

CLOWNS AND GENDER

- Clowns and gender
- Clothing and acts
- Reinforcing/challenging gender
- Highlighting cultural norms
- Learning Outcome 2: Assess critically the ways in which gender are constituted/challenged through particular forms of culture.

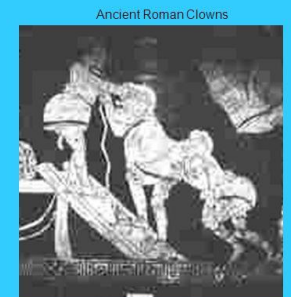
CLOWNS

- Clowns have varied traditions
- Outlandish costumes, distinctive make-up, colourful wigs, exaggerated footwear, colourful clothing
- Associated with circus clown which arose out of comedy in 19th 20th century theatre
- The fool – everyday actions become extraordinary
- Ancient clowns – fifth dynasty of Egypt (2400 BCE).
- Socio-religious, psychological roles/ trickster



HISTORY OF CLOWNS

- Ancient Rome had 4 well-known styles of clowns:
 - Sannio – popular mimes who used grimaces
 - Stupidus – a mimic fool – usually bald – slapstick comedy
 - Scurra – lower class clown – with physical oddities
 - Moriones – silly and sometimes mentally challenged



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BODIES AND CLOWNS

- Clowns mask, blur the natural features of face and bodies
- Exaggeration of the width of shoulders – male stereotypes
- Acts – often allude to tacit rules
- Often revolve around love interests
- Sex and gender used to create humour by unexpected outcomes
 - Disclose hidden norms



BOCKY AND RANDEL /CLOWN ACTS

- 2013 - Blackpool Tower Circus
- Narratives – the nightingales
- Courting of the clowns – one in drag perform mating rituals
- Clowns in drag – keep their typical makeup and emphasise failing to mimic women's clothing and gestures
- Highlights the artificiality of gender
- <https://youtu.be/RfEGSlu5Grg> 19.20 mins some)

EXAMPLES

- Flawless image – Kabuki actors (35.08 mins)
- Ballerina on a horse – parodied by clowns
- Culturally learned gender behaviours transfer across the sexes
- Laughter though, reinforces cultural norms
- Horror and Clowns – maybe due to challenging norms



SUMMARY

- Clowns and gender
- Whether clowns challenge/reinforce gender binaries
- Reveal social construction of gender through performativity
- Highlight cultural norms regarding gender/sexuality
- Learning outcome 2: Assess critically the ways in which gender are constituted/challenged through particular forms of culture.

REFERENCES

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