

THERE ARE REALLY

TWO
TIMES

when the circus means something to people.

Once when they are children and see it through their own

eyes

and again when they have the opportunity to see it

through their children's

eyes.

-Art Buchwald

Clowns are comic performers stereotypically characterized by the grotesque image of the circus clown's colored wigs, stylistic makeup, outlandish costumes, unusually large footwear, and red nose, which evolved to project their actions to large audiences. Other less grotesque styles have also developed, including theatre, television, and film clowns. Peter Berger writes that "It seems plausible that folly and fools, like religion and magic, meet some deeply rooted needs in human society".^[1] For this reason, clowning is often considered an impor-

tant part of training as a physical performance discipline, partly because tricky subject matter can be dealt with, but also because it requires a high level of risk and play in the performer.^[2]

The humour in clowning comes from the self-deprecating actions of the performer, rather than the audience laughing with the performer as is common with other forms of comedy. The most ancient clowns have been found in the Fifth dynasty of Egypt, around 2400 BCE.^[1] Unlike court jesters, clowns have traditionally served a socio-religious and psychological role, and

traditionally the roles of priest and clown have been held by the same persons.^{[1][5][16][7]}

Clowning was developed from a broad tradition of historical performances, and it is difficult to point out a singular tradition or even a few different ones as being the primary precursors to clowns. However there are a few past prominent forms of entertainment contemporarily linked to clowning as its possible antecedents. Examples of historical, clown-like comedic performers have been the pantomimus in ancient Greece, the Lazzi of Co



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