

Annotated Bibliography

Exploring Facets of Spontaneity, the Expected, and the Unexpected

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I often think about how life is transitory and about how death is ultimately expected, but regarding death, we do not know where, when, or how it will happen. This is a profound thing to think about, death is expected but with qualities of the unexpected. Hopefully life lasts a long time for all of us, and we are not overwhelmed by burden, injustice, or misfortune, but the truth remains, we just don't know. Although we can guide our lives by prediction and planning, we are not certain about what burdens will become our own or when good fortune may enter our lives. This is a fundamental truth that governs the human experience. This is something that I think about often as I create works of art, and now more recently, as I research. It is hard for me to put into words exactly what I am exploring in the studio, and I am certain that my research will change, but for now I think that spontaneity and the unexpected are good places to start writing.

Aristotle; 1999. *Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 2nd Edition*; Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Glossary, by Terence Irwin; New York, Hackett Publishing Company. p 120

I chose Aristotle as an authority to help with understanding the nature and importance of justice when the problem of unjust humor showed up in my research. His ideas about friendship became important when understanding why justice is necessary. These ideas are explored in books V and VIII of *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Aristotle; 1952. *Aristotle's Ethics for English Readers*; Translated by H. Rackham; New York, Barnes and Noble. p. 130.

This is a translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. I chose this version for its eloquent translation of Aristotle's ideas on the nature of true friendship in Book VIII.

Avolio, Bruce J.; Howell, Jane M.; Sosik, John J. 1999. "A funny thing happened on the way to the bottom line: humor as a moderator of leadership style effects." *The Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 2. (Apr., 1999), pp. 219-227.

This article cites research about some of the positive effects of humor within a social structure such as morale improvement, group cooperation, productivity, and both individual and group creativity. Here I am considering an artist's work as a kind of touchstone for people or an object of social attention, and I am drawing parallels between art style and leadership style. My main concern here is the healthy effect of humor on a social structure. The article is prefaced with this quote by William Hazlitt, *Witt and Humor*. "Man is the only animal that laughs and weeps; for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between what things are, and what they ought to be." Like the W.C. Fields quote from another of my annotations, this is a quote that sparks interest.

Bernard, Jessie; 1954. "The Theory of Games of Strategy as a Modern Sociology of Conflict." *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 59, No. 5. (Mar., 1954), pp. 411-424.

As I began my research on play and games I discovered a branch of Sociology that discussed something called "Game Theory." Sociologist Jessie Bernard was cited as being a ground breaking figure in this area of thought, so I included this article for its potential importance. I am not sure how this relates to my research as of yet.

Burke, Edmund, 1987. *A philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful / Edmund Burke* ; edited with an introduction and notes by James T. Boulton. Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1987.

Vanessa Ryan's *The Physiological Sublime* uses these writings by Burke and Kant as the framework for her essay. I have included them in my research as aids in helping me to more fully understand her research, and ideas relating to the sublime.

Caillois, Roger, 2003. *The Edge of Surrealism : A Roger Caillois Reader / by Roger Caillois*. (Edited and with an introduction by Claudine Frank; translated by Claudine Frank and Camille Naish.) Durham : Duke University Press.

Caillois's writing includes thoughts on play and surrealism, both relating to the unexpected. Surrealism relates to the unexpected for what I think are obvious reasons, and I am considering play for its spontaneous nature. In her introduction to the essay "Fruitful Ambiguity," editor Claudine Frank quotes Caillois exploring Surrealist images that "do not want to mean anything, or rather they want to say nothing, at the same time as they imply everything." Later in this collection, beginning on page 350 with his essay "The Natural Fantastic," Caillois defines the fantastic comparing it to what he calls "the natural fantastic."

Caillois, Roger, 1961. *Man, play, and games.* / Translated from the French by Meyer Barash. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.

I will be exploring how play relates to the unexpected and the experience of making art.

Carroll, Noël. 1999. "Horror and Humor." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 57, No. 2, Aesthetics and Popular Culture. (Spring, 1999), pp. 145-160.

In this article Noel Carroll explores the nature of horror and humor as it relates to popular culture. Although I am uncertain about horror and humor and how they relate to my work, both elements are important to my research because they rely on the unexpected in order to function. She writes about the nature of incongruity as being important. On page 153 she references Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, and others to illustrate the importance of incongruity as it relates to the function of humor. On page 146 she gives an example of a scenario that illustrates an important facet of my research. "W.C. Fields comes out of a small town pet shop with a live ostrich." This quote continues with an examination of the suspension of disbelief relating to fantasy and laughter.

Freud, Sigmund; 1963. *Jokes and their relation to the unconscious*; Translated from the German and edited by James Strachey; New York : Norton.

Freud's writing becomes very important when exploring humor in relationship to emotion. I chose this work to better understand humor in the context of tension or emotional distress.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1986. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other Essays*; Edited with an introduction by Robert Bernasconi; translated by Nicholas Walker. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.

I included Gadamer's series of essays for his writing about play and the speechless image. He has some interesting thoughts on page 91 about the artist as "less a creator than a discoverer of the unseen, the inventor of the previously unimagined." He goes on to tie these thoughts to the economy of an art work, something that I have been thinking a lot about in my studio practice. This collection also includes an essay on the play of art.

Huizinga, Johan, 1950. *Homo ludens; a study of the play-element in culture*. Boston, Beacon Press.

I want to explore the relationship between play and what I am doing in the studio (Be careful of translation errors in the Beacon Press version). Search for another translation.

Kant, Immanuel, 2007. *Critique of judgement* ; Translated by James Creed Meredith ; revised, edited, and introduced by Nicholas Walker.
Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2007.

Vanessa Ryan's *The Physiological Sublime* also uses this writing by Kant as part of the framework for her essay. I have included this in my research as an essential primary source in helping me to more fully understand her research. Kant's *Critique of Judgement* seems to have made an important impact, not only on ideas relating to the sublime, but also on Modern and Contemporary aesthetics as a whole.

Kornblatt, Judith Deutsch. 1998. "On Laughter and Vladimir's Solov'ev's *Three Encounters*." *Slavic Review*, Vol. 57, No. 3. (Autumn, 1998), pp. 563-584.

In this text Judith Deutsch Kornblatt examines Russian poet-philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev's vivacious sense of humor through his autobiographical poem *Three Encounters*. On page 563 she describes the poem as "an autobiographical *poema* that pokes fun at Solov'ev's mystical visions of truth in the form of the divine Sophia." The poem has Vladimir searching for the divine Sophia in Egypt - "in the desert dressed in a coat and top hat causes us to laugh because the poet-

dreamer proves unable to alter his Moscow dress code.” Her description of his humor as being self deprecating and mystical is another facet of humor that I have not encountered thus far in my research. In addition to analyzing laughter and how it relates to Vladimir’s three encounters, Kornblatt is rich with her comparisons citing Dostoevskii, Freud, Nietzsche, and especially Henri Bergson.

Lee, Yih Hwai; Mason Charlotte. 1999. “Responses to Information: Incongruity in Advertising: The Role of Expectancy, Relevancy, and Humor.” *The Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 26, No. 2. (Sep., 1999), pp. 156-169.

This article examines the importance of incongruity as eliciting a consumer response in advertising. Two studies were completed where the expectancy and relevancy of information was changed within a message in order to study the message’s effectiveness. The findings show how the incongruity of information within a message has a powerful memory and mood affect on the consumer, furthermore when humor is added the impression on the consumer is even stronger. Within this examination the question of relevancy is addressed and proves to be important.

Ryan, Vanessa L.; 2001. “The Physiological Sublime: Burke’s Critique of Reason” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 62, No. 2. (Apr., 2001), pp. 265-279.

Qualities of the sublime experience interest me because I am curious about how a work of art has a potential for creating a state of consciousness that is out of the ordinary or beyond neutrality. I am uncertain as to how important the sublime is to my research. I only know that the sublime, with its different definitions, relates to the unexpected, which in turn, is something that interests me about the human experience. This article compares Immanuel Kant’s writing on the sublime in his *Critique of Judgement* with British philosopher Edmund Burke’s writing about the sublime in his *Philosophical Enquiry*. Kant especially, has been highly influential in the area of aesthetics guiding art critics like Clement Greenberg, so I think it is important to explore he and Burke’s writing.

Smith, Richard. 1913. (Review of Henri Bergson’s essay.) “Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic.” *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. 23, No. 2. (Jan., 1913), pp. 216-218.

Review author Richard Smith provides a contemporary critical analysis of Henri Bergson’s thoughts on laughter. I chose this article as a way of making a comparative analysis with what Judith Deutsch Kornblatt writes about Henri Bergson’s thoughts on laughter in her article *On Laughter and Vladimir’s Solov’ev’s Three Encounters*. Here Bergson is depicted as seeing laughter as a mechanical “social corrective of the anti-social” that is purely intellectual in its appeal. Smith argues that this is a “gross assumption that laughter is primarily social.” He also addresses an important idea about comedy as not belonging to art or life, “its position is equivocal.” Smith argues that a man can be comical to himself.

Stubbs, John C. 2002. “Fellini’s Portrait of the Artist as Creative Problem Solver.” *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 4. (Summer, 2002), pp. 116-131.

This article examines *8 1/2* which is considered by many critics to be Fellini’s best film. The film is about a director who is working on an unfinished movie and his struggle with the creative process. Woven into the plot is a series of dream-like fantasy scenes that communicate a feeling of movement and being that carries the viewer along with the main character inside and outside of reality. This article uses Fellini’s film as a study of the creative process in action.

Swedberg, Richard; 2001. "Sociology and Game Theory: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives." *Theory and Society*, Vol. 30, No. 3. (Jun., 2001), pp. 301-335.

I included this in my research because I considered it as an more current overview of game theory. I felt that this is a good starting point if I would like to explore game theory in depth.

Verwoerd, Wilhelm; Verwoerd Melanie. 1994. "On the injustice of (un) just joking." *Agenda*, No. 23, Body Politics (1994), pp. 67-78

This article examines humor as how it can function negatively in a social context. The model that is used is sexism and sexist humor in opposition to the feminist perspective. It is argued here that humor does not play a function to improve morale, cooperation, or creativity. In this article humor attacks justice in the social structure of gender relationships. On page 69 the question "Why people laugh?" is asked, and text is cited about psychic tension related to degradation and superiority which manifests itself in aggression and laughter. I am not certain about how this relates to my research, or even how much this topic interests me, other than giving me a more complete perspective on humor, and an introduction to contemplating the relationship between humor and injustice.