

Is There Medicine in Medical Clowning?

Prof. Shevach Friedler*

Abstract

The tasks of the circus clown and the medical clown differ mainly in that the latter serves also in a therapeutic capacity, creating an intimate relationship, mostly with a single spectator - the patient. The medical clown endeavors also to actively involve his audience in the physically and spiritually liberating creative procedure.

The article poses two main questions: *are the benefits of medical clowning scientifically viable? Is there proof of the medical benefits of medical clowning?* The sparse research already existing shows that the presence of the medical clown during diverse medical procedures has widespread positive effects on the patients' wellbeing, however more extensive research is required in order to support present findings.

Keywords: Medical Clowning, Humor, Laughter, Pediatrics.

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What are the Characteristics of Comedic Acting?

The Case of Molly Picon (1898-1992)

Prof. Yehuda (Jean-Bernard) Moraly*

Abstract

The article analyzes the characteristics of comic acting by focusing on the acting career of a leading actress of Yiddish theater and film- Molly Picon (1898- 1992). The analysis relies on key aspects of the comic effect as they appear in the ars poetic film of Federico Fellini, **The clowns** (1971). According to the film the comic effect is associated with physical or behavioral distortion, with conflict between the normative white clown and the wild red clown, with the breaking of taboos and with a huge acting energy. I show how these characteristics are expressed in the Molly Picon's comic acting.

In addition, the article deals with the way comic acting is a way to cope with a performer's internal wound. The analysis connects the obsessive repetition of characters of a child and a father in Molly Picon's films with problems in her private life. This phenomena is connected with the healing role of humor, which transforms suffering into joy. The article proposes a way to characterize the style of a comic creator through the exposure of his internal wound that feeds his comic creation.

Keywords: Humor, Clown, Molly Picon, Comic acting

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Is There a "Comedic" Shoe?

Dr. Orna Ben-Meir*

Abstract

Shoes are a primary sartorial item for every human being, and especially for actors on the stage. Footwear is an identification mark of the theatrical character, by expressing her status, gender, functional and aesthetic context. More than any other item of costume, shoes fully represent the character who wears them; shoes get their specific form by means of the shape of the foot and its gait, and at the same time the shoes shape the body language of the character. Footwear has an essential function in the process of "physicalization" of the character, in which the written words of the play are manifested in the living character.

This article discusses the question: is there footwear that is characteristic to the unique genre of comedy? It does so by walking in the footsteps of the shoes` characters that have established the tradition of comedy in the western theatre: the stereotyped characters of Commedia dell`Arte, Pantalone, Arlecchino and Pulcinella who are the ancestors of the circus clown archetype. The article follows the iconic image of the clown in modern theatre, in the tramp characters of "Waiting for Godot", and their influence on the Israeli theatre where the clown has come to symbolize the deterioration of the Zionist human ideal.

Key words: Comedia dell`Arte, Clown, Waiting for Godot, The Sorrows of Job, The Last of the Proletars, The Comedy of Calandaro

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Murderously Funny – How Humor Helps to Cope with Threatening Reality in an Extreme Intergroup Contact Process

Dr. Peter Harris*

Abstract

This paper provides insights into the way theatre can act as a social and therapeutic processes in which the ‘actor’ transitions between reality and fiction, employing humor, amongst other things, to create aesthetic distancing between the ‘real’ drama and its observers (the actor-creators themselves, collaborators in the process and invited audiences), thus aiding in humanizing the ‘murderer’.

Analysis of these processes, and narratives devised in workshops attended by - prisoners serving life sentences and theatre arts students, indicates at the power of these processes to change attitudes for both participating groups, and pave a path for rehabilitation, by prisoners overcoming denial and positively taking responsibility.

Key Words: Inter-group dialogue, Dramatic/Aesthetic space, attitude change, prisoner rehabilitation, community theatre, aesthetic distancing.

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Theatrical Arena, to be published as a book. Harris has international experience and expertise in the application of theatre practices in the field of education and for empowering human rights issues, dialogue in conflicted communities, relations in organizations, prisoner, street workers and substance user rehabilitation.

What's Funny About Beckett? (An Essay)

Prof. Shimon Levy*

Abstract

Beckett's humor is a giveaway for intelligence and courage. Facing the "horror of their situation" Beckett characters and audiences alike are invited (or forced) to cross a bridge of humor, connecting between the realization that there is nothing to be done, and the necessity to still go on. Beckett's abundant sorts of humor, gross and refined, hidden and overt, simple and complicated all the way from asshole to God, include laughing at laughter itself. While Beckett hardly ever explains his jokes, I, however, will try.

Tags: God, laughter, 'Waiting for Godot', 'Eleutheria', courage.

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