendet (z.B. „ja", „nein", oder „trifft völlig zu", „trifft zu", „trifft eher zu" etc.). Ich habe das jeweilige Antwortformat erhalten. Jede Frage bzw. Aussage wird mit der am stärksten zustimmenden Antwort gemeinsam präsentiert.

Auf diese Art und Weise finden Sie im Folgenden jene 73 Aussagen aufgeführt, die zumindest mit „(eher) tugendhaft" beurteilt wurden.

Beachten Sie bitte: Es geht hier nicht um die Frage, ob etwas humorvoll ist oder nicht. Es geht darum, ob und wenn ja wie tugendhaft ein bestimmtes in den Aussagen beschriebenes Verhalten oder eine beschriebene Einstellung ist.

Bitte beantworten Sie nun für jede der 73 Aussagen die folgende Frage:

Wie sehr ist jede einzelne Tugend, nämlich *Mut, Gerechtigkeit, Humanität, Mässigung, Transzendenz* oder *Weisheit,* in dieser Aussage vorhanden bzw. repräsentiert?

Sie haben dazu eine Skala von 0 bis 9 zur Verfügung. Die Werte bedeuten folgendes.

0	überhaupt nicht vorhanden
1	sehr schwach vorhanden
2	
3	schwach vorhanden
4	
5	mittelstark vorhanden
6	
7	stark vorhanden
8	
9	sehr stark vorhanden

Das sieht dann für jede Tugend so aus:

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Verwenden Sie „0," wenn Sie finden, dass die Tugend in der betreffenden Aussage nicht gezeigt wird. Verwenden Sie – je nach Grad – die Werte 1 bis 9, wenn Sie der Meinung sind, dass die Tugend repräsentiert ist. Verwenden Sie „1" oder einen grösseren Wert nur, wenn eine Tugend wirklich zumindest sehr schwach repräsentiert ist. Es kann durchaus vorkommen, dass einige Aussagen gar keine Tugend repräsentieren.

Sie finden diese Skala in der Kopfzeile aller folgenden Seiten.

Bitte beachten Sie, dass hier nun nur die Tugenden und nicht die gesamten Tugendfamilien inklusive Charakterstärken aufgeführt sind. Sie können aber zur Hilfe bei der Zuordnung zu den Tugenden nun das Extrablatt „Übersicht der Tugenden" zur Hand nehmen.

Auf der folgenden Seite finden Sie ein Beispiel.

Beispiel

Stellen Sie sich vor, eine fiktive Person beantwortet die Aussage „Ich mag Witze, in denen Menschen einander helfen" in einem Fragebogen mit *starker Zustimmung*.

Ich mag Witze, in denen Menschen einander helfen. (Starke Zustimmung)

Bitte beurteilen Sie nun dieses Verhalten: Schätzen Sie für jede Tugend ein, inwieweit sie in diesem beschriebenen Verhalten vorhanden ist. Sie finden die Ankerpunkte der Skala in der Kopfzeile der Seite.

Zur Erinnerung: Wenn Sie der Meinung sind, eine Tugend ist bei einer bestimmten Aussage nicht repräsentiert, kennzeichnen Sie das bitte mit „0." Sobald eine Tugend zumindest sehr schwach repräsentiert ist, verwenden Sie je nach Grad einen Wert zwischen 1 und 9. Wenn Sie der Meinung sind, es handle sich bei dem beschriebenen Verhalten um gar keine Tugend, markieren Sie für jede Tugend die „0." Es kann durchaus vorkommen, dass einige Aussagen gar keine Tugend repräsentieren.

Wenn Sie z.B. der Meinung sind, das Verhalten in der obigen Aussage repräsentiere Gerechtigkeit mittelstark und Humanität stark bis sehr stark, dann markieren Sie für Gerechtigkeit die 5 und für Humanität die 8, so wie im Beispiel demonstriert. Markieren Sie für alle anderen Tugenden die 0, wenn Sie der Meinung sind, sie werden in dem in der Aussage beschriebenen Verhalten nicht gezeigt.

Die sechs Tugenden stellen nach Dahlsgaard, Peterson und Seligman einen erschöpfenden Tugendenkatalog dar. Sollten Sie aber bei bestimmten Aussagen der Meinung sein, es handle sich um eine andere Tugend (die sich nicht nur rein sprachlich von den aufgeführten Tugenden bzw. der dazugehörigen Tugendfamilie unterscheidet), so haben Sie die Möglichkeit, diese Tugend unter „andere Tugend" aufzuführen. Bitte schreiben Sie sie auf die Linie und bewerten Sie dann anhand der Skala das Ausmass. Im anderen Fall lassen Sie die Linie frei und streichen Sie sie durch, wie im Beispiel gezeigt.

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	●	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	●	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	●	O
Mässigung	●	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	●	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	●	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Bitte beurteilen Sie auf diese Art und Weise jede Aussage. Geben Sie jeweils für jede der Tugenden eine Einschätzung ab.

Es gibt hierbei keine richtigen und falschen Antworten. Bitte verlassen Sie sich auf Ihr eigenes Urteil.

Arbeiten Sie bitte möglichst zügig. Sie können gerne Pausen machen, wenn Sie müde sind. Setzen Sie dann aber die Bearbeitung möglichst bald fort.

Bevor Sie mit den Einschätzungen beginnen, bitte ich Sie noch um die Beantwortung einiger Fragen zu Ihrer Person.

Auf der folgenden Seite geht's los. Viel Spass!

Die Ankerpunkte der Skala für das Ausmass der Tugend		
0 = überhaupt nicht vorhanden	*3 = schwach vorhanden*	*7 = stark vorhanden*
1 = sehr schwach vorhanden	*5 = mittelstark vorhanden*	*9 = sehr stark vorhanden*

Wichtig: Da der Fragebogen via Scanner eingelesen wird, sind wir darauf angewiesen, dass die entsprechenden Markierungen **nur innerhalb** der Kreise und mit **schwarzer Farbe** eingetragen werden. Ansonsten wird das Einlesen der Daten via Scanner mit Problemen verbunden sein. Herzlichen Dank für Ihr Verständnis!

so markieren: ●   nicht so markieren: ⊙   Ø

Bitte machen Sie zunächst noch folgende Angaben zu Ihrer Person. Die Angaben werden selbstverständlich vertraulich behandelt.

Geschlecht			**Alter**
O	männlich		
O	weiblich		
Höchster erreichter Bildungsgrad			**Beruf /Studienrichtung**
O	AHS/BHS-Matura/Abitur		
O	Fachhochschul-/Universitätsabschluss		

Sie finden hier nun die einzelnen Aussagen nacheinander aufgeführt. Bitte beurteilen Sie diese in dem darunterstehenden Raster auf das Ausmass der Tugend hin. In der Kopfzeile finden Sie die Ankerpunkte der Skala. Auf dem Extrablatt „Übersicht der Tugenden" finden Sie nochmals die Tugenden samt der dazugehörenden Charakterstärken (Tugendfamilien) aufgeführt.

55) Mein Alltag bietet mir oft Anlass zum Lachen. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend:		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Die Ankerpunkte der Skala für das Ausmass der Tugend		
0 = überhaupt nicht vorhanden	3 = schwach vorhanden	7 = stark vorhanden
1 = sehr schwach vorhanden	5 = mittelstark vorhanden	9 = sehr stark vorhanden

56) Ich lächle häufig. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

57) Die gute Laune anderer wirkt ansteckend auf mich. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

58) Die kleinen Dinge des Alltags finde ich oft komisch und erheiternd. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

59) Ich bin oft in heiterer Stimmung. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

60) Ich bin ein fröhlicher Typ. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

61) Es fällt mir leicht, gute Laune zu verbreiten. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Die Ankerpunkte der Skala für das Ausmass der Tugend		
0 = überhaupt nicht vorhanden	*3 = schwach vorhanden*	*7 = stark vorhanden*
1 = sehr schwach vorhanden	*5 = mittelstark vorhanden*	*9 = sehr stark vorhanden*

62) Ich lache gerne und viel. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

63) Ich unterhalte meine Freunde gerne mit lustigen Geschichten. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

64) Lachen wirkt auf mich sehr ansteckend. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Die Ankerpunkte der Skala für das Ausmass der Tugend		
0 = überhaupt nicht vorhanden	*3 = schwach vorhanden*	*7 = stark vorhanden*
1 = sehr schwach vorhanden	*5 = mittelstark vorhanden*	*9 = sehr stark vorhanden*

65) Ich bin ein lustiger Mensch. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

66) Ich habe die Erfahrung gemacht, dass an dem Sprichwort "Lachen ist die beste Medizin" wirklich etwas dran ist. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

67) Ich bin ein heiterer Mensch. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

68) Ich nehme die Dinge, wie sie kommen. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

69) Ich bin häufig in einer vergnügten Stimmung. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

70) Ich habe ein sonniges Gemüt. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

71) Die kleinen Missgeschicke des Alltags finde ich oft amüsant, selbst wenn sie mich betreffen. (Trifft sehr zu)

Tugend	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mut	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Gerechtigkeit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Humanität	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Mässigung	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transzendenz	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Weisheit	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Andere Tugend: _____		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Übersicht der Tugenden

Tugend	*Dazugehörige Charakterstärken (Tugendfamilien)*
Mut	*Authentizität*: die Wahrheit sagen und sich natürlich geben
	Tapferkeit: sich nicht einer Bedrohung oder einem Schmerz beugen, Herausforderungen annehmen
	Ausdauer: beendigen, was begonnen wurde
	Enthusiasmus: der Welt mit Begeisterung und Energie begegnen
Gerechtigkeit	*Fairness:* alle Menschen nach dem Prinzip der Gleichheit und Gerechtigkeit behandeln
	Führungsvermögen: Gruppenaktivitäten organisieren und ermöglichen
	Teamwork: gut als Mitglied eines Teams arbeiten
Humanität	*Freundlichkeit*: jemandem einen Gefallen tun und gute Taten vollbringen
	Bindungsfähigkeit: menschliche Nähe herstellen können
	Soziale Intelligenz: sich der Motive und Gefühle seiner selbst und anderer bewusst sein
Mässigung	*Vergebungsbereitschaft*: denen vergeben, die einem Unrecht getan haben
	Bescheidenheit: das Erreichte für sich sprechen lassen
	Vorsicht: nichts tun oder sagen, was später bereut werden könnte
	Selbstregulation: regulieren, was man tut und fühlt
Transzendenz	*Sinn für das Schöne*: Schönheit in allen Lebensbereichen schätzen
	Dankbarkeit: sich der guten Dinge bewusst sein und sie zu schätzen wissen
	Hoffnung: das Beste erwarten und daran arbeiten, es zu erreichen
	Spiritualität: stimmige Überzeugungen über einen höheren Sinn des Lebens haben
Weisheit	*Kreativität*: neue und effektive Wege finden, Dinge zu tun
	Neugier: Interesse an der Umwelt haben
	Urteilsvermögen: Dinge durchdenken und von allen Seiten betrachten
	Liebe zum Lernen: neue Techniken erlernen und Wissen aneignen
	Weitsicht/Durchblick: in der Lage sein, guten Rat zu geben

Part II

Humor in Virtues: Humor in Tugenden (HiT)

Humor in Tugenden (HiT)

Sehr geehrte Untersuchungsteilnehmerin, sehr geehrter Untersuchungsteilnehmer,

in meinem Dissertationsprojekt geht es um Humor in Verbindung mit Tugenden. „Humor" wird dabei in seinem weitesten Sinn gebraucht und steht für alles, was komisch oder zum Lachen ist. Das Wort „Tugend" stammt von „Tauglichkeit" ab; Tugenden sind Gruppen von Eigenschaften oder Handlungsweisen, die von den meisten Menschen als positiv und moralisch wertvoll wahrgenommen werden. Insbesondere sechs Haupttugenden kristallisieren sich dabei nach den Forschern Peterson und Seligman (2004) aus Schriften verschiedener Zeitepochen und Kulturen übereinstimmend heraus: *Weisheit, Mut, Humanität, Gerechtigkeit, Mäßigung* und *Transzendenz*.

Dieser Fragebogen stellt eine Voruntersuchung zu der Frage dar, inwieweit Humor bei der Verwirklichung spezieller Tugenden im täglichen Leben eine Rolle spielen kann. Aus diesem Grunde sammle ich Erinnerungen an tatsächliche Erlebnisse und Situationen aus dem Alltag, in denen das der Fall war, und ausgedachte Situationen, wie sie geschehen könnten.

Sie werden auf den folgenden Seiten dafür eine Anleitung finden.

Bei Fragen erreichen Sie mich

unter der E-mail-Adresse u.beermann@psychologie.unizh.ch

oder der Telefonnummer +41/44/635 75 23.

Vielen herzlichen Dank fürs Mitmachen!

Ursula Beermann

Anleitung

Der Fragebogen besteht aus zwei Teilen.

1. Im **Teil A**, der auf der folgenden Seite beginnt, finden Sie eine kurze <u>Beschreibung jeder einzelnen Tugend</u> nebst den Stärken, die man (nach Peterson und Seligman) zur Verwirklichung dieser Tugend braucht. Sie werden dort gebeten, Ihre Einschätzung zu einigen wenigen Fragen abzugeben.

2. Im **Teil B** werde ich Sie nach Situationen aus dem Alltag fragen, in denen <u>Humor bei der Verwirklichung der jeweiligen Tugenden zum Einsatz</u> kam. Dabei können Sie selbst der oder die Agierende gewesen sein, oder Sie waren bei einer solchen Situation dabei und jemand anders war die tugendhaft handelnde Person. Wenn Sie eine solche Situation noch nie erlebt haben, haben Sie sie vielleicht in einem Film gesehen, einem Buch gelesen oder davon gehört oder können sie sich vorstellen. Ich werde Sie um möglichst konkrete Beschreibungen solcher Situationen bitten. Es geht dabei <u>nicht</u> darum, herauszufinden, wie humorvoll oder tugendhaft Sie sind; vielmehr interessiert mich, ob und wie Humor zum Einsatz kommen kann, um die einzelnen Tugenden zu verwirklichen.

    Bitte lassen Sie sich für die Beantwortung dieses Fragebogens Zeit. Erinnerungen aus Ihrem Erfahrungsschatz sind für dieses Projekt sehr wertvoll. Scheuen Sie sich nicht, auch Beispiele zu bringen, die Sie für „schlecht" halten. Auch diese können sehr wertvoll sein. Sie werden für den Fragebogen vermutlich mindestens eine Stunde brauchen. Sie können die Bearbeitung auch unterbrechen und den Fragebogen zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt weiter bearbeiten.

Ihre Antworten werden selbstverständlich anonym behandelt.

Bitte machen Sie hier noch ein paar Angaben.

Geschlecht

männlich			weiblich	

Alter _____

Höchster erreichter Bildungsgrad

	Pflichtschulabschluss
	Lehrabschluss
	AHS/BHS-Matura/Abitur
	Fachhochschul-/Universitätsabschluss

Teil A

Mut

Unter „Mut" wird die Bereitschaft verstanden, eigene Angst zu überwinden und Ziele zu verfolgen, auch wenn sich dabei äußere oder innere Widerstände in den Weg stellen. Dabei gibt es vor allem drei Typen von Mut:

- *Physischen Mut* (Mut, der zum Tragen kommt, wenn man die Angst vor körperlichen Verletzungen oder vor dem Tod überwindet, um sich selbst oder andere zu retten)

- *Moralischen Mut* (Mut, Authentizität zu bewahren, auch mit der Gefahr, Freunde, eine Anstellung, die Intimsphäre oder Prestige zu verlieren – Stichwort „Zivilcourage")

- *Psychischen Mut* (Mut, den man braucht, um sich einer Krankheit oder einer hinderlichen Gewohnheit oder Situation entgegenzustellen; die Tapferkeit, die man hat, wenn man sich den inneren "Dämonen" stellt)

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend „Mut" gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Authentizität (authenticity)*: die Wahrheit sagen und sich natürlich geben
- *Tapferkeit (bravery)*: sich nicht einer Bedrohung oder einem Schmerz beugen, Herausforderungen annehmen
- *Ausdauer (persistence):* beendigen, was begonnen wurde
- *Enthusiasmus (zest):* der Welt mit Begeisterung und Energie begegnen

* * *

Sie finden nun ein paar Fragen zur Tugend „Mut". Bitte kreuzen Sie jeweils die für Sie zutreffendste Antwort an.

1. Wie bewerten Sie die Tugend **Mut** in Bezug auf das menschliche Zusammenleben?

absolut hinderlich	sehr hinderlich	hinderlich	weder/noch	förderlich	sehr förderlich	unabdingbar
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Inwieweit fühlen Sie sich persönlich im Handeln der Tugend **Mut** verpflichtet?

gar nicht	ein bisschen	mäßig	ziemlich	sehr
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Im Alltag ist man manchmal ernst und manchmal lustig. Dies betrifft auch Situationen, in denen Tugenden gezeigt werden.
Wenn Sie alle Situationen betrachten, in denen **Mut** gezeigt wird: In wievielen davon geschieht dies auf humorvolle Weise? Tragen Sie bitte eine Zahl zwischen 0 und 100 auf der Linie ein, wobei „0" für „nie" und „100" für „immer" steht.

Ich schätze, dass in _____ von 100 Situationen, in denen Mut gezeigt wird, dies auf humorvolle Weise geschieht.

4. Wie oft konnten Sie selbst schon auf **humorvolle Weise Mut** zeigen?

noch nie	1x	mehrmals	häufig	so gut wie immer
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Gerechtigkeit

Unter „Gerechtigkeit" versteht man das, was das Leben fair macht: den Versuch, jedermann moralisch angemessen zu behandeln. Gerechtigkeit ist für die Beziehung zwischen der Einzelperson und der Gruppe oder Gemeinschaft und dabei sowohl für Mitglieder als auch für Führungspersonen einer Gruppe bedeutsam.

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend „Gerechtigkeit" gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Fairness (fairness):* alle Menschen nach dem Prinzip der Gleichheit und Gerechtigkeit behandeln
- *Führungsvermögen (leadership)*: Gruppenaktivitäten organisieren und ermöglichen
- *Teamwork (teamwork)*: gut als Mitglied eines Teams arbeiten

*　　　*　　　*

Sie finden nun ein paar Fragen zur Tugend „Gerechtigkeit". Bitte kreuzen Sie jeweils die für Sie zutreffendste Antwort an.

1. Wie bewerten Sie die Tugend **Gerechtigkeit** in Bezug auf das menschliche Zusammenleben?

absolut hinderlich	sehr hinderlich	hinderlich	weder/noch	förderlich	sehr förderlich	unabdingbar
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Inwieweit fühlen Sie sich persönlich im Handeln der Tugend **Gerechtigkeit** verpflichtet?

gar nicht	ein bisschen	mäßig	ziemlich	sehr
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Im Alltag ist man manchmal ernst und manchmal lustig. Dies kann auch Situationen betreffen, in denen Tugenden gezeigt werden.
Wenn Sie alle Situationen betrachten, in denen **Gerechtigkeit** gezeigt wird: In wievielen davon geschieht dies auf humorvolle Weise? Tragen Sie bitte eine Zahl zwischen 0 und 100 auf der Linie ein, wobei „0" für „nie" und „100" für „immer" steht.

Ich schätze, dass in _____ von 100 Situationen, in denen Gerechtigkeit gezeigt wird, dies auf humorvolle Weise geschieht.

4. Wie oft konnten Sie selbst schon auf **humorvolle Weise Gerechtigkeit** zeigen?

noch nie	1x	mehrmals	häufig	so gut wie immer
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Humanität

Sowohl Gerechtigkeit als auch Humanität betreffen das Verbessern des Wohlergehens der anderen; trotzdem handelt es sich hier um unterschiedliche Tugenden. „Humanität" bezeichnet eine humane Gesinnung und Haltung, die in Beziehungen zu anderen Menschen zum Tragen kommt. Sie kann bedeuten, mehr als nur das tun, was fair ist, und großzügig, liebevoll und nachsichtig gegenüber anderen zu sein. Humanität beruht auf Empathie und Mitgefühl und kann sogar manchmal dazu führen, gegen die Regeln der Fairness zu handeln.

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend „Humanität" gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Freundlichkeit (kindness)*: jemandem einen Gefallen tun und gute Taten vollbringen
- *Bindungsfähigkeit (love)*: menschliche Nähe herstellen können
- *Soziale Intelligenz (social intelligence):* sich der Motive und Gefühle seiner selbst und anderer bewusst sein

*   *   *

Sie finden nun ein paar Fragen zur Tugend „Humanität". Bitte kreuzen Sie jeweils die für Sie zutreffendste Antwort an.

1. Wie bewerten Sie die Tugend **Humanität** in Bezug auf das menschliche Zusammenleben?

absolut hinderlich	sehr hinderlich	hinderlich	weder/noch	förderlich	sehr förderlich	unabdingbar
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Inwieweit fühlen Sie sich persönlich im Handeln der Tugend **Humanität** verpflichtet?

Gar nicht	ein bisschen	mäßig	ziemlich	sehr
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Im Alltag ist man manchmal ernst und manchmal lustig. Dies kann auch Situationen betreffen, in denen Tugenden gezeigt werden.
Wenn Sie alle Situationen betrachten, in denen **Humanität** gezeigt wird: In wievielen davon geschieht dies auf humorvolle Weise? Tragen Sie bitte eine Zahl zwischen 0 und 100 auf der Linie ein, wobei „0" für „nie" und „100" für „immer" steht.

Ich schätze, dass in _____ von 100 Situationen, in denen Humanität gezeigt wird, dies auf humorvolle Weise geschieht.

4. Wie oft konnten Sie selbst schon auf **humorvolle Weise Humanität** zeigen?

noch nie	1x	mehrmals	häufig	so gut wie immer
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Mäßigung

Normalerweise wird der Begriff „Mäßigung" für Abstinenz betreffend Essen, Trinken, Rauchen oder Sexualität verwendet. In der vorliegenden Untersuchung hat er eher die Bedeutung von „allgemeiner Selbstbeherrschung". Dazu zählt auch die Fähigkeit, die eigenen Emotionen und Motivationen ohne äußere Hilfe erkennen und damit umgehen zu können und sein Verhalten zu regulieren.

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend Mäßigung gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Vergebungsbereitschaft (forgiveness)*: denen vergeben, die einem Unrecht getan haben
- *Bescheidenheit (modesty)*: das Erreichte für sich sprechen lassen
- *Vorsicht (prudence)*: nichts tun oder sagen, was später bereut werden könnte
- *Selbstregulation (self-regulation)*: regulieren, was man tut und fühlt

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Sie finden nun ein paar Fragen zur Tugend „Mäßigung". Bitte kreuzen Sie jeweils die für Sie zutreffendste Antwort an.

---

1. Wie bewerten Sie die Tugend **Mäßigung** in Bezug auf das menschliche Zusammenleben?

absolut hinderlich	sehr hinderlich	hinderlich	weder/noch	förderlich	sehr förderlich	unabdingbar
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Inwieweit fühlen Sie persönlich sich im Handeln der Tugend **Mäßigung** verpflichtet?

gar nicht	ein bisschen	mäßig	ziemlich	sehr
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Im Alltag ist man manchmal ernst und manchmal lustig. Dies kann auch Situationen betreffen, in denen Tugenden gezeigt werden.
Wenn Sie alle Situationen betrachten, in denen **Mäßigung** gezeigt wird: In wievielen davon geschieht dies auf humorvolle Weise? Tragen Sie bitte eine Zahl zwischen 0 und 100 auf der Linie ein, wobei „0" für „nie" und „100" für „immer" steht.

Ich schätze, dass in _____ von 100 Situationen, in denen Mäßigung gezeigt wird, dies auf humorvolle Weise geschieht.

4. Wie oft konnten Sie selbst schon auf **humorvolle Weise Mäßigung** zeigen?

noch nie	1x	mehrmals	häufig	so gut wie immer
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Transzendenz

Das Transzendente ist nach Kant das, was über menschliches Wissen hinausgeht, die Verbindung zu etwas Höherem. Diese Beziehung zu einer höheren Instanz erlaubt es Menschen, Sinn fürs Leben zu gewinnen. Transzendenz ist nicht das Gleiche wie Spiritualität oder Religiosität, schließt sie aber mit ein. Sie kann auch etwas Irdisches sein und ist nicht an die Ausübung von Religion gebunden.

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend „Transzendenz" gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Sinn für das Schöne (appreciation of beauty and excellence)*: Schönheit in allen Lebensbereichen schätzen
- *Dankbarkeit (gratitude)*: sich der guten Dinge bewusst sein und sie zu schätzen wissen
- *Hoffnung (hope)*: das Beste erwarten und daran arbeiten, es zu erreichen
- *Spiritualität (spirituality)*: stimmige Überzeugungen über einen höheren Sinn des Lebens haben

<p align="center">*   *   *</p>

> **Sie finden nun ein paar Fragen zur Tugend „Transzendenz". Bitte kreuzen Sie jeweils die für Sie zutreffendste Antwort an.**

1. Wie bewerten Sie die Tugend **Transzendenz** in Bezug auf das menschliche Zusammenleben?

absolut hinderlich	sehr hinderlich	hinderlich	weder/noch	förderlich	sehr förderlich	unabdingbar
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Inwieweit fühlen Sie sich persönlich im Handeln der Tugend **Transzendenz** verpflichtet?

gar nicht	ein bisschen	mäßig	ziemlich	sehr
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Im Alltag ist man manchmal ernst und manchmal lustig. Dies kann auch Situationen betreffen, in denen Tugenden gezeigt werden.
Wenn Sie alle Situationen betrachten, in denen **Transzendenz** gezeigt wird: In wievielen davon geschieht dies auf humorvolle Weise? Tragen Sie bitte eine Zahl zwischen 0 und 100 auf der Linie ein, wobei „0" für „nie" und „100" für „immer" steht.

Ich schätze, dass in _____ von 100 Situationen, in denen Transzendenz gezeigt wird, dies auf humorvolle Weise geschieht.

4. Wie oft konnten Sie selbst schon auf **humorvolle Weise Transzendenz** zeigen?

noch nie	1x	mehrmals	häufig	so gut wie immer
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Weisheit

„Weisheit" bedeutet eine durch Lebenserfahrung und Abgeklärtheit gewonnene innere Reife. Weisheit ist nicht identisch mit Intelligenz. Weise Menschen wenden Intelligenz an, und zwar nicht nur, um die eigenen Interessen oder die der anderen zu maximieren; sie stellen auch eine Balance zwischen verschiedenen Eigeninteressen und den Interessen anderer her. Dazu zählt auch der Kontext, in dem man lebt: die eigene Stadt, das eigene Land, die Umwelt oder sogar Gott. Weisheit ist Wissen, das für Gutes eingesetzt wurde oder wird.

Peterson und Seligman meinen, dass die Tugend „Weisheit" gezeigt wird, indem man folgende Stärken einsetzt:

- *Kreativität (creativity)*: neue und effektive Wege finden, Dinge zu tun
- *Neugier (curiosity)*: Interesse an der Umwelt haben
- *Urteilsvermögen (open-mindedness)*: Dinge durchdenken und von allen Seiten betrachten
- *Liebe zum Lernen (love of learning)*: neue Techniken erlernen und Wissen aneignen
- *Weitsicht/Durchblick (perspective)*: in der Lage sein, guten Rat zu geben

*   *   *

Sie finden nun ein paar Fragen zur Tugend „Weisheit". Bitte kreuzen Sie jeweils die für Sie zutreffendste Antwort an.

---

1. Wie bewerten Sie die Tugend **Weisheit** in Bezug auf das menschliche Zusammenleben?

absolut hinderlich	sehr hinderlich	hinderlich	weder/noch	förderlich	sehr förderlich	unabdingbar
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Inwieweit fühlen Sie sich persönlich im Handeln der Tugend **Weisheit** verpflichtet?

gar nicht	ein bisschen	mäßig	ziemlich	sehr
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Im Alltag ist man manchmal ernst und manchmal lustig. Dies kann auch Situationen betreffen, in denen Tugenden gezeigt werden.
Wenn Sie alle Situationen betrachten, in denen **Weisheit** gezeigt wird: In wievielen davon geschieht dies auf humorvolle Weise? Tragen Sie bitte eine Zahl zwischen 0 und 100 auf der Linie ein, wobei „0" für „nie" und „100" für „immer" steht.

Ich schätze, dass in _____ von 100 Situationen, in denen Weisheit gezeigt wird, dies auf humorvolle Weise geschieht.

4. Wie oft konnten Sie selbst schon auf **humorvolle Weise Weisheit** zeigen?

noch nie	1x	mehrmals	häufig	so gut wie immer
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Kennen Sie eine andere Tugend, die hier nicht aufgeführt ist und von der Sie der Meinung sind, dass sie mit Hilfe von Humor verwirklicht werden kann?

Wenn ja, führen Sie sie bitte hier auf. (Keine Angst, Sie brauchen sich kein Beispiel dafür auszudenken ☺)

Teil B

Im zweiten Teil bitte ich Sie nun um die Beschreibung **konkreter Situationen** für jede der sechs Tugenden. Es geht dabei um Situationen, in denen die **jeweilige Tugend** auf **humorvolle Weise verwirklicht** wurde oder werden könnte.

Für jede Tugend sind noch einmal kurz die dazugehörigen Stärken angeführt. Weiters werden Sie für jede Tugend folgende Fragen finden, die Ihnen helfen sollen, sich an die Situation zu erinnern oder sich die Situation vorzustellen:

- *Wo* spielte sich die Situation ab?
- Welche *Person(en)* waren anwesend?
- *Wie kam es* zu dieser Situation?
- Wie *lief sie ab*?
- Wie *endete* die Situation?

Bitte gehen Sie besonders auf die folgenden Fragen ein:

- Worin bestand das *tugendhafte Handeln*?
- Welches *humorvolle Verhalten* wurde genau gezeigt, das für die Verwirklichung der Tugend hilfreich war? (Sagten Sie etwas Humorvolles? Wenn ja, was? Wurde gelacht oder gelächelt? Etc.)

Wichtig

Bitte versuchen Sie, sich zuerst an Situationen zu erinnern, in denen **Sie selbst** die aktive Person waren („Fall 1"). Es kann manchmal schwer sein, sich in allen Einzelheiten an die Situationen zu erinnern. Ich bitte Sie trotzdem, alles aufzuschreiben, was Ihnen zu dieser Situation einfällt.

Sollten Sie noch nie selbst die aktive Person gewesen sein, überlegen Sie, ob Sie schon einmal dabei waren, wie **jemand anderer** auf humorvolle Weise die jeweilige Tugend zu verwirklicht hat („Fall 2").

Sollten Sie eine solche Situation noch nicht miterlebt haben, überlegen Sie, ob Sie schon einmal in einem **Film** gesehen (bzw. in einem Buch gelesen, gehört usw.) haben, wie jemand Humor einsetzt/eingesetzt hat, um eine bestimmte Tugend zu verwirklichen, oder ob Sie sich eine solche Situation **vorstellen** können („Fall 3").

Bitte kennzeichnen Sie für Ihre Situation jeweils, um welchen Fall es sich handelt.

Wenn Sie für alle drei Fälle Situationen wissen, wäre uns eine Situation für Fall 1 am liebsten. Sollte Ihnen zu einer bestimmten Tugend nicht gleich etwas einfallen, gehen Sie vorläufig zur nächsten Tugend weiter und kommen Sie zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt noch einmal auf die betreffende Tugend zurück. Falls Sie zu einer bestimmten Tugend gar nichts schreiben konnten, ist das natürlich in Ordnung. Bitte kontrollieren Sie am Ende aber noch einmal, ob Sie nichts unabsichtlich ausgelassen haben. Selbstverständlich ist es auch möglich, mehr als eine Situation anzuführen. Verwenden Sie dazu bitte die Rückseite oder ein Extrablatt.

Auf der folgenden Seite geht's los.

Mut

Konnten Sie selbst oder jemand anders schon *Mut* z.B. durch Einsatz der Stärken *Authentizität, Tapferkeit, Ausdauer* oder *Enthusiasmus* im Alltag zeigen und dabei das Mittel des Humors verwenden?

Bitte versuchen Sie sich an eine Situation zu erinnern, in der auf **humorvolle Weise Mut** verwirklicht wurde. Folgende Fragen sollen Ihnen helfen, sich an die Situation zu erinnern/sie sich vorzustellen:

- *Wo* spielte sich die Situation ab?
- Welche *Person(en)* waren anwesend?
- *Wie kam es* zu dieser Situation?
- Wie *lief sie ab*?
- Wie *endete* die Situation?

Bitte gehen Sie besonders auf die folgenden Fragen ein:

- Worin bestand das *tugendhafte Handeln*?
- Welches *humorvolle Verhalten* wurde genau gezeigt, das für die Verwirklichung der Tugend hilfreich war? (Sagte die aktive Person etwas Humorvolles? Wenn ja, was? Wurde gelacht oder gelächelt? Etc.)

Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation auf dem freien Platz dieser bzw. der nächsten Seite so genau wie möglich. Vermeiden Sie bitte Formulierungen, die „man" oder „sollte" enthalten, und versuchen Sie, die Situation möglichst konkret zu beschreiben.

<center>*   *   *</center>

Fall 1: Waren **Sie selbst** schon einmal der/die Agierende in einer Situation, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Mut** gezeigt wurde? Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation hier so genau wie möglich.

Fall 2: Sollten Sie kein Beispiel wissen, indem Sie selbst die handelnde Person waren: Waren Sie schon einmal dabei, wenn **jemand anders** auf humorvolle Weise **Mut** gezeigt hat?

Fall 3: Sollten Sie eine solche Situation noch nie selbst erlebt haben: Haben Sie sie schon einmal in einem **Film** gesehen (bzw. in einem Buch gelesen, gehört usw.) oder können Sie sich eine solche Situation **vorstellen**, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Mut** gezeigt wurde? Wie könnte diese Situation Ihrer Vorstellung nach ablaufen?

Bitte kennzeichnen Sie, welchen Fall von Situation Sie ausgewählt haben:

	Fall 1		Fall 2		Fall 3

Bitte beantworten Sie für diese Situation noch die Frage am Ende der folgenden Seite.

Bislang wurde „Humor" im weiteren Sinne verwendet: Alles, was komisch und zum Lachen ist. Nicht immer muss aber Humor etwas mit Lachen zu tun haben.

Wie würden Sie den Humor charakterisieren, der in der oben beschriebenen Situation vorkam? Kreuzen Sie bitte das Zutreffende an. (Mehrfachnennungen möglich.)

☐	Humor (im engeren Sinn: Verständnis für die Un-gereimtheiten der Welt aufbringen, Mitgefühl wecken)	☐	Witz/Geist (Im Sinne von: Witz haben)
☐	Ironie	☐	Satire
☐	Scherz/Spaß	☐	Nonsense/Unsinn
☐	Sarkasmus	☐	Zynismus

Gerechtigkeit

Konnten Sie selbst oder jemand anders *Gerechtigkeit* z.B. durch Einsatz der Stärken *Fairness, Führungsvermögen* oder *Teamwork* im Alltag zeigen und dabei das Mittel des Humors verwenden?

Bitte versuchen Sie sich an eine Situation zu erinnern, in der auf **humorvolle Weise Gerechtigkeit** verwirklicht wurde. Folgende Fragen sollen Ihnen helfen, sich an die Situation zu erinnern/sie sich vorzustellen:

- *Wo* spielte sich die Situation ab?
- Welche *Person(en)* waren anwesend?
- *Wie kam es* zu dieser Situation?
- Wie *lief sie ab*?
- Wie *endete* die Situation?

Bitte gehen Sie besonders auf die folgenden Fragen ein:

- Worin bestand das *tugendhafte Handeln*?
- Welches *humorvolle Verhalten* wurde genau gezeigt, das für die Verwirklichung der Tugend hilfreich war? (Sagte die aktive Person etwas Humorvolles? Wenn ja, was? Wurde gelacht oder gelächelt? Etc.)

Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation auf dem freien Platz dieser bzw. der nächsten Seite so genau wie möglich. Vermeiden Sie bitte Formulierungen, die „man" oder „sollte" enthalten, und versuchen Sie, die Situation möglichst konkret zu beschreiben.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Fall 1: Waren **Sie selbst** schon einmal der/die Agierende in einer Situation, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Gerechtigkeit** gezeigt wurde? Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation hier so genau wie möglich.

Fall 2: Sollten Sie kein Beispiel wissen, indem Sie selbst die handelnde Person waren: Waren Sie schon einmal dabei, wenn **jemand anders** auf humorvolle Weise **Gerechtigkeit** gezeigt hat?

Fall 3: Sollten Sie eine solche Situation noch nie selbst erlebt haben: Haben Sie sie schon einmal in einem **Film** gesehen (bzw. in einem Buch gelesen, gehört usw.) oder können Sie sich eine solche Situation **vorstellen**, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Gerechtigkeit** gezeigt wurde? Wie könnte diese Situation Ihrer Vorstellung nach ablaufen?

Bitte kennzeichnen Sie, welchen Fall von Situation Sie ausgewählt haben:

	Fall 1		Fall 2		Fall 3	

Bitte beantworten Sie für diese Situation noch die Frage am Ende der folgenden Seite.

Wie würden Sie den Humor charakterisieren, der in der oben beschriebenen Situation vorkam?
Kreuzen Sie bitte das Zutreffende an. (Mehrfachnennungen möglich.)

	Humor (im engeren Sinn: Verständnis für die Un-gereimtheiten der Welt aufbringen, Mitgefühl wecken)		Witz/Geist (Im Sinne von: Witz haben)
	Ironie		Satire
	Scherz/Spaß		Nonsense/Unsinn
	Sarkasmus		Zynismus

Humanität

Konnten Sie selbst oder jemand anders *Humanität* z.B. durch Einsatz der Stärken *Freundlichkeit, Bindungsfähigkeit* oder *Soziale Intelligenz* im Alltag zeigen und dabei das Mittel des Humors verwenden?

Bitte versuchen Sie sich an eine Situation zu erinnern, in der auf **humorvolle Weise Humanität** verwirklicht wurde. Folgende Fragen sollen Ihnen helfen, sich an die Situation zu erinnern/sie sich vorzustellen:

- *Wo* spielte sich die Situation ab?
- Welche *Person(en)* waren anwesend?
- *Wie kam es* zu dieser Situation?
- Wie *lief sie ab*?
- Wie *endete* die Situation?

Bitte gehen Sie besonders auf die folgenden Fragen ein:

- Worin bestand das *tugendhafte Handeln*?
- Welches *humorvolle Verhalten* wurde genau gezeigt, das für die Verwirklichung der Tugend hilfreich war? (Sagte die aktive Person etwas Humorvolles? Wenn ja, was? Wurde gelacht oder gelächelt? Etc.)

Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation auf dem freien Platz dieser bzw. der nächsten Seite so genau wie möglich. Vermeiden Sie bitte Formulierungen, die „man" oder „sollte" enthalten, und versuchen Sie, die Situation möglichst konkret zu beschreiben.

*　　*　　*

Fall 1: Waren **Sie selbst** schon einmal der/die Agierende in einer Situation, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Humanität** gezeigt wurde? Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation hier so genau wie möglich.

Fall 2: Sollten Sie kein Beispiel wissen, indem Sie selbst die handelnde Person waren: Waren Sie schon einmal dabei, wenn **jemand anders** auf humorvolle Weise **Humanität** gezeigt hat?

Fall 3: Sollten Sie eine solche Situation noch nie selbst erlebt haben: Haben Sie sie schon einmal in einem **Film** gesehen (bzw. in einem Buch gelesen, gehört usw.) oder können Sie sich eine solche Situation **vorstellen**, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Humanität** gezeigt wurde? Wie könnte diese Situation Ihrer Vorstellung nach ablaufen?

Bitte kennzeichnen Sie, welchen Fall von Situation Sie ausgewählt haben:

	Fall 1		Fall 2		Fall 3

Bitte beantworten Sie für diese Situation noch die Frage am Ende der folgenden Seite.

Wie würden Sie den Humor charakterisieren, der in der oben beschriebenen Situation vorkam? Kreuzen Sie bitte das Zutreffende an. (Mehrfachnennungen möglich.)

☐ Humor (im engeren Sinn: Verständnis für die Un-gereimtheiten der Welt aufbringen, Mitgefühl wecken)	☐ Witz/Geist (Im Sinne von: Witz haben)
☐ Ironie	☐ Satire
☐ Scherz/Spaß	☐ Nonsense/Unsinn
☐ Sarkasmus	☐ Zynismus

Mäßigung

Konnten Sie selbst oder jemand anders *Mäßigung* z.B. durch Einsatz der Stärken *Vergebungsbereitschaft, Bescheidenheit, Vorsicht* oder *Selbstregulation* im Alltag zeigen und dabei das Mittel des Humors verwenden?

Bitte versuchen Sie sich an eine Situation zu erinnern, in der auf **humorvolle Weise Mäßigung** verwirklicht wurde. Folgende Fragen sollen Ihnen helfen, sich an die Situation zu erinnern/sie sich vorzustellen:

- *Wo* spielte sich die Situation ab?
- Welche *Person(en)* waren anwesend?
- *Wie kam es* zu dieser Situation?
- Wie *lief sie ab*?
- Wie *endete* die Situation?

Bitte gehen Sie besonders auf die folgenden Fragen ein:

- Worin bestand das *tugendhafte Handeln*?
- Welches *humorvolle Verhalten* wurde genau gezeigt, das für die Verwirklichung der Tugend hilfreich war? (Sagte die aktive Person etwas Humorvolles? Wenn ja, was? Wurde gelacht oder gelächelt? Etc.)

Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation auf dem freien Platz dieser bzw. der nächsten Seite so genau wie möglich. Vermeiden Sie bitte Formulierungen, die „man" oder „sollte" enthalten, und versuchen Sie, die Situation möglichst konkret zu beschreiben.

* * *

Fall 1: Waren **Sie selbst** schon einmal der/die Agierende in einer Situation, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Mäßigung** gezeigt wurde? Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation hier so genau wie möglich.

Fall 2: Sollten Sie kein Beispiel wissen, indem Sie selbst die handelnde Person waren: Waren Sie schon einmal dabei, wenn **jemand anders** auf humorvolle Weise **Mäßigung** gezeigt hat?

Fall 3: Sollten Sie eine solche Situation noch nie selbst erlebt haben: Haben Sie sie schon einmal in einem **Film** gesehen (bzw. in einem Buch gelesen, gehört usw.) oder können Sie sich eine solche Situation **vorstellen**, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Mäßigung** gezeigt wurde? Wie könnte diese Situation Ihrer Vorstellung nach ablaufen?

Bitte kennzeichnen Sie, welchen Fall von Situation Sie ausgewählt haben:

	Fall 1		Fall 2		Fall 3	

Bitte beantworten Sie für diese Situation noch die Frage am Ende der folgenden Seite.

Wie würden Sie den Humor charakterisieren, der in der oben beschriebenen Situation vorkam? Kreuzen Sie bitte das Zutreffende an. (Mehrfachnennungen möglich.)

☐	Humor (im engeren Sinn: Verständnis für die Un-gereimtheiten der Welt aufbringen, Mitgefühl wecken)	☐	Witz/Geist (Im Sinne von: Witz haben)
☐	Ironie	☐	Satire
☐	Scherz/Spaß	☐	Nonsense/Unsinn
☐	Sarkasmus	☐	Zynismus

Transzendenz

Konnten Sie selbst oder jemand anders *Transzendenz* z.B. durch Einsatz der Stärken *Sinn für das Schöne, Dankbarkeit, Hoffnung* oder *Spiritualität* im Alltag zeigen und dabei das Mittel des Humors verwenden?

Bitte versuchen Sie sich an eine Situation zu erinnern, in der auf **humorvolle Weise Transzendenz** verwirklicht wurde. Folgende Fragen sollen Ihnen helfen, sich an die Situation zu erinnern/sie sich vorzustellen:

- *Wo* spielte sich die Situation ab?
- Welche *Person(en)* waren anwesend?
- *Wie kam es* zu dieser Situation?
- Wie *lief sie ab*?
- Wie *endete* die Situation?

Bitte gehen Sie besonders auf die folgenden Fragen ein:

- Worin bestand das *tugendhafte Handeln*?
- Welches *humorvolle Verhalten* wurde genau gezeigt, das für die Verwirklichung der Tugend hilfreich war? (Sagte die aktive Person etwas Humorvolles? Wenn ja, was? Wurde gelacht oder gelächelt? Etc.)

Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation auf dem freien Platz dieser bzw. der nächsten Seite so genau wie möglich. Vermeiden Sie bitte Formulierungen, die „man" oder „sollte" enthalten, und versuchen Sie, die Situation möglichst konkret zu beschreiben.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Fall 1: Waren **Sie selbst** schon einmal der/die Agierende in einer Situation, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Transzendenz** gezeigt wurde? Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation hier so genau wie möglich.

Fall 2: Sollten Sie kein Beispiel wissen, indem Sie selbst die handelnde Person waren: Waren Sie schon einmal dabei, wenn **jemand anders** auf humorvolle Weise **Transzendenz** gezeigt hat?

Fall 3: Sollten Sie eine solche Situation noch nie selbst erlebt haben: Haben Sie sie schon einmal in einem **Film** gesehen (bzw. in einem Buch gelesen, gehört usw.) oder können Sie sich eine solche Situation **vorstellen**, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Transzendenz** gezeigt wurde? Wie könnte diese Situation Ihrer Vorstellung nach ablaufen?

Bitte kennzeichnen Sie, welchen Fall von Situation Sie ausgewählt haben:

	Fall 1		Fall 2		Fall 3	

Bitte beantworten Sie für diese Situation noch die Frage am Ende der folgenden Seite.

Wie würden Sie den Humor charakterisieren, der in der oben beschriebenen Situation vorkam?
Kreuzen Sie bitte das Zutreffende an. (Mehrfachnennungen möglich.)

☐	Humor (im engeren Sinn: Verständnis für die Un-gereimtheiten der Welt aufbringen, Mitgefühl wecken)	☐	Witz/Geist (Im Sinne von: Witz haben)
☐	Ironie	☐	Satire
☐	Scherz/Spaß	☐	Nonsense/Unsinn
☐	Sarkasmus	☐	Zynismus

Weisheit

Konnten Sie selbst oder jemand anders *Weisheit* z.B. durch Einsatz der Stärken *Kreativität, Neugier, Urteilsvermögen, Liebe zum Lernen* oder *Weitsicht/Durchblick* im Alltag zeigen und dabei das Mittel des Humors verwenden?

Bitte versuchen Sie sich an eine Situation zu erinnern, in der auf **humorvolle Weise Weisheit** verwirklicht wurde. Folgende Fragen sollen Ihnen helfen, sich an die Situation zu erinnern/sie sich vorzustellen:

- *Wo* spielte sich die Situation ab?
- Welche *Person(en)* waren anwesend?
- *Wie kam es* zu dieser Situation?
- Wie *lief sie ab*?
- Wie *endete* die Situation?

Bitte gehen Sie besonders auf die folgenden Fragen ein:

- Worin bestand das *tugendhafte Handeln*?
- Welches *humorvolle Verhalten* wurde genau gezeigt, das für die Verwirklichung der Tugend hilfreich war? (Sagte die aktive Person etwas Humorvolles? Wenn ja, was? Wurde gelacht oder gelächelt? Etc.)

Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation auf dem freien Platz dieser bzw. der nächsten Seite so genau wie möglich. Vermeiden Sie bitte Formulierungen, die „man" oder „sollte" enthalten, und versuchen Sie, die Situation möglichst konkret zu beschreiben.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

Fall 1: Waren **Sie selbst** schon einmal der/die Agierende in einer Situation, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Weisheit** gezeigt wurde? Bitte beschreiben Sie diese Situation hier so genau wie möglich.

Fall 2: Sollten Sie kein Beispiel wissen, indem Sie selbst die handelnde Person waren: Waren Sie schon einmal dabei, wenn **jemand anders** auf humorvolle Weise **Weisheit** gezeigt hat?

Fall 3: Sollten Sie eine solche Situation noch nie selbst erlebt haben: Haben Sie sie schon einmal in einem **Film** gesehen (bzw. in einem Buch gelesen, gehört usw.) oder können Sie sich eine solche Situation **vorstellen**, in der auf humorvolle Weise **Weisheit** gezeigt wurde? Wie könnte diese Situation Ihrer Vorstellung nach ablaufen?

Bitte kennzeichnen Sie, welchen Fall von Situation Sie ausgewählt haben:

	Fall 1		Fall 2		Fall 3	

Bitte beantworten Sie für diese Situation noch die Frage am Ende der folgenden Seite.

Wie würden Sie den Humor charakterisieren, der in der oben beschriebenen Situation vorkam?
Kreuzen Sie bitte das Zutreffende an. (Mehrfachnennungen möglich.)

☐	Humor (im engeren Sinn: Verständnis für die Un-gereimtheiten der Welt aufbringen, Mitgefühl wecken)	☐ Witz/Geist (Im Sinne von: Witz haben)
☐	Ironie	☐ Satire
☐	Scherz/Spaß	☐ Nonsense/Unsinn
☐	Sarkasmus	☐ Zynismus

* * * Ende des Fragebogens * * *

Bitte kontrollieren Sie noch einmal, ob Sie nichts unabsichtlich ausgelassen haben.

Ich werde eventuell Nachfragen zu den einzelnen Sitationen haben. Darf ich Sie in diesem Fall kontaktieren? Falls ja, würde ich Sie bitten, hier die Kontaktmöglichkeit, die Sie bevorzugen, hinzuschreiben (E-mail-Adresse oder Telefonnummer...). Die Kontaktangaben werden nach Beseitigung aller ggf. aufgetretenen Unklarheiten von den Daten getrennt. Vielen herzlichen Dank.

Sollten Sie jemanden kennen, den eine Teilnahme an meiner Untersuchung interessiert, wäre ich Ihnen dankbar, wenn Sie ebenfalls hier Kontaktangaben der betreffenden Person angeben könnten.

Nochmals vielen herzlichen Dank für die Teilnahme!

☺

Part III

Distorted Portraits

The distorted portraits in the Distorted Portrait Judgment Task exist in two parallel versions. Version B is a mirrored version of Version A with exception of the first three images. The first three images were alternated in Version B; however, the first image was always one of Distorted Portraits of Oneself. Only Version A is displayed here. Note that in the illustration displayed here, the Distorted Portraits of Oneself don't show an actual participant but distorted portraits of the author of this thesis as representative examples. Table A1 presents an overview of the Distorted Portraits.

Table A1.

Overview over the distorted portraits.

Image number	Distorted Portraits Set
1	Distorted Portraits of Oneself
2	Distorted Portraits of Woman
3	Distorted Portraits of Man
4	Distorted Portraits of Woman
5	Distorted Portraits of Oneself
6	Distorted Portraits of Man
7	Distorted Portraits of Woman
8	Distorted Portraits of Man
9	Distorted Portraits of Oneself
10	Distorted Portraits of Man
11	Distorted Portraits of Oneself
12	Distorted Portraits of Woman
13	Distorted Portraits of Oneself
14	Distorted Portraits of Man
15	Distorted Portraits of Woman
16	Distorted Portraits of Woman
17	Distorted Portraits of Oneself
18	Distorted Portraits of Man

Instructions and Stimuli.

Liebe Versuchsteilnehmerin, lieber Versuchsteilnehmer

Sie bekommen nun 18 Fotos präsentiert. Um zum nächsten Foto zu gelangen, drücken Sie bitte die Maustaste EINMAL. Bei jedem neuen Foto werden Sie einen Ton hören.

Sie haben vor sich ein Beiblatt liegen. Bitte bewerten Sie darauf jedes Foto nach zwei Kriterien:

1. Wie witzig finden Sie das Foto?
2. Wie sehr lehnen Sie das Foto ab?

Wichtig: Sie bewerten die Art des Fotos, nicht die Person, die fotografiert wurde. Die Ablehnung des Fotos muss nicht von der Witzigkeit des Fotos abhängen. Sie können beispielsweise ein Foto zwar witzig finden, es aber trotzdem, aus welchen Gründen auch immer, ablehnen (oder auch umgekehrt). Bitte tragen Sie die Witzigkeit und Ablehnung für jedes Foto auf dem Beiblatt unter der entsprechenden Nummer ein. Die Nummer des Fotos entnehmen Sie der rechten unteren Ecke des Bildschirms.
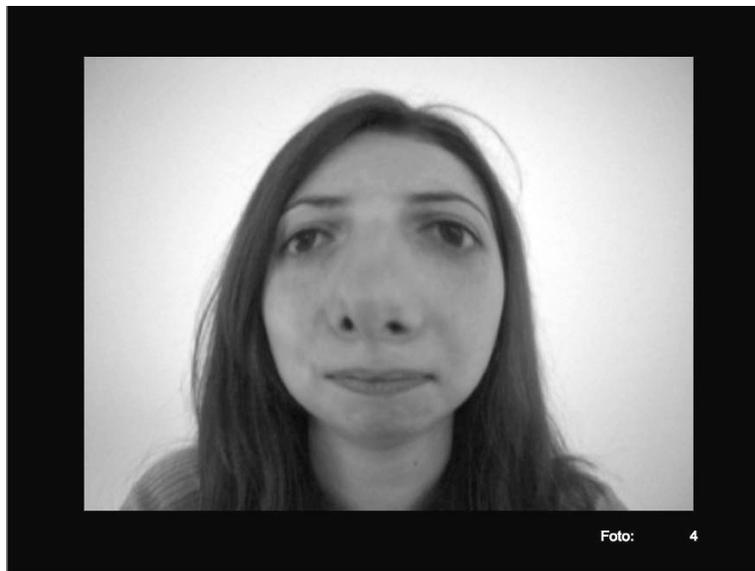
Haben Sie noch Fragen? Dann stellen Sie sie bitte jetzt.
Falls Sie keine Fragen haben, drücken Sie die Maustaste,
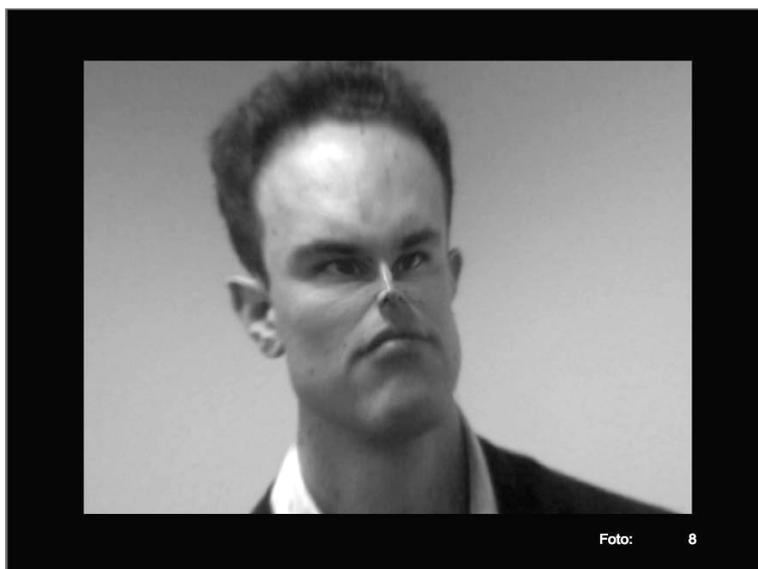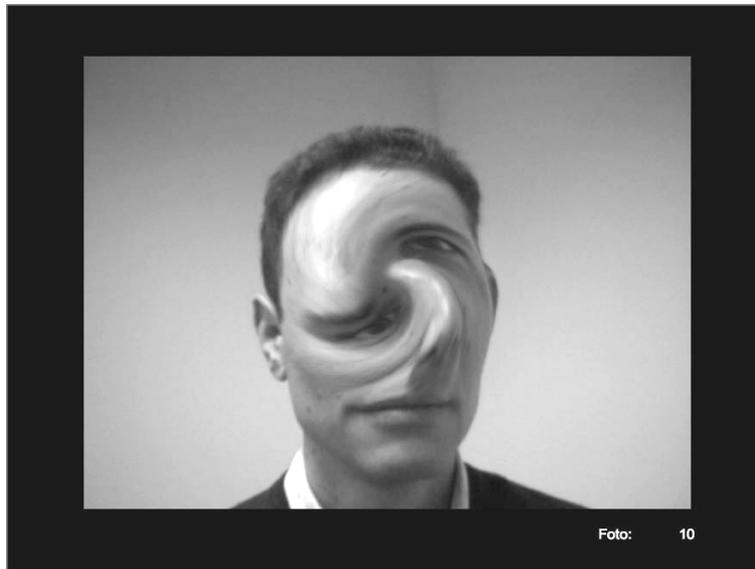um mit der Präsentation zu beginnen.

Foto: 1

Foto: 2

Foto: 3

Foto: 4

Foto: 5

Foto: 6

Foto: 7

Foto: 8

Foto: 9

Foto: 10

Foto: 11

Foto: 12

Foto: 13

Foto: 14

Foto: 15

Foto: 16

Foto: 17

Foto: 18

Ende dieses Teils

Bitte teilen Sie dem Versuchsleiter
mit, dass Sie fertig sind.

Answer sheet.

Note that for all stimuli, the answer format looked the same. Only the first page of the answer

sheet is displayed here as an example.

Bitte verwenden Sie diese Blätter, um die am Computer dargestellten Fotos zu bewerten. Notieren Sie, wie witzig Sie die Fotos finden und wie sehr Sie die Fotos ablehnen. Bitte beachten Sie, dass es bei „Ablehnung" und „Witzigkeit" um die Art des Fotos und nicht um die abgebildete Person handelt.

Wichtig: Da der Fragebogen via Scanner eingelesen wird, sind wir darauf angewiesen, dass die entsprechenden Markierungen **nur innerhalb** der Kreise und mit **schwarzer Farbe** eingetragen werden. Ansonsten wird das Einlesen der Daten via Scanner mit Problemen verbunden sein. Herzlichen Dank für Ihr Verständnis!

so markieren: ●   <u>nicht</u> so markieren: ⊙ ⌀

1

nicht witzig   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   sehr witzig

keine Ablehnung   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   starke Ablehnung

2

nicht witzig   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   sehr witzig

keine Ablehnung   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   starke Ablehnung

3

nicht witzig   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   sehr witzig

keine Ablehnung   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   starke Ablehnung

4

nicht witzig   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   sehr witzig

keine Ablehnung   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   starke Ablehnung

5

nicht witzig   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   sehr witzig

keine Ablehnung   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   starke Ablehnung

6

nicht witzig   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   sehr witzig

keine Ablehnung   ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○   starke Ablehnung