



**ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DRAMA**

## **The clown Inside Out**

**an exploration into the world of clowns from a practitioner's perspective**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Key words: clown, play, playfulness, contemporary performative arts, vulnerability

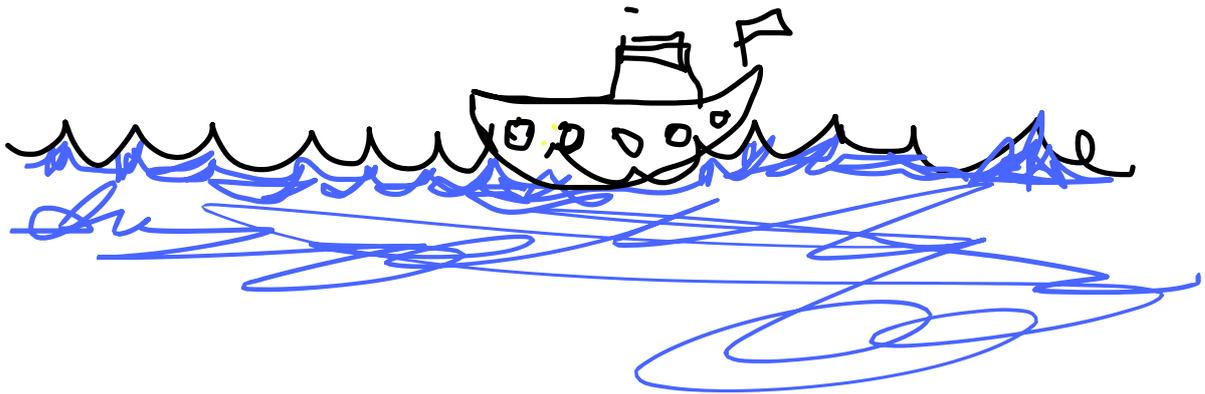
With my experience of more than twenty years as a professional clown, I took my spade of knowledge to go deep down below into the mud of ideas and prejudices about the clown. I wanted to shed light, clear out weeds and years of abuse and bad reputation and make way for some new insights. To articulate the tools of a clown in action, give focus to the logic and water the magic of the clown. This artistic exploration is about the clown, about me and my clown. About the two of us in relation to the world. It is the story about the voyage we went on together, an odyssey in search of the mission of the contemporary clown. Founding that the way of the clown can be a way of managing the existential restlessness that haunts human beings. I hope you enjoy the trip

# THE CLOWN INSIDE OUT

## An exploration into the world of clowns from a practitioner's perspective

"Comedy is to move in the Speed of Fun: faster than your worry and louder than your critic"

Christopher Bayes<sup>1</sup>



## The voyage – An introduction

This artistic exploration is about the clown. About me and my clown. About the two of us in relation to the world. The story that follows is the story about the exploration that we undertook together, the clown and I, a voyage, an odyssey in search of a mission of the contemporary clown my clown. This search started with questions that I felt could no longer be ignored.

## Background – the clown

The roots of the clown extend deep and far back in history, but in the framework of this exploration, I concentrate on the specific stage clown tradition that starts in the 60s, in France. Prior to that, there had not really been any specific clown/circus schools in Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Bayes, Christopher, Scott, Virginia, *Discovering The Clown or The Funny Book About Good Acting* (New York: Theatre communication group New York, 2019), 21.

(In Russia and later the USSR the situation was different.)<sup>2</sup> In central Europe outside the context of the circus, humoristic characters occurred in vaudeville and music hall performances, often influenced by film comedians such as Chaplin, and others. Grock<sup>3</sup> and Marcel Marceau<sup>4</sup> were a big inspiration for many who wanted to work with physical comedy.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes there were apprentice arrangements, a student following a clown with a lot of experience or as often was the case in the circus context, the trade run in the family from father to son/to daughter.

In 1956 Jacques Lecoq<sup>6</sup> opened a theatre school in Paris. It was and is still a school of, mime and physical theatre/comedy and there he launched a pedagogy for the students to uncover their "own clown". In 1964 Pierre Byland<sup>7</sup>, a swiss clown who had trained with Lecoq and returned to the school to teach clown, was now introducing the red nose. Together they laid the ground for the work where the main tool is yourself, "the authentic playful self". The clown with the red nose was not new in the circus but now the red nose was used in order to strip off the person's daily mask. The red nose holds the possibility of opening the face and revealing the vulnerability of the person. It has now in this context become a tool to find "your inner clown". The school started a new wave of clowns and some of the school's students became clown pedagogues with the result that many clowns of today are strongly influenced by this clown pedagogy.

In my artistic work, the clown's expression is, born and fed by me, my emotions, my memories, fantasies, whatever I have access to and carry with me on the path of life. My clown incorporates all this. Through the theatrical, the symbolic, the imaginative, the clownish language and the play with the unexpected, "the Universe" of my clown will appear and find ways to manifest. I would describe this as a state of being, a readiness for performance<sup>8</sup> – a way of listening.

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<sup>2</sup> In ancient Russia travelling groups entertained at village fairs, later there where private circus buildings for aristocrats to come and see and then Soviet made the circus to a "high art form".

<sup>3</sup> Grock, (1880-1959) Swiss clown, composer, musician

<sup>4</sup> Marceau, Marcel (1923-2007) French mime artist established his own pantomime school in Paris in 1959

<sup>5</sup> Physical comedy is a form of comedy focused on the manipulation of the body for a humorous effect. It can include slapstick, clowning, mime, physical stunts

<sup>6</sup> Lecoq, Jacques (1921-2007) athlete, actor, influenced by Copeau, Dullin, Noh theatre, Commedia dell'arte, pedagogue of physical acting established his school in Paris 1956. Part of the focus is on collaborative creations. His method is called mimodynamics. The school is still existing.

<sup>7</sup> Byland, Pierre (1938) actor, clown, director, pedagogue. Student of Lecoq (1959-1962). Teacher at the school of Lecoq from 1964 until 1976. Co of Centre national des arts du cirques in Chalons-en-Champagne. Where he taught 1986-1990.

<sup>8</sup> Peacock, Louise, *Serious Play, Modern Clown Performance*, (UK/Chicago USA: Intellect books 2009), 33.

When embarking on this journey I was eager to, in perspective of many years of experience as a practitioner in the field, to further understand, deepen, and articulate, the relationship between the person performing the clown and the clown. From the standing point of my experiences of working as a clown in various contexts, the aim was to explore ways in which the clown of today could be seen as an activist and a social convert.

The clown as an incurable, existential optimist, balancing across the abyss. Always close to failure. In the world of today when everything and everyone is expected to strive for success and to maximize results in all areas of life and in society, I am interested in what the clown can be, can “do” in relation to this. Is the clown itself an exploration of the anatomy of failure? I wanted to see if the clown could help us accept the notion of failure as part of life. Could it be considered an act of activism to reflect “the little one”<sup>9</sup> inside each one of us? The fear of failure and exclusion. Could it be considered an act of resistance to put on the red nose?

In this sometimes-hopeless world where climate disaster, war, exhaustion, and depression lurk? Can the clown help zoom in, highlight, and give hope? How could the work of the clown operate as a comment on societal dilemmas?

Interesting to me is the clown as an instrument of self-reflection, also mirroring our less wanted aspects as humans, and holding the possibility to opens the audience to recognition and release through playfulness. Seen as such the clown is wise and profoundly serious. *How to bring out new aspects of wisdom and seriousness in the contemporary clown?*

Since the very start of me being with my clown, these questions have evolved and become more and more urgent to me and about two years ago, I came across this boat, this craft with the mystical letters CPA<sup>10</sup> painted on the starboard bow. Me and my clown embarked. It was time to explore! It was time to dig into the mud of ideas and prejudices that surrounds the clown in hope of together bringing forth something to enrich the views on the clown and on the human existence in a broader sense. Being practitioners, me and my clown, I was particularly happy to find a big studio space onboard where we would be able to try out ideas and thoughts in practical explorations.

On the boat, at sea, we – or rather I, spend a lot of time, reading books, about the contemporary clown and philosophers thinking and writing about things as creativity, art, language, body-mind, and human existence. The clown and I had already spent more than 20 years together before embarking on the CPA voyage, so now we had time also to reflect

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<sup>9</sup> Bayes, Christopher, (1961-) New York, actor, director, pedagogue, professor and head of Physical Acting at the Yale School of Drama, and The Pandemonium Studio [www.thepandemoniumstudio.com](http://www.thepandemoniumstudio.com). Introducing the term: “the little one”

<sup>10</sup> CPA, Contemporary performance arts, that is the name of the master program I took part in at the Academy of theatre and music in Gothenburg

on our experiences of collaborating in different settings, hospitals, theatres and so forth. And time to dream and envision possibilities of our coming future together.

During our journey we landed on different islands, to meet people, and collect new knowledge, groceries, and water. Onboard our boat, there was mostly me and my clown. But through radio connections and screens, we also had, guidance and check-ins with a great group of fellow CPA explorers, conducting other parallel explorations on other CPA boats as also with a group of teachers and supervisors at the University of Gothenburg.

What now follows the story of our exploration. The story is presented as a travel book. We have chosen to share our experiences, experiments, surprises, disappointments and insights, through extracts from our voyage logbook

Welcome! Hope you will enjoy sailing with us

**Late summer - Sunday morning 8:15**

## **The boat is leaving the harbour, heading for a two-year adventurous voyage Looking back at how we got on the boat and found a mystical message**

Standing on the deck while the harbour and the city slowly disappear into a memory. The sea makes the boat roll from side to side. Westerly winds. We stand on the deck, hanging over the railing looking down in the water at the bubbles and the white foam constantly changing. Things happened suddenly so quickly. We try to recall who got this ball rolling?

I had started to wake up at night with questions, words, and letters. A need to write, to search for ways to reflect and there was a sense, a longing for new horizons, new landscapes.

And the clown? Well, even if she lived very much in the now, she would get restless when things were very much the same. Maybe her readiness for some exciting new adventure, with the consequence, that the fun in the feet increased and the search for sparkling, nice things<sup>11</sup> got out of hand was what made things happen? In other words, the need for new

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<sup>11</sup> Bayes, in his workshop talks about finding the fun in the feet and looking for sparkling nice things. I will describe the workshop more in detail later in the text.

challenges had made her become impatient so yes, maybe it really was her who got us on board...

What matters is that we were both ready for something new in our life.



One day I got a letter. It was an invitation. I didn't show the letter to my clown because it had to do with the questions that came in the night and my desire to write, to dig into some theory, books, and stuff. This I knew my clown wouldn't be so happy about. Instead, I showed her this: **I S O T M O T C** I told her it is a code for a very important and exciting adventure. That there would be a boat to take us and that we would need to get our things together to leave as soon as possible. She got very excited, singing and jumping around, so of course, I needed to do all the packing.

Then we went down to the seashore to search for the boat.

It was empty of people, someone jogging, a couple of fishing boats laying at the quay, some sea eagles fighting about some leftover food, the smell of fish from the nearby fish market inside a big warehouse

We continued our walk by the water, or close to it because large parts were fenced, there were big houses, warehouses and then a very big boat, a ferry with cars and trucks with needed or not needed things to buy and sell. A destination far away. Then, finally back by the water at a promenade and we could now see the open sea. Then after a while, we saw some smaller boats lying. There we found the boat with the name CPA. My clown whispered to me while looking around that this could be a secret code for a secret mission. I totally agreed. The boat was painted in the colours of pale yellow and green. From the outside, it looked rather small but when entering we were surprised by all the space. Especially the big room below the deck, called the studio was surprisingly big. There was a kitchen and some cabins with tiny bunks and in a strange way while we moved around, up, and down small ladders and circling around it felt like home. Passing by the studio a second time we noticed a big notebook lying on the floor that we didn't see at first. On the cover, there were some big letters **I S O T M O T C** and when opening it we found this written: **nwlc eht fo noissim**

eht fo hcraes ni.<sup>12</sup> Now my clown cried out, happily. (I had a hunch that she reads backwards...)

Yes, this is the mission – I love it! She jumped around, “we must leave now at once, this is sooo important”!!! Ups, while she was spinning around on the floor there was a small piece of paper that fell out of the book. With these letters

T.D.S  


In our luggage, which we always bring with us on voyages like these there are a pair of binoculars made from two toilet rolls and tape. Not the most far-reaching but for focus and looking on details; functional. Some music instruments. A horn to blow in for any or no reason. An ukulele, small size, some spoons with the right curves and weight for playing, a clarinet and finally the diatonic button accordion. Italian, handmade tuned in B and F#. Bought it just before we left the shore, very special and very expensive.

I also brought rolls of big paper with words and questions I had written down during those sleepless nights. A very big pen, not sure of how many days, or weeks we would need to spend on the boat, and a camera.

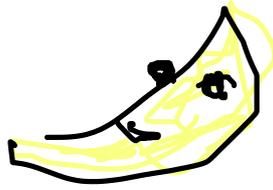
The practical parts of our exploration took place mostly in the big room, the studio on the boat, but also on the different islands, we visited. Besides the physicality needed for my practice as a clown, there is also the music. The various instruments that were at hand, were played, as tools for creation and relaxation.

We made an agreement of cooperation during the trip, but I am not sure if my clown fully grasped how it would involve her and in what way I intended to use her. The truth was that I didn't fully know myself. And as it turned out that while she was enjoying her selves more

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<sup>12</sup>This is backwards for: In Search of The Mission Of The Clown.

and more, as the exploration proceeded I was often faced with inner resistance, second thoughts and doubts about the whole project.



Many thoughts went through my mind already during that first night on the boat, turning around in the narrow bunk to the sound of the sea caressing the boat. How will this work out? Where to start?

Without her, my clown knowing it I had planned to search deeper, to rediscover, reveal, give space, and try to articulate issues concerning her. For example, many clowns often have one name and one costume and mine has until now had several names and costumes depending on where and with whom she appeared.

Who is she? I now asked myself. What name? What did I not yet know about her and about her universe? Are there things, layers that I haven't seen, or even denied her? And not only my clown but clowns in general. Does the world really need clowns, and if, then why? I do believe in the clown as somehow important in a modern societal perspective, but how in that case to articulate such a mission?

I finally fall asleep.

**Early autumn, southerly winds - morning 8:30**

**The first weeks on the open sea**

**Remembering things, me and my clown, our background.**

After a nice breakfast, I sat on the deck thinking about me and my clown. The late summer rays forced me into the shadow. Thoughts wandered back and forth as the waves caressed the boat. What have I done until now? Why and what made me choose this path?

Growing up in Norway I early started to create small dance pieces to perform with when needed in school and elsewhere. I later joined a theatre group where we created music and numbers that commented on things happening around us. In the autumn of 1985, I had finished one year of school at a preparatory school as a preparation for art school. However, I had doubts about if I should continue down that road. There was also the theatre, but I did not feel like going to the traditional theatre school in Norway, working with traditional speech theatre, but on the other hand I hadn't seen anything else so what else was there? I couldn't know without exploring so I travelled around Europe and came to Paris and Centre de Pompidou. There I saw a street performer, a clown/mime interact with the audience. Immediately I knew that this was it! The physicality, the presence, the playfulness, and the interaction with the audience. A feeling of simplicity, complicity, and the freedom of phantasy. The performer was René Bazine.<sup>13</sup>

I got my stuff together. My parents gave me a lift to Copenhagen where I started at The Commedia School.<sup>14</sup>

There my first clown teacher was Karen Mc Cormick. I don't remember if she was a good teacher, but she was a lovely clown. I think I still have her written list of numbers for a clown show she had at school (that I found on the floor when she was done...) It was the first "clown piece" I saw. This must have been in 1986. In the summer of 1986 we, the group of four from my theatre school created our first show. The clown show "clown-kompott".<sup>15</sup>

The moment in Paris, many years ago, when I saw René Bazine perform was maybe the starting point - and here we are today, my clown and I sailing.



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<sup>13</sup> Bazine, René, German/Canadian performer that attended the school of Lecoq. Now a well-known artist in the world of clowns/circus based in Canada.

<sup>14</sup> Ole Brekke, director, teacher, former student of Lecoq and founder of The Commedia School 1983 in Copenhagen.

<sup>15</sup> Since then, we worked together as Teater Kolibri, playing, creating, touring for more than fifteen years. Apart from our first piece, our focus, and way of working have been in the sphere of physical comedy rather than the clown. We still come together once in a while to create and have fun.

Some seagulls are interrupting my thoughts with their loud comments. Seeing the world from above, from a distance as they do, we, humans may only be able to do with the distance of time. Like now. Letting the past and the now emerge...

Now I hear some singing, my clown is entering the scene.

In 2000 I did a clown piece and we were spending more and more time together. Finally! she says. Since then, the clown - you, has been my main occupation. Yes, I helped you get food on the table and now I am hungry! Off she dances to inspect the kitchen of the ship.

So since then, we have been together. We started to work at Clownkliniken<sup>16</sup> in 2001 visiting hospitals and the elderly homes as a hospital/care clown. We still love that context. Another context is creating clown pieces and playing at theatres, cultural venues for both adults and children.<sup>17</sup> I now also give clown workshops to beginners and professionals to help them search or deepen their own clowns.

**Late Autumn, soft breeze – mid day 12:06**

**Thinking about methods of doing**

**Thinking of creating a costume, of play, and the audience perspective.**

Again, sitting on the deck of the boat with a nice cup of tea I continue the reflection on the preparations we undertook ahead of this journey. A couple of weeks before we embarked and my clown still didn't know anything about my plan. I talked to her about her costume. The need for a new costume. Of course, she liked the idea of something new and nice and really sparkling. Well, I couldn't promise her that we would be able to buy a new costume, or even how sparkling it would be, just that we now would start working on it. So, during some of these nights when I couldn't sleep..... I started to think about and zoom in on the costume. In my mind, I went through the things I had at hand, waiting to be used for the right occasion stored in the attic, in old suitcases etc. I started with a brown leather hat.... Then the feet, the shoes.... The light brown Italian leather shoes... a bit too big, perfectly pointed... A brown skirt with a nice "roundness"... What if I take the ballet skirts I have and

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<sup>16</sup> Visiting both hospitals and housing for elderly people with dementia. Clownkliniken is a group of about eight/five clowns always working in duos. These venues are defined by improvisation and that "the audience, the participants" can come and leave as they like. There is a focus on contact and communication, and it takes place in the existing environment

<sup>17</sup> Together with my colleague Maja Ringstad from Clownkliniken we formed clownkonstNU. With Johannes Fuchs also from the hospital, I formed CLOWNfrekvenser

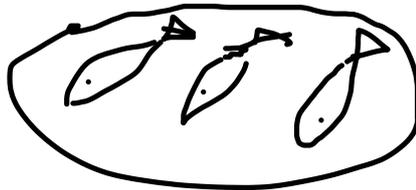
wear them under..... It would give some volume.... A white shirt with frills. ...And the legs, dark brown tights...

The next day I tried it out in front of the mirror but it didn't work. Although I also tried it without the shoes and the hat, I could clearly see, and feel it: It was not right.

Some nights later the same story: I wake up. It is dark, silent, I turn around in my bed... Again, in my head, go through everything. Can I see what is wrong, what is missing? - Ah if I pull the skirt higher up, just beneath my breasts maybe hold it up with braces? Maybe tie a shawl of some colour around my neck? My hair? Braids as the old fashion way where you attach the braid back into the hair..... I fall asleep. The next day – I again tried it out in front of the mirror and yes, it worked as a start!

- Ho, ho! Again, I am interrupted by my friend, the clown coming back from the kitchen of the ship now insisting on us getting things on the table! Oh yes, I felt also hungry now.

After the meal consisting of sardines in oil, boiled eggs and some Swedish crispbread, we decided to try out the studio, and see how it would be to play around.



## The first day in the CPA studio

To go basic. Warming up. Body, running moving around. Breath, voice. Let it be random, not structured. The playful silliness that comes from the body and then some rope skipping. To get exhausted. To look for rhythm, listen for melodies, songs and moves.

Legs free and feet tripping, shuffling, dancing, running, stumbling.

There is this innocent, serious fighting with things. We enjoy that. Using high energy, breath and voice. Humming and singing. We are in the new costume, (she had it on since we embarked but now exploring it in the studio), the volume of the skirt pulled up and the short jacket makes the upper body shorter and gives focus to the arms. Swinging around, in the

front, in the back all over, too long and everywhere. A kind of careless stropyness. Ready for anything. Some glimpse of a cowboy dancing in the dust.

As watching and analyzing recorded improvisations also is an essential part of the creative process for the clown and me I am glad I remembered to bring the camera on board and to unpack it for the documentation. Documenting the playfulness gives freedom to go back and analyze. It is about interacting with playfulness and structure in our creative ways. Silliness and analysis walking hand in hand...

## The clown as a tool - Play as a method

So, thinking about methods I write this down. "The clown as a tool – Play as a method" What do I mean when writing this? I am now alone again in the CPA studio after our playful session. The clown wanted us to get going so she is up on deck taking care of the roader, steering our way through the waves. In the studio space, I bring forward my paper rolls, there are many. I put them out on the floor. Big papers with drawings, arrows and circles, big and small letters all over. We have already spent some time together, my clown and I and so I brought with me several questions but also some ideas and assumptions. Now time to organize this! - But how to do it?

I start to move around on the floor among the papers and pictures and words. The first thing that catches my attention is some words about the experience, the clown and I and I have of the red nose holding the possibility of vulnerability. It can open other ways of communication. The training in different clown exercises and clown skills can influence and change people, in what we believe, in positive ways. In my notes, I have written things like the importance of playfulness and the ability, of the clown to inspire. To make room for new thoughts and new perspectives. The clown to give new breath and courage to stay true to what you believe is yourself. To find the courage to communicate with others. I have written down that I imagine the world as a more human, and friendly place with the clown around...

That I want to formulate, fine-tune and deepen these thoughts and issues about ways to think of the clown as a tool, as a way of listening. Listening both to yourself and to the world.

The clown as a way, as a tool to start listening to yourself, to the little one inside. I asking if it is possible, as the clown, to be in the world in this state of being, really listening to the inside having huge, big ears? And what happens to the individuals exposed to the clown? Could the clown in the communication open "the receiver" to help lower the guard and accept whoever they are, for the sake of taking part in the communication? Moving again over the floor following an arrow pointing towards: What happens in the communication with the spectator?

## The clown and the audience's perspective

Now thinking about the spectator, the audience. I have reflected upon this from the perspective of myself as a member of an audience. My personal "needs". If I put myself in a position as an audience member - What do I want to see, to experience? What could make me take part and accept the conditions of play, the play that forms the agreement between me as an audience member and the performer? As Gadamer<sup>18</sup> writes: to participate in the simultaneity, or as le Coq puts it; to engage in the complicity<sup>19</sup>. Becoming complicit. (What I didn't know at this time was that I was actually accidentally about to meet one of them in person later during this journey)

Me, as a spectator, as a matter of both forgetting and remembering who I am. I continued my reasoning in the CPA studio. It is like opening a window and letting the fresh air fill the room, discovering a new view I have not seen before. It can also be to feel the generosity of the performer, sharing, allowing us to see, being "naked", to share a sense of trust.

I as a spectator, also appreciate when there is nerve, surprise, and some risk involved in the performance. The unpredictability we recognize in the life we all share.

Switching back to the perspective of the clown I ask myself: Does the clown even exist without the audience? What happens in this relationship and communication? Where can it go?

From the papers spread on the studio floor, I read: "Exploring a mission of the clown today."

## Small, silly, enjoyable things"- A method of playfulness

I remember one afternoon, maybe at the age of nine? We, me and two friends of mine, Vivian and Ingrid were sitting on the little green fence of iron outside our house watching people pass by. There were many adults passing, looking straight forward, carrying bags for the office or whatever. From this view, it seemed so terribly boring to be an adult. We promised each other that day that we would never stop playing! I don't know if they kept the promise, but I believe I did.

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<sup>18</sup> Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *sanning och metod*, (Gothenburg: Bokförlaget Daidalos AB, 1997), p11.

<sup>19</sup> Lecoq, Jacques, *The moving body* (London: Methuen drama 2009), p174.  
Peacock, Louise, *Serious play*, p33.

What is there with the play of the clown? What could play mean in this context?

Playfulness. To have access to your personal fun. The action of always trying to have fun. So, whatever is going on there will be a part of me that is occupied with "small, silly, enjoyable things".<sup>20</sup> Playfulness as an ongoing motor looking for fun, at what Christopher Bayes describes as: "your personal party," a party to which you invite the audience.<sup>21</sup> I see this as a method. A method of playfulness. To make the audience laugh and have fun, you must first allow yourself to feel silly and giggle inside. Then most likely the audience will also be affected by your fun. Even in the saddest and most tragic moment, the clown will be sure to enjoy as much as possible. To always look for the fun, sometimes by following an idea as far as one can imagine and then going even further.

This element of playfulness, which I consider the core element of the clown is also one key to the relation with the spectator. I see it as a way of making mutual agreements with your friends: the audience. Let's do this together! To rely and depend on each other requires mutual respect and trust. We are in this together, let's communicate and work together to solve the common task within the framework of the play.

Many have contemplated and written about play, and playfulness in the context of Performing Arts. One that comes to my mind now is the actor Malin Vispe who investigated this in her Bachelor thesis: "Where is the playfulness"? An essay on playfulness as a strategy for an actor/actress to overcome self-criticism in rehearsals.<sup>22</sup> She concludes that for her it has shown to be important to frame playfulness not as something per se in her acting. Then this strive risk to create a kind of performance anxiety in itself. Playfulness on the other hand can function as something to consciously give space to "happen" in the practice. In her experience then framing playfulness in the context of trust and curiosity is crucial to frame play in relation to the audience.

I think about her conclusions in relation to my own experiences working with my clown. For us, within clown work, play is a key term.<sup>23</sup> I am not so fond of how many pedagogues use

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<sup>20</sup> Osten, Suzanne, pioneer, director, playwrighter. *Mina meningar*, (Södertälje: Fingraf tryckeri, 2002), p157.

<sup>21</sup> Bayes, *Discovering*, p.23

<sup>22</sup> Vispe, Malin, *Leken var är du? En skådespelares undersökning av lekfullhet som strategi i repetitionsarbete* <http://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/handle/2077/70078>

<sup>23</sup> *Le jeu* or play is introduced as a keyword of the teachings by Jacques Lecoq. Others that followed him have continued to use the term as part of the training in physical comedy. I never met Lecoq in person but some of former students and collaborators. When they use *le jeu* in their teaching there is first of all focus on the winner and the loser and the emotions that this creates. The idea is that the clown is appearing when you are a failure, a loser.

this, "le jeu". As I wrote earlier, I believe in the fun of the clown and one way to overcome fear or self-criticism can be by celebrating your silliness!

Early spring, land in sight - morning 11:15

## The island of theoretical perspectives

Playing croquet with Hans-Georg<sup>24</sup> Jonna<sup>25</sup> Paul<sup>26</sup> Hanna<sup>27</sup> and Ola<sup>28</sup>

None of us, neither my clown nor me, were very used to being caught up in such a small space like on a boat. After many days at sea, we were longing for solid ground and long walks.

We stood on the deck looking through the binoculars and finally, there was an island ahead. What a relief! And approaching the island we could also see some people.

We had to anchor on the other side of the island and at first, we just met sheep and cows and we had to walk quite a bit before we found the people we saw from the boat. It was at a farmhouse with a garden and the people were all playing croquet. They invited us to join. It didn't take much convincing and soon we were also playing croquet together with the others. Or we are played by, the croquet Hans-Georg<sup>29</sup> one of the guys saying looking kindly at my confused appearance while he sends his blue wooden ball through three bridges. He continues: to be played by the game, it is the play that engages, that makes you lose yourself into the game, the play, the playing.<sup>30</sup>

I am not sure if it was a response to what Hans-Georg just said but now Paul, whom we were waiting for to send off his yellow ball suddenly started to jump around, on the field over and in between the bridges his body like an animal singing: Who is next? Who are you? Who am I? Then he suddenly stopped, paused, looked at us all and said: I have - and I am!!! Then he

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<sup>24</sup> Gadamer, Hans-Georg,(1900-2002) German philosopher

<sup>25</sup> Bornemark, Jonna, [1973- Swedish professor of philosophy working as a researcher, and teacher at the center for practical knowledge at the University of Södertörn.

<sup>26</sup> Ricoer, Paul, [1913-2005] French philosopher

<sup>27</sup> Hanna, Arendt [1906-1975] German philosopher

<sup>28</sup> Sigurdson, Ola [1966- ] professor of literature, history of ideas and religion at the university of Gothenburg.

<sup>29</sup> Gadamer, H, *sanning och metod i urval*, (Gothenburg: Bokförlaget Daidalos AB, 1997) p.84

<sup>30</sup> Gadamer,H *sanning* p.83

looked surprised by his own words and started laughing. We all joined in, laughing without really knowing why.<sup>31</sup>

After the game that nobody won, but everybody enjoyed we were all drinking lemonade in the greenhouse heated by the sun.

We talked about this and that and after a while, we discovered that Paul was gone. Where did he go? Oh yes, he is over there sitting with some children questioning and discussing.<sup>32</sup> Jonna was tasting her lemonade and with eyes closed, went hmm..mm... what kind is this? Hmm...can it be elderflower?? Pondering, wondering, she couldn't decide. Ola poured some more lemonade into the already empty glass of my clown, saying how happy he was that we all enjoyed his lemonade. It's a secret recipe – a taste of heaven, isn't it? Yes, we all agreed and then he went off to get some more from the cellar.

The evening went on as we talked about the situation in the world today and the future and structures of science and power. Hannah was very engaged, walking around saying things as: yes, if we could manage to illuminate the human condition and provide a fresh perspective on the nature of political life. And to act! Hmm...hmmm....complicated things, Hans-Georg responded. He had been silent for a while but continued now in his slow, calm way: one important thing for mankind would also be to embrace suffering and compassion or if to speak like a poet, to learn to honour the human soul's ability to dream.<sup>33</sup>

We all sat in silence for a while. Then Hannah sat down at the piano and started playing. Paul and my clown were dancing silly dances making us all laugh.

We almost didn't make it back to the boat that night, loaded with all the books and writings we had been given by all our new friends. Ola gave my clown a bottle of his nice sparkling lemonade which she carried with caution. Luckily the bright moon was showing us the way.

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<sup>31</sup> Sigurdson, Ola *Gudomliga Komedier, humor, subjektivitet, transcendens* (Göteborg: Glänta produktion och författaren 2021) volyme 3 p.227

<sup>32</sup> Ricoeur, Paul, wanted to include as many as possible in discussions. Also, the children!

<sup>33</sup> Gadamer, *a message from Gadamer* 2021 [Video file]. Retrieved from PhilosophyHub, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89QTmRZbbZE>

Spring, soft breeze - morning 9:20

## The delay as experience

### Back on the boat reflecting on croquet games and lemonade

Next morning - on the studio floor with my big papers and the pen in my hand.

I listen. I read. Then walking.

Walking to help my mind move, moving, walking around,  
in the studio, on the deck, down again,  
writing, dreaming...

How many times? Four? Five?

Moving around mapping out words in clusters words alone, arrows, circles,  
big letters, smaller, tiny, invisible

Then waiting.

Letting things rest.

Walking.

Legs moving, arms swinging, in the studio  
Up and around on the boat searching

How do I do? What do I do? The mission of the clown? Why, where and for who?

We sit on the deck with each a glass of the sparkling lemonade we got from Ola. The wind has calmed down and the water is mirroring the sky. All the questions in my head made me want a break but still - I continue... What is the meaning of everything? Being played by...? Is there even a meaning?? I stare at the sea then my clown, who I almost forgot is sitting next to me and is now shouting out loud HEY, EVERYBODY, DO YOU WANT TO KNOW THE MEANING?! SURPRISE...It is in this glass – IT IS THE TASTE OF THIS LEMONADE FROM HEAVEN!!! The words echoed over the water. Finally, my thoughts lingered and I could suddenly taste the complexity of the lemonade. Now we continue sipping, enjoying in silence.

I continue, sitting on the floor of the studio opening the book "Truth and method" we got from Hans-Georg yesterday at the island. There is a piece of paper on page 12.

He is writing about what he calls the delay.<sup>34</sup> Giving time.

Yes, I remember he was also talking about this while we were sitting in wonder, tasting the lemonade looking at the landscape through the greenhouse.

I read: "The delay as experience. To take time in the experience of arts. The experience itself holds the time it takes to read, take part, be part of. Experiencing art as a reading and a translation into your personal language, your own comprehension."

So, how do I translate this for me and my clown to understand or to give meaning in our world? For me to be touched emotionally and intellectually. As an ongoing dialogue with the strange, the other, the outside, the community of which I am part.

Experiencing life, in the here and now.

Hans-Georg continues, same page: "to perceive the art experience as an experience - as a meeting with an unfinished continuity. I as a spectator, take part in a course of events. "<sup>35</sup>

To demonstrate the meaning of the art experience he writes about play. (Spiel): "When the play is completed as art it is transformed into a picture, an image that presents itself as an abiding, permanent truth." <sup>36</sup>

He also writes: "The presentation is not about repeating or imitating but a realizing transformation, with the audience, the spectator, the co-creator.

The aesthetic object is not just an object but a process of transformation and mediation where the performance (the doing), as well as the appropriation itself, are necessary ingredients." <sup>37</sup>

Yes, yes, I get it, thinking eagerly; the spectator is a co-creator in this happening by just being there. We are doing this together. What does the spectator need for this participation and simultaneity?

I think about this in relation to the clown, the state of the clown.

Unpredictable and in-play/in delay personified. I would say that in *the state of the clown*, time changes. There is an elevated awareness where the time creates space for all of us to indulge and make us all to take part in. To share and make us all be part of what is going on and to give focus to human dilemmas and emotions we all face in the everyday life.

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<sup>34</sup> Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *sanning och metod*, (Gothenburg: Bokförlaget Daidalos AB, 1997), p12

<sup>35</sup> Gadamer, Hans-Georg, p.12

<sup>36</sup> Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *sanning* .p.90

<sup>37</sup> Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *sanning*, p.15

I suddenly realize I have been in the studio the whole day, and I haven't eaten anything. How time flies and what about my clown? She hasn't been seen at all. I find her in the steering house also she very hungry and a little bored as she had been taken care of the boat and the steering through the waves all day, so I decide to make a nice, big meal for us and then we play memory all evening.



Late spring, blue sky - early morning 6:05

## The clown as a way of listening

### Embodied being, she - me

I woke up very early, my clown still sleeping, snoring, with her shoes on. I sneak out trying not to wake her up and go to the studio. Early morning sunrays are filling the room as I am standing there, just standing holding the red nose in my hand.

Listening.

I am listening with my eyes.

Looking and listening.

Searching for what lies underneath, not to be seen or named.

Out of sight but hearable if I sharpen my ears open the skin to the world.

Letting any vibrations touch and pass through my skin,

the tympanic membrane, my eardrums and further.

To have eyes in the neck is another way of putting it.

Two ways of listening. Two directions.

Listening to my surroundings and listening to my inside.

To see, hear what goes on inside of me, my head, my body:  
thoughts, images, ideas, sudden impulses, desires.

The outside, the room, sounds, lights, people whatever surrounds me.  
Always in these two directions, both ways, let it flow in connection.  
To be in a constant dialogue with these two rooms.

Outside in and inside out.  
To be everywhere at the same time, inside and outside.  
Like a hut in a tree.  
Like a tree.

Being present.  
Suddenly I know what to do.

And the red clown nose, sharpening my senses.  
Especially my ears, my hearing.

In improvising, listening is the compass.  
To try to see, hear, understand where I am, where to go, what is next?

Waiting, listening, being in the space of not knowing. With myself and everything that happens on the inside.

Then the outside – the world. Where am I? With whom?  
What is going on? Where could it go?

How long can I wait before I make a move?  
Listening.  
The crucial timing.

And the red nose opens the space of playful craziness,  
to be shared with the audience.

I invite the audience into my party. To share the fun.  
thinking about our work as clowns in the hospitals. In homes for people with dementia.  
In any space where the clown is not expected.  
The clown as the other.  
How to navigate?

Without stress. So easy to go too fast, to do too much. Trying to convince.  
The concept of in delay for a clown in the hospital.  
So many layers of interaction.

To stop and wait.  
Not in an empty void or nervous waiting, but filled with energy,  
with listening and a strong focus; mentally and physically.  
You search, you listen.

What is happening?

The space of in-between is loaded with so much important information,  
loaded with meaning.

The void. The gap. To mind the gap

In any performing situation, but especially when improvising, so essential.

To accept the gap of non-control.

To be safe in this gap.

Awareness and enjoyment in the delay.

When coming from the theatre, working on stage or improvising,  
you think you need to perform.

You think you need to be good,

make something happen,

be interesting, be funny.

Well, the trick is to stop, slow down, to do nothing.

Wait, breathe, observe, listen.

To be interested - in the situation!

Really. Genuinely.

So crucial for the listening, for the dialogue we want to have with the public.

With our playmates.

The situation in the hospital is special. Some clowns, hospital clowns and especially new beginners tend to become even more up in their heads, thinking, instead of listening. There is so much to consider, to think about that easily can create some stress and a need to be in control of the situation, the space. The key is to be in your body, your clown - and your head at the same time! To let go of the control. Now, I see her, my clown standing in the studio doorway. She is looking at me. Wide awake, smiling. If you listen, if you trust, things will turn out just the way they need to be. I hear her voice in my head - the situation will be in control but may be full of surprising fun things that now happen, that cannot be planned.

It strikes me: So simple and so complicated. Maybe there is a need for a certain kind of experience to understand this - beyond the thinking mind?

A rainy summers day - afternoon 15:20

## The clown as a tool for communication

### A call from Jonna and Hannah, then finding the notes from Paul

RIIING! It is the satellite phone that suddenly breaks the silence in the kitchen of the boat where we sit, me writing and my clown is drawing with crayons of many colours. It is Jonna calling. From the island of theories where we played croquet some days ago. The line isn't too good, so it is hard to hear what she is saying. She forgot to give us her book "The horizon is always there",<sup>38</sup> she says and now she wants to talk. Telephone crackles, we also hear someone else there, I ask who that is and she says that it is her friend Cusano<sup>39</sup>; just arrived this morning, she is sorry we missed him and then she continues our conversation from when we last met. About the hospital, and the knowledge of the hand. About practical knowledge and judgment and how to talk about that? Yes, yes, the key is to be Pactiv, she says. Pactiv, I wonder? Yes, it is a new word I have invented, she continues now very enthusiastic. It holds passive and active in one word. It is great! Then she refers to Hannah<sup>40</sup> and her thoughts on judgment. That some critics claim that Hannah was contradictory about her judgment concept, where she states, Hannah, that there must be a certain amount of both passive and active approaches in the act of judgment. In action, would mean to be both spectator and actor.

Jonna goes on, she says she agrees with Hannah; listening requires a certain amount of passivity, the approach of not knowing. To be able to receive, you need to be open to new information not filtered by your expectations and stereotypes. So, when trying to make a judgment you need to be Pactiv; you as a professional are responsible for the "participants" to feel safe. You need to be able to "read the situation". How to do that and then how to act in this specific situation, you will know on the bases of your achieved professional skills. Active, actor and at the same time receiving, passive, spectator, in the state of not-knowing.

When this happens simultaneously, you are Pactiv. Now she is laughing out loud, continuing; You know, this interplay is full of information. Here is everything you need for you to be able to decide on what to do and where to go next in the situation. As simple as that!

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<sup>38</sup> Bornemark, Jonna,(1973-) *Horisonten finns alltid kvar, om det bortglömda omdömet* (Stockholm: Jonna Bornemark & Volante, 2020)

<sup>39</sup> Cusanus, Nicolaus, (1401-1464) priest, theologian, philosopher. Bornemark is often referring to him.

<sup>40</sup> Bornemark, Jonna refers to Hannah Arendt in *Horisonten* p.73-75

And I remember we talked about this in the greenhouse and how this collides totally with a lot of ideas connected to NPM (New Public Management). We share now on the phone, again with her, our experience from working in the hospital where NPM is very much part of the administration and how the work is organized and where we, the clowns and how we think, and work sometimes collides very strongly with how the organizational structure of control... I now hear how Hannah in the background is starting to get very upset when we are talking about this, but due to the bad connection it is hard to hear exactly what she says. We decide to end the phone call, but we promise to keep in touch.

Hanging up the phone I remember a moment in the greenhouse with all our new friends when I realized that this, the state of the clown, is all about motion and communication. It is a constant motion between inside-outside, me-you, the performer-the audience, the nurse-the patient, my feet-the earth underneath, both ways all the time.

There is constant communication in so many directions, all the time. To really start listening to this. This is part of what I search; how to talk about the experience of being a clown? How to "think" or rather, how to listen? The clown on stage, in the hospital creating, improvising. The clown in the world today? The listening. Embodied knowledge, how to translate this? Is it possible without creating even more intellectual obstacles than there already are? Killing the play of the clown and providing fuel for the fear of failure? How to make ways for, as an example a clown student to discover, to experience from inside?

Oh yes, I now think about Paul, whom we also met on the island. He was very involved in talking to a group of kids, but before we left the island, he sent some notes he said, about communication with the clown.<sup>41</sup> To be honest I think he found the clown a little bit more interesting than me.

Paul writes about communication, the meaning of words. To translate experience, to embody. Engaging every cell in the body in the reading of the situation. Passing through and leaving old ideas and stereotypes - and there will be real knowledge that means embodied, ready to use as part of the vocabulary of this person.

And if this is possible - to communicate this knowledge, how could it inspire others? I mean all people in all areas where you have interaction between people? When you need to listen and use your judgment? Like everywhere on this planet, in interaction with people and animals and nature. The trust in what you receive. To trust your own judgment. Without fear.

I reflect: To take this responsibility with a kind of lightness and a blink of an eye because you might be wrong.

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<sup>41</sup> Ricoer, Paul, internet encyclopedia of philosophy

One the first note Paul wrote: We are all humans in need of humour and lightness.

And the clown reminds us of the joy of living, of play, of fantasy, of just being in the world, silly, playfully, truthfully.

And this is what was written on one the other note:

“Connecting to the children we still are.

Wise, brave, and rebellious. Trust that space.”

This specifically brings me back to some experiences in the hospital setting. I will continue tomorrow.

**Still summer, rather windy - late morning 10:45**

**Clowns in the hospital settings – memories**

**Creating a safe space, ways for communication and ideas about clown**

So, with the pen in my hand, I remember one day at the hospital....

On the regular morning meeting we, the two clowns working that day, received the following information: there is a teenage girl with cancer. The play therapist has not yet gotten any contact with her, they don't know what to offer her, or how they could help her.

When we later get there, we find the curtain is down except for a tiny gap but enough space for me to peek in. A nurse passes by in the corridor signaling that this would not be the right time for us now, to go inside. But from my position at the curtain, I catch eye contact with the mother of the girl who was standing in the tiny hallway, functioning as an airlock, separating the room where the patient is and the corridor. The mother on the other hand looks happy when seeing us and is waving intensely with her hand to tell us to enter. The mother's eyes are happy and we are happy and now we move through the doors in a slow jazzy way. The girl sits in her bed dressed in the shirt of the hospital. She looks surprised and glad as we continue the jazzy entry showing how we are dressed and our accessories. My colleague has a lot of white dots on her red dress and opens her suitcase on wheels, also red with white dots. She opens it and takes out another bag, also red with white dots on, opens it and takes out a pair of big swimming shorts also red with white dots on and a scarf and, and, then we go into singing, dancing and on my ukulele, I play some chords and we all had some kind of party there together. We jazzed out again, waving to our new friends

and I remember the girl smiling. I am glad I got the eye contact with the girl's mum and that we went in there to communicate without words, like we do, playing, sharing. We didn't get the chance afterwards to talk to the nurse who wanted to stop us from entering but it happens frequently that staff who doesn't know how we work has ideas about whom we should visit and not. In this case, maybe the nurse was thinking the girl was too old for clowns or that the fact that neither the mother nor the girl was speaking Swedish would be a problem. Since we didn't get the chance to talk with her, we will never know her reasoning in this case but our experience from the hospital strongly tells us that often it is very much worth trying. In this case, it was her mother who opened up to us and also, she as a parent to a child fighting cancer got the chance to enjoy herself which in itself also matters.

Another example of the importance of us being clowns, communicating and offering a space for whatever is needed, the way we do is this memory of another day at the hospital. A doctor is approaching us with urgency, she wants to tell us that she hasn't been aware of the importance of our work, but now she understands.

There was this boy who recently passed away, she tells us, a teenager with a touch of Asperger's. They had "a come together meeting" to talk about him and remember him, the doctors his parents and the staff. The doctor tells us she was sorry that we weren't there at the meeting. That they didn't invite us because it turned out that we, the clowns had been very important to him. As he also had become for us. He really connected to us creating an alliance or what Lecoq would call *complicité*. We had great fun together as he for example watched and commented on the small minute films, we produce every now and then, as part of our work, especially interested in potential love affairs between the different clowns. For the doctor, she told us this had come as a revelation to her during the ceremony and created a different and new understanding of the deep connection we are having with some of the children we meet at the hospital.

Of course, if people don't know how we think, haven't seen us in action or taken part in one of our magic moments or just when we hang around making us available for whatever is needed, then it can be hard to fully grasp what it is we are doing.

This also has to do with some general Ideas, about the clown

These ideas also being one of the reasons why it is important for us, for me, to articulate some of the issues concerning the clown.

Again, thinking about the hospital setting and things we must deal with as clowns.

It has to do with common ideas about the clown. Some ideas could be that all clowns are sad, or they are always happy or that it is expected for the audience to laugh or that clowns are only for children, that clown is a figure with a set costume, with colourful wigs, lots of makeup, often with balloons, with tricks, almost always bad tricks, bad everything. So, for many, the clown is associated simply with anything but quality. In addition to this, there is the influence of books and films that has created the image of the scary clown. People now often say they find clowns scary or that they don't like clowns and everybody quickly agrees, without having met or seen any great clown shows/pieces.

This makes the clown struggle with the very idea of the clown. I also believe there is a logic in connection to what I would point out as the liberal way of despising the loser and the rejection of everything that seems childish, stupid, or weak.

An important aspect here is the child. I think about Suzanne Osten<sup>42</sup> who talks about the complex view or relationship adults and the whole society has to children. And also, the whole idea about the upbringing of children. They need to learn.

Yes, and I think, there are many adults who don't want to be reminded of the child they still are. It makes me sad.

Suzann writes that "children must dumb down in order to survive." She has really been standing on the side of the child, giving voice and respect through the theatre and film she has created and still is creating. Claiming the wisdom of the children to be listened to.

Now together with my clown steering through the waves, water splashing on the windows. It makes me really uplifted and inspired, being on this voyage, spending so much time with my clown.

To be a clown for me is to be in a certain "state of being". You are your personal clown. An exaggerated you with free rein to your personal brand of craziness. It is "a place" where I have access to a wide range of emotions, and phantasies. An open, curious listening to the inside - and to the outside. Enjoying, and inviting the audience into your world. This can have similarities to a certain way of mask work, where there are ritual aspects; you put on your mask and enter that "energy" or "universe" for that particular mask in that particular context. The nose as the smallest mask in the world can also have that function. One big difference is that you don't become something else behind the mask. You yourself - and

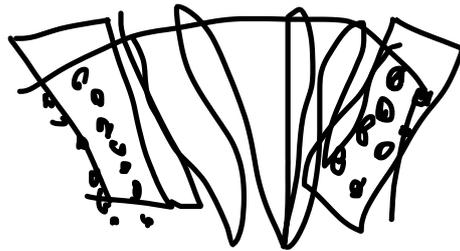
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<sup>42</sup> Osten, Suzanne (1944-) writer, Von Zweigberk, Helena,(1959-) writer/coworker *Barndom, feminism och galenskap, Osten om Osten*. (Stockholm: Alfabeta Bokförlag AB 1990) s.17

yourself as the clown are revealed. The aim is to strip away my everyday masks that hide this vulnerable little one that “holds” my clown.

So, in this quest for more knowledge and search for ways to articulate from the inside, being the clown, I felt the time had come to attend a clown workshop. First, I needed to see what my clown thought about this, but she was really up for it so now we had to find the person we wanted to meet and who could help us dig further into this world of clowns.

But first it was time for some dinner. Spaghetti, my clown's favourite. Then we played on the Italian accordion! Singing made up Italian songs in gibberish Italian<sup>43</sup>. What a perfect evening!



Colours of autumn - the fog dissipated at 8:30

Embarking on the island with a bookstore

Discovering Christopher Bayes, reading, writing and finally a long, inspired session, together in the studio

The next day, when the morning fog eased, we discovered an island ahead and we decided to go ashore. The freshwater needed replenishment, so we went off to explore the island and first thing was to see if there was water. Somewhere on the way, we lost track of each other, or rather she suddenly disappeared. This I am used to and when I, on the way found a little obscure bookshop that was placed near the port, I was glad. My clown is not so fond of books.

In the store, I found a small book named “Discovering the Clown or The Funny Book of Good Acting” by someone called Christopher Bayes. On the cover is a light blue sky, soft

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<sup>43</sup> Gibberish, when you are speaking a nonsense language or “pretending” to speak, for instance, Italian, Arabic or any language you don’t speak. Playing with the sound of Italian

white clouds, looking like eyes and a red balloon flying among the clouds, like a nose. I bought it and luckily the book was not a big heavy one so I could hide it in my pocket.

Then I went back to the boat again, finding my clown sleeping, I opened the book and started to read. Already from reading the first page, I was happy. It was written with such lightness and urgency. I instantly felt that this book was articulating something about the core of the clown in ways that coincided with my experience and views. One thing that impressed me was the way he managed to guide every single person, through his exercises and at the same time make me as a reader understand some vital things about clown-work.

Inspired by the reading I took the book with me down to the studio. Again, I spread out my papers on the floor.

I start to note down the words spinning in my head:

The clown – where, how to search?

What is it? Who is it? Is it me?

Someone else other than me?

Someone fun, likeable?

Like this or like that?

Maybe just very timid and cute – and nice!

But what I want, might not be what my clown wants.

This, what you wish, might not be your clown, or what we see.

Maybe it is all in your head? Get out of your head. Get out of your way.

Out of control. You don't know what we see.

This is the void, endless and you want so much to know and control what we see, what we feel. But for now, forget this.

Let your enthusiasm be greater than the fear of failing.

The fear of being boring and uninteresting.

Don't try to be interesting, be interested!

With the braveness of your little person go into your enthusiasm.

Enjoy without restriction.

if you want to go there stop the "my clown this, my clown that".

These are all ideas. From your head and you, want to be in control.

Try for a moment to let your clown reach the surface.

Come bubbling up in joy, or fear or craziness, it doesn't matter how silly or boring, but we know when it's there. Let yourself be taken by surprise and then later when you trust, you will know and enjoy and give us more. Cause if you want, if you dare, there could be such a funny, likeable, silly clown inside, waiting to evolve and manifest in the world.

Make way for that!

Exhausted by all the writing, of words and words I am now up for some physical practice/exploration. I run up to wake my clown. - Hey, you my clown - let's do some working. She is immediately enthusiastic about it (I love that with her) and we both run down and, in the studio, and onto the studio floor starting with a practical exercise softening our brains, awakening our bodies, void, stillness, curiosity, presence

## Exercise

Soft brain. Soft eyes. Soft mouth, teeth.

Softness everywhere.

Body soft breathing.

Curiosity and stillness.

Breathing in breathing out.

Being in the world. Being and having body.

Who's body? This body, falling into, and through the floor.

Forgetfulness.

Embracing the void, the emptiness.

Softening the brain. This moment is forever, never-ending, and timeless.

No judgment, no trying to adjust, just being

Light and shadow. Listening. Sounds nearby, outside, and far away. The impulse to move, to stretch, to wiggle with the little finger, the foot.

A movement from the inside: the sounding voice, letting out, stretching high and low from the smallest to the biggest, filling up the room, the strange sounds.

Surprise and delight. Playing and being fully filled up by the world.

Small games and voices, laughter, and a simple song.

Crazy silly humanity. Greatness? To make way for the little ones to come bubbling up.

The soon to be discovered clowns wakening up for the first time have forgotten about themselves and the world and everything they have learned.

Discovering the world for the first time.

Everything is new, never seen, never heard

Creating the freedom of being, of trust.

Of playing and interaction and relating to what happens around and inside.

A sudden memory of early years. Reacting and acting and remembering. Staying on the side, outside, entering trusting, and leaving whenever. To follow the flow of any direction, nothing is wrong, everything is right. Now, and now and now.

No judgment. Enthusiasm and excitement for the smallest thing. Being and letting be. Allow myself to follow my curiosity, totally with no hesitation.

I have not yet met fear, repression, or betrayal, there is trust in the world. I am in the world. To see and be seen. To love and be loved. To play and be played.

Standing leaning into the void, as far as possible, falling, out of control, giving in and then - in the last second, catch up with one foot in front into a walk.

Repeating. Searching the challenge of gravity.

The body, the ground.

Bravely trusting the fun of danger.

There it is - the energy of free fall onto the stage.

Stumbling and there, suddenly in the spotlight with no time for preparation.

On the stage. No lifesaving jackets. You are in the void.

The adrenalin is pumping. YES!! The danger of comedy.

In the spotlight, everyone is watching. What will happen??

Failure or success? It doesn't matter!

Give us your enthusiasm and we will love you!

We are suddenly interrupted by a knock on the deck. Someone says: hello? Hello? It turns out to be a delivery of two packages, one for me and one for the clown.

Mine is a heavy brown package and when I open it, I find it containing more books, heavy books this time. There is a note from Ola we meet at the island, where we were playing croquet, saying "Enjoy!" We didn't get his books then, at the island and now he had decided to send them to us. Still today a mystery how he figured out we would be on this island, with the bookstore these days. But I was very happy for the gift. Standing there with three heavy books the impressive titles: *Divine Comedies, humour, subjectivity, transcendence*. 1359 pages divided into: Antiquity to The Renaissance, German Romance and Criticism of the Existential Humour.<sup>44</sup> I was eager to immediately dive into the reading. The clown looked at me. She says; Ola? Is it the one with the lemonade? Luckily when we opened the other package, we found he also sent us a bottle of the lemonade. Ok, you do the reading. I go drink some lemonade says the clown. And it was decided.



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<sup>44</sup> Sigurdson, Ola *Gudomliga Komedier, humor, subjektivitet, transcendens* (Göteborg: Glänta produktion och författaren 2021)

## Reading Ola's book about humour

I start with the third volume, Criticism of the existential humour page 378. It was a suggestion from my clown to make the reading go faster. That I should start somewhere in the middle and go both backwards and forward at the same time. At page 378 Ola states that humour can in a certain sense be seen as a critical ability that maintains the tension between affirmation and negation. Then he is citing Russel Heddendorf,<sup>45</sup> that humour in that sense makes us able to perceive "the paradoxes that transcend the realities of everyday life". Humour is not primarily something you understand, but something you are gripped by suggests Ola.<sup>46</sup>

At page 148, in Ola's book I find a note from Ola: I think you might find this interesting! And our clown might also find it interesting it is about my research of Humans as threshold creatures. I read:

One aspect of the threshold being is that by the reflexivity, as Arnold Gehlen<sup>47</sup> puts it, that this means to be able to relate both to one's body and one's thoughts, and to both be - and have this body and these thoughts which creates a tension. The tension that arises between being and having. Between body and consciousness<sup>48</sup>

Now it is starting to get dark outside. I have been reading for some time but it feels like I am just getting into it. My clown is still in the kitchen occupied by drinking the lemonade I think before continuing:

Gehlen sees man as unfinished and unspecialized and fundamentally exposed and therefore characterized as deficient. This lack creates the need for transparency. In order to survive, the human self, which is eccentric, must step out of herself and thus move toward something else or someone else.<sup>49</sup> This makes her vulnerable, but in order to survive, she needs to take this risk, to reach out, which only can be done if there is trust and hope. Ola writes about affirmation, highlighting humor as affirmation and the act of basic trust that characterizes human existence.<sup>50</sup>

I feel very excited! Reading Ola's work I again get the feeling of finding something of importance to our exploration - find the essence of the clown?

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<sup>45</sup> Heddendorf, Russel, (1930-2008). American sociologi professor

<sup>46</sup> Sigurdson, *Gudomliga Komedier, humor, subjektivitet, transcendens* (Göteborg: Glänta produktion och författaren 2021) Volyme 3 *Kritik av den existentiella humourn* s.378

<sup>47</sup> Gehlen, Arnold, (1904-1976) German philosopher, anthropologist, sosiologist

<sup>48</sup> Sigurdson, *Gudomliga Komedier, Volyme 3, Kritik av p..148*

<sup>49</sup> Sigurdson, *Gudomliga Komedier, Volyme 3, Kritik av p.149*

<sup>50</sup> Sigurdson, *Gudomliga Komedier, Volyme 3 Kritik av p.352*

The existence as a threshold being is both a prerequisite for and a source of humour.<sup>51</sup> concludes Ola.

There's the clown! This faltering threshold creature is highly porous, ticklish, playful and eccentric. The clown as a manifestation of humor!

I really believe that Ola's work says something very important about humans and about our time. He states the necessity of humour as a way of coping and being in relation with the world and the self – and to stay vulnerable.

Vulnerable, vulnerability....as something of value, valuable, maybe even powerful....source? Thinking about the daring, courageous and at the same time vulnerable clown sitting now patiently in the kitchen sipping the lemonade. I am reminded of Brené Brown<sup>52</sup> and her TED talks about the power of vulnerability and its relation to courage. The courage to live the life you want to live. It is one of the most viewed talks in the world. So then, striving away from your "little one" creates the loss of vulnerability and less courage to be who you are. It seems like a necessity to step back and regain our humanity, our vulnerability.

Honestly, I don't know how many hours, days I spent indulged in the reading before I again finally entered on deck, to find my clown waving happily from the steering house. She loves being in charge of the boat. I am glad. I breathe in the fresh air. Realizing I am extremely hungry.

Later that day while the sun was disappearing in the ocean, and me sitting on deck playing the diatonic button accordion, I suddenly knew exactly where I want to go now as the next step in my exploration of my clown: To Christopher Bayes of course! I will ask my clown....

She loved the idea and finally we found the island where we could participate in the teachings of Christopher Bayes. First week: "Clown, second week: Advanced clown, and the third week: Super-advanced clown". My clown was very excited.

Three weeks. A kind of hybrid solution, zoom thing and an island where we could anchor up. About 21-17 people many from the States but also from India participated in the course together with us. A mix of experienced and beginners, both actors and other people with other professions who just wanted to discover their clown.

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<sup>51</sup> Sigurdson, *Gudomliga Komedier*, Volyme 3 *Kritik av* p..256

<sup>52</sup> Brown, Brené (1965- ) U.S professor, researcher, academic public speaker, *The power of vulnerability*, [Video file] Retrieved from [https://www.ted.com/talks/brene\\_brown\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_vulnerability](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability)

## Spotted the first snowflakes - late afternoon 17:15

# The clown zoom workshop with Christopher

## lots of singing and crying

So exciting to finally meet Christopher! It turned out that singing was very much part of the workshop. To sing from the heart, without making any smart rimes or singing perfectly. We started out every session with this kind of singing. On the first day, we were to sing about why we had chosen to join the course. And then, the other days, first thing, we would ask each other questions like how high is the sky, or where did you come from or what are you afraid of, what do you see from your window - whatever came to your mind, stupid or wise, and the answer was sung. Sometimes it could get very emotional, sometimes not at all.

Then we did a warm-up that included getting your body and breath moving - and also your emotions! Christopher Bayes talked about stretching and exercising the muscle of emotions. This "warm-up" is specifically focusing on working through anger into grief and sadness, sometimes with the result of a release into tears. Many tears and wet faces were seen on the people's screens. We could at this point also sing things to each other, if we wanted. The warm-up is a way of coming to your core, to break up the everyday mask you use to "protect yourself" and prevent "the little one" to surface. It is also a way of finding "the braveness" of your clown. When this was done, we were all ready for some serious work!

One afternoon after the day's workshop was finished, I was sitting writing, contemplating the workshop. I do not really know what happened, but suddenly felt my clown just grab my hand to help me write or help me find the words. This is what we wrote: The clown as an activist!!

Through the red nose: the revelation of your vulnerability, your "child" the little one inside of you, your humanity. In the workshop, all the crying, laughing, wet faces, and "no pre-wiping" that is part of the beauty. The pre-wiping is so typical for adults that hate to cry. Especially in public, trying to resist and wipe away the tears, the traces of sorrow and grief. But it doesn't work. We will continue to cry, there will be new tears coming. So, stop the talking, the thinking about it, trying to understand, explain or hide. Let it be. It is what it is. Give space to the emotions, let it - you, become emotional, out of control. You will not die because of crying so just try to be in it. In that space of true emotions. That is right where you are! Now! To accept this now even if it hurts.

Thinking about the clown as an activist in this sense. I feel suddenly in touch with the urge, the desire, the impulse, to go out into the world and "change stuff". A mission to change -

the world? Me and my clown look at each other. We are both laughing now. We feel we are approaching something here, something of importance...A mission, a mission of the clown?

I remember I once read in a book about clowns, that "nobody wants to see the clown flop". (This clown had not been a student of the French new clown wave!)

Now we, the clown and I jump around crying out loud: you have got it all so wrong! Don't you see, this is part of shutting down the little one inside desperately seeking success and love from the audience. This crazy idea: that you can only love me if I can do my tricks and tuck my throat, my little one away. To serve and give the audience what I think they want. Not showing my tears, fears, sorrow, and my little four-five- six-year-old who had to grow up. No, because this is too dangerous. This is a stunt, a dangerous one! But you cannot hire a stuntman for this – you need to do it yourselves!

So many people are so unhappy, thinking life is about this that you must tuck your little one it away to be able to live and earn respect in the eyes of others. People who are so afraid of being pathetic, afraid of their own little person and of what could happen if it would come free or by accident revealed.

So, we had a big wet cry about this, my clown and I. My tears filled with anger and despair It is so WRONG! I cried. People so desperately try to be smart and hold themselves together and show the façade of perfection. The clown now looked me straight in the eye. She said: but we will work together. On changing things. Step by step.

Some people in power will maybe not be so happy about these ideas: people starting to think about being themselves and stand up for themselves and maybe also for each other, brave as children. But we'll give it a try, the clown continued. We have each other and it will certainly also be a lot of fun, a new face in our adventure!

For my clown and me the workshop with Christopher showed to be a very important step on the journey and having to say goodbye to all the clowns and people we had met during the three workshop weeks was very hard.

Here is a song my clown and I wrote some time after the workshop.

Reflections that turned into singing

OBS - needs to be sung!

Try it. Many different melodies could work. Whatever suits you

We chose to call it simply: "Singing a song to our favourite clown teacher in the world".

Oh, Christopher Bayes, we write, and we sing to you trying not to be smart and wise or make any rimes. Just singing the truth: We love, we all love you being so very good in opening all the harts, my being as a silly crazy clown in this silly crazy world and to keep going even if my tears start to flow and I cannot see the letters on my computer anymore. And it is hard to hear what I sing hu hu hu and not ever to pre-wipe any tears until the tears are no longer making my nose all red and dripping. So, this is a tribute to you and your great teaching and the way you love the clowns and see them and make them appear. It's a wonderful thing and we don't know what more to sing. Yes, we will take, and we will use everything – but it wasn't us it was you who made it happen and together with all the amazing clowns during the three weeks together that was something special we will never forget, and I must admit the clown took some screenshots of everybody because she was afraid of forgetting. Now we start crying even more, hu hu. And all the crazy silly names, we love you all. Singing and saying things like this is not normal for us but we know it is the truth from the bottom of our heart. Hu hu huhuhuhu hu hu ha ha hahaa ha ha ha

With wet love from me, "One Gentle Spurt but I Wish My Name Was One Last Yawp"<sup>53</sup>

**A smell of spring in the air - early morning 6:30**

## **Approaching the Island of our presentation doubts, chaos - and unexpected help from a new friend**

Oh, what have I let myself into? This voyage, was it really necessary? My clown is just being in the moment, in the now, whatever that is. And me trying to sort out all these treads, all the different influences, whims, and outbursts of ideas. I feel lost and confused. In the dark night, I sit on the deck singing a song improvising on the diatonic button accordion.

The why, the how, the.....and then: Hey!! This is the song we sang with Christopher. I didn't think about it before until now! The song is called: "I don't know anything". It is about embracing the "not knowing".

I keep on singing until the sun is rising.

In the very early morning, a rope is thrown over the railing of the. Boat. I stop playing. Surprised to find Stacey, one of the coaches from the University boarding us from her RIB boat. Oh, hello Stacey! I had forgotten that we had booked a meeting that day but was so glad she showed up right now also bringing with some breakfast, her smoothies that she

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<sup>53</sup> A name was proposed by Christopher, and depending on the clown's response and try out decided on. Not to be taken too literally. A name that could have something to do with your clown. Something to lean into, that has some.

now wanted to share. We had only one hour scheduled together so we went down to the studio immediately. I shared with her my feelings right now of stress, a kind of confusion about where I was, where I was going, so many things at the same time. - Well, you are probably more organized than you think you are, Stacey says looking at the papers behind me on the wall... - Also, like this, I write...in a kind of chaos. I continue.

- Well what about embracing the mess says Stacey If this is how I you are, your clown is, then why not use it as a strength?

- Yes, I did consider that this night... the feeling of not knowing what I am doing... The not knowing! The challenge to stay in the "not knowing", to be in the unknown is the clown. Yes, to use it and go even deeper!! "If you don't know what you are doing, then do more".

Stacey had earlier shown me some of Peta Lily's work<sup>54</sup>, and now we talk about it in relation to my investigation. We talked about going into that "dark place" – about "the dark clown". A place where we normally don't want to go to, as clowns - and as human beings. We don't want ourselves or the clown to be bad, envious, begging, fearful etc. But to go there and have fun! The ferocity of the clown can really be a great place to be in if we allow ourselves to be there. What we look for is to be authentic and open in a naked, naive in a way and to create connection and complicity with the audience. To find the fun, even when it hurts! The ferocity of the clown, the tragedy, the sorrow... Life and death!

RIB boat with Stacey is leaving our ship and I follow it as far I can see in the horizon.

When I turn around, I see my clown standing there on deck, she is smiling. She has a map in her hand. What about the presentation, she says? Being eager, she now wants us to dig into some practical work. We go down together to the studio, but my head is still spinning...

## Many ideas

I like the idea about the map. "Unhand able". Unreadable and playing with the unreasonable idea that a map would clarify everything!

I also like the idea about the clown in lecture, the diagrams, the boxes, and all the knowledge that she hopes to shed light upon the world and all the aspects of the clown. The hope that we will be able to navigate somehow in the landscape of clowns....? But on the same time the doubts - the more I "know" the less I know and how do I even know that anybody wants to know?

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<sup>54</sup> Lily, Peta, (UK) performer, theatermaker, director

To bring it in, everything. Not to limit and take away things. Not yet. Go with the flow, the ideas popping up. To have fun digging and try not to not judge too early in the process. The chance for the two of us to indulge.

Embrace the chaos and all the bits. Now I stand there on the middle of the floor, frozen, unable to move with a sense of desperation growing. Then I look at my clown. she is dancing. Embrace the chaos! Embrace the chaos she sings. I smile.

I want to articulate for more people to understand and know more about this world so that they can respect and give credit to the clown for what it is, what it can be and how much work and knowledge it takes for the clown to stay brave as a child in the world. But what am I doing standing here? Doubts. I feel confused, powerless. Is it a problem that I myself is immersed in the clown logic? Or is that on the opposite a main resource? Right now, everything just seems like an impossible task. Not much practical work was done during the rest of that day.



## Finding a new friend.

Next day. In the kitchen. Today is a rainy day. My clown is browsing through a book with recipes she found on the bookshelf, looking at the pictures. I am staring at the grey sea, the grey sky following the raindrops on the window glass, wondering what all this will lead to....

Oh!!...my clown is giving out a sound of desire, now showing me a recipe with a picture. It is The Pavlova Cake. It does look very good, I read: consists of a base made of a meringue crust, topped with whipped cream and fresh fruits such as kiwis or strawberries. In some recipes, you have lemon curd. Wait a minute, I think... Pavlova? I suddenly remember the piece of paper falling out of the notebook the first day when we found the boat and looked around in it. The notebook! My clown looks like a question mark. Where is it? I say. I mean the note, the name? It rings a bell.... Doesn't it...? Then I remember! I run out of the kitchen into the studio. Hm....where did it go.? Oh, yes, I wrote in it, it's at my bed...I find it but

there is no piece of paper falling out... bugger! – it just felt so important, like a message. Then I bend down looking under the bunk and there it is! I crawl under the bunk and reach it together with some dust.....

And yes, this could be her signature,



Anna Pavlova.

But the other letters?



Again, one of these mysteries! I go back to the kitchen with the kitchen and continue to read in the cookbook: "No one knows who first created the famous dessert. But the name and the recipes appear soon after the Russian prima ballerina and choreographer, Anna Pavlova started to tour the world. It was said, "She does not dance; she soars as though on wings." So, this cake is created as a light and airy dessert."<sup>55</sup> And the story says she herself loved it very much.

We agreed, the clown and I - this needed to be tried out. Let's make it! A quick inspection into what there were of ingredients in the kitchen we understood we had to find a grocery store on land.

The next time there was land in sight we found a harbour with a small grocery store. Perfect! To our big surprise, we also outside the store meet Anna Pavlova, in person! She was there with a small suitcase and said she was waiting for us. She heard we were planning to make her favourite cake. She said she could come with us to help. It turned out she was stranded

Later that day, back on the boat we were all three sitting in the kitchen Anna, my clown and me. We are all a bit exhausted by the making of this cake. It was not as easy as it said in the recipe, also because my clown and Anna insisted on making the lemon curd, not buying it and well, if you double the lemon juice it might taste better but you will need to stir in the pot so much longer, instead of 10 minutes, 45 minutes!! And it turned out that Anna doesn't know how to cook, so, let's summarize, it was a bit chaotic.

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<sup>55</sup> What's cooking America. Pavlova cake: 6 large egg whites, room temperature / Pinch of salt / 1 ½ cups sugar / 1 ½ teaspoons cornstarch / 2 teaspoons white vinegar / 2 teaspoons vanilla / freshly whipped cream / lemon curd / fresh fruit

But now Anna is looking happy, moaning loudly with her mouth full of cream and cake. A piece of kiwi tries to escape but she captures it elegantly before it reaches the floor. Licking the cream off her fingers she says, with the hunch of a Russian accent: You know, always when you start to do things in new ways it is hard. They said, about me that I had a bad turnout; I was too energetic, which made me make many mistakes; I danced with bent knees; my *tours* were placed incorrectly; I had misplaced *port de bras*. Etcetera, etcetera, but honestly - who cares??! The audience loved me. I shared my enthusiasm and passion on stage. After all, that is what art - and life is about! Isn't it? To share and like for example this cake; The ingredients are marvellous but it is its imperfection that gives it life. You cannot control it, it is unpredictable, a challenge to eat, and it falls apart, so you need to concentrate and engage in the eating. Uhhh...it is irresistible, and we all join in the moaning. She continues to tell us about her childhood in Russia and stories about her life. She is a good storyteller and we laughed a lot. It must have been past midnight when she suddenly becomes serious, looking at us, pausing for a minute or even longer. She really knows how to keep the tension...then she finally says: Actually, I am here on your boat because I need your help. I have an idea and I want us to do this together. We leave the kitchen for the studio and there we work all night. It was lovely working with her, what an engagement and energy! We even made a film together. (länk till film) She stayed for a week before we took her to a harbour close to a train station. She waved, sent us throwaway kisses and we reminded her to put on some warmer clothes, spring was still far away. Yes, yes, she said but would probably not do it...

The clown and I was now very excited. We started to see and sense how the Presentation could be held. Now there were several parallel threads to be used both for moving forward as also for holding it together. Most important now we had the final number that we have worked out together with Anna Pavlova, *The Dying Swan*. (The letters of the note; T D S – *The Dying Swan*!!) And the music of the *Dying Swan*<sup>56</sup> will come twice before the final. One time singing to the ukulele and the second time only the diatonic button accordion, I told the clown.

The presentation was to take place on land, in what is called a black box. On the island of CPA presentation, we, all the CPA explorers from the seven different CPA boats and seven different explorations would all land at a certain date on this island to present our

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<sup>56</sup> Saint-Saens, Camille (1880-1921) French composer. Wrote *The dying swan*

exploratory work to share it between ourselves and an audience of people interested in our various explorations.

In the black box we agreed now, the clown and I, we would present some short films on the screen, on the back wall shown in intervals interrupted with things happening in the room and sometimes simultaneously. We will go back and forth, in and out of the clown. Taking off the nose I turn around. The transition between the self and the clown, changing, will be something to explore. I will also bring in a whiteboard to write on when I don't have the nose on. I invite people to help me by carrying my stuff, looking after my things, clearing the floor, reading aloud, handing out flowers to the audience, etc.

The second main thing is the number that we worked out with Anna: my clown performing "The dying Swan"

**About wanting a Soundtrack.** So, the clown will suddenly burst out and use the soundtrack of the marching brass band, we decided. Having it in her body, her head, as listening to it in headphones. For a moment being in her own world enjoying the rhythms, the groove. This is one of the things that can happen "in-between", the other elements which we agreed on, as more like "numbers." Some of the other in-between spaces, where I would take off the nose, would be when drinking and coughing, writing on the whiteboard, reading on the long piece of paper with the order of each specific thing, and yes, leaving the space open for whatever could happen.

We did discuss me taking off the nose. My clown didn't first get why I wanted to do that. Actually, she never did, she forgot about us, her, having agreed about that so every time I was about to do that, she was fighting against it.

**About the number "making the Pavlova cake disappear".** My clown wanted to do the exercises "succeeding in a great, difficult trick", that we did with Christopher also in the workshop. When we did this exercise in the workshop, I couldn't really come up with anything super great so I just decided that she, my clown would lift a big suitcase and put it down. Having done that, with a lot of effort, apparently, succeeding, Christopher wondered if this really was the trick my clown would want to do...? Of course not. Neither I nor my clown was too excited about it. So, we now decided to see if we could come up with something else.

We decided to stay outside on the deck, in the sunshine (none of us were too keen on going down into the studio moving around too much...) So, in our mind, we started to go through the warmups we did in the workshop before we started working, soon tears were running down our cheeks and now my clown burst out: the cake! I want to make it disappear, like magic. Yes, to eat the Pavlova cake!! very quickly! And now I am also excited! I imagine her coming in, super, super, excited about something so much that she cannot find the words, doing some preparations, then bringing it out - it is a lovely, small version of a Pavlova cake! The cake looks very good, she can't wait to eat it. And yes, before starting

she will ask one of the audience to take the time, the seconds. She starts out first in a hurry but then tasting and enjoying, she slows down, having forgotten about doing it as quickly as possible. And it works, it is magic, what a great, great trick!! It is gone! In how many seconds?? Then as my clown wants to write the seconds on the whiteboard realizing that she doesn't know how to do it, she will ask the person from the audience to do this.

**About the exercise of failure – I will fly.** Also, from the workshop with Christopher. My clown is very excited about showing this wonderful magic trick, totally convinced that it will work. Getting out a plastic bag and start to blow air into it with her magic breath. Asking someone from the audience to stand and hold the door open for her to be able to leave and fly out that way. Flying away to the other side of the ocean to visit all our friends there! And it will be so fun, so great! ...The audience understands rather early that this will fail and is waiting for the moment when my clown also realizes this....That she will never be able to fly away... That her magic breath is no longer magic.... What a terribly sad moment! She leaves towards the door, slowly, totally devastated making the audience cry with her and at the door leaning into the person holding the door for a moment of comfort and we all wonder how this will end...

Yes, we decide that this has to be near the end. Almost

**About the film: lonely clown in the mountains.** Using the exercise, we did with Stacey. Zoom- background: the mountains of Norway. My clown is entering, looking for people to share and talk about the investigations, bringing all the papers. But there is nobody there. Funny that I choose a spot up in the mountains, so lonely and empty of people when trying to find someone to share this with. But when I asked the clown about that she just looked at me. Why is that funny? I don't feel lonely there in the mountains and secondly, it is a well-known fact that you go high up on a hill if you want to sing or blow in your horn to make an announcement or send a signal to "the next-door mountain hut". And of course, to get a better view and to find where you need to go next. So, we decided we should bring it on as the start when the intro is done. Getting everybody seated, giving things, etc.

**About two films in the landscape.** Landscape filmed while driving, person occurs that suddenly falls. And you might not even see it, the falling person. You look away and when looking again then there is just landscape passing. It is a long film where nothing happens apart from the fall. A very ordinary moment between two destinies. Driving from somewhere to somewhere. And in a way we need this space, thoughts coming and leaving. Even being bored is necessary. The in-between spaces where ideas, dreams, and desires can pop up. Unplanned and unproductive – how much do we allow ourselves this kind of space? As adults? Played outside before entering the theatre? While people are gathering, I will meet up and chat a bit and then we enter together. And when we enter the theatre on

the big screen, the same film. When people come out of the theatre there is another film "clown on the cliffs with a red balloon". The clown walking in the same landscape as one of the films I show in the beginning. But now there is sunshine. In the end, standing by the sea on the cliffs with a red "balloon" in the air (created by me). Zooming out and more and more landscape. The camera from above and the clown get smaller and smaller and the ocean bigger and bigger.



The clowns and my to-do list for the presentation.

The start: getting to know each other, the audience, me, the form

The clown – me: small fights taking off the nose, she still resonating without the nose

The sounds/music: the poetic sound of the pen writing on the paper, trumpet, happy tjoochos, playing the ukulele, singing, the accordion

The films: let them be part of the story. As they have been in the whole process.

The enthusiasm: for being there, for the big great audience, for the cake, for the theatre

The success: expectations, such a good, great cake, making it disappear so quickly it's magic

The forgetfulness: being on stage can I forget the audience? To be in the forgetfulness creating the in-between spaces with the help of the

The solitude: the films, alone in the mountains, nature

The sharing: for us to really go into each thing

The audience: participation from the very start. I depended on them to help me. Carrying, watching over, reading out loud, writing numbers on the whiteboard, clearing the floor

The Manifest: conclusions

The great failure: to take the fall, how deep? and I made sure to get the consolation from the guy holding up the door..

The Dying Swan: The number!

The flowers: to stage my own success. Again, the practical participation of the audience. We are doing this together. What a joy!

The goodbye: people staying and stay and I talking and talk

Conclusions - found during this journey.

What is important to remember?

What is the clown giving me? Emotional courage, playfulness, self-evident. Where does the clown start? Where is she ending – me starting? Does it end? I can have a small resistance, may be out of convenience but the clown is pulling me in. Removes obstacles and resistance and then gives access to the direct, instant as ready for anything, in a fearless way....Through authenticity creating relationships. The in-betweens I fill with what I feel I need, or whatever creates meaning for me., I don't want to control but I want to make room for thousands of interpretations and personal experiences. We are so different and yet so alike...

The possibility of sudden contact with oneself.

The struggle between me and my clown. I want to take off the nose to say important things, but the clown wants to keep the nose and continue playing around.

The music or me playing because I like it. To share that, what is not perfect.

And the fear of what? Is it the fear of failure or the fear of success, or hybris and the fear that people will think that you think that you are great?? Yes, you are! That is the enthusiasm!

Enjoy! To be in touch with what triggers your enthusiasm and be there, enjoying and letting go of the utility aspect of almost everything. To leave this track and turn off into the thicket forest where there are no paths already walked by. You follow the light, the paths of ants of animals, you must climb, must go around, go back, it is exhausting, you lose your way, get wet feet, meet elk, insects, wild boar, lose time, lose yourself

In the comedy, we learn the truth about human existence as "pardoned folly" <sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Sigurdson, *Gudomliga Komedier*, Volyme 3, *Kritik av*, p.355

The socialized, adult human being is often very far from this state. There is not much room for the porous self in today's world of demands and expectations – the little four-year-old.

This is serious. What kind of world do we want? We need to start listening. To listen inward to ourselves, the little one, and outward, to the philosophers, artists, clowns and children. Then we can let go of our defenses and give ourselves to the laughter, to be struck, by humour, beyond my control, and by the grace and realization of what it is to be a little human being.

**Suddenly summer - past mid-day 14:40**

**The boat entering the harbour**

**The manifest is finally written.**

Now the time has come to leave the boat that has been our home for these years. It will need some reparation and reorganization, but this is no longer of our concern.

For the next phase, of our exploratory adventure we will build a boat of our own. The material for building the boat will come from some of the conclusions made during this journey.

My clown is interrupting, now singing rather loud: I hereby decide that on the sail, of our new boat, there will be written some words, a manifest, Our manifest!

This is the manifest that will guide us now into the new adventure.

## **THE MANIFEST**

Now listen

Listen with your ears

Listen with your eyes through your hands

Listen to your voice, your breath, your body

into the silence, the morning birds, the roar of the city

Then listen

to the little person there inside of you, hardly hearable

listen gently

This was you then long ago: still is you  
Embrace and hold and give the biggest space  
Whatever was – now is now and try it out

Take the risk of stumbling head out first into the world  
Not knowing how or why  
Take the risk of being like a fool  
foolish and silly: yes enjoy

take the risk of feeling funny, being funny, stupid  
or like a clown, the risk of not at all arise the laughter  
risking oh, the worst disaster, greatest failure ever after  
this the risk of anger risk of flying soft red rape tomatoes  
confusion, exclusion, earthquake, and death  
and your reputation that is at risk

laugh out loud  
let it fill the room, the world  
there you are: perfect is boring  
there is such a need for sharing, truly from the darkest silly part  
of listening and seeing your neighbour, your fellow comrades  
of being seen  
and we are all so human  
touch and be touched  
life is just too short to hide trying to avoid the final disclosure

admit it  
yes: I was wrong  
yes: I was lying  
yes: it was fun  
I love it I hate it  
Yes: why not?

Hold on to your dreams  
Dream the dream scream it out  
Let your poetry and your infinite imagination break the walls  
of this room of isolation  
this tiny cell  
this prison of adulthood

With my experience of more than twenty years as a professional clown, I took my spade of knowledge to go deep down below into the mud of ideas and prejudices about the clown.

I wanted to shed light, clear out weeds and years of abuse and bad reputation and make way for some new insights. To articulate the tools of a clown in action, shed light on the logic and water the magic of the clown

We have been on an odyssey where I have found that the way of the clown can be a way of managing the existential restlessness that haunts human beings.

I hope you have enjoyed the trip!

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