

THE BOUFFON: the ecstasy of Mocking

Where do Bouffons come from?
What is their relationship with Clown and comic theater?
What is their dramatic potentials?
What is the duality between tragedy and bouffons?

These are the themes explored by Giovanni Fusetti during this lecture-demonstration.

The word *Bouffons* come from a latin verb: *buffare*, to puff, to fill the cheeks with air. When we blow our cheeks, and take a funny look: it seems to be a very old practice of humans. To deform themselves, to swell in order to provoke laughter.

In fact, bouffons are direct descendants of the satyrs of ancient greek Satyric Drama

The actual word *Bouffons* comes from French *bouffon* and has entered the English theatrical language through the work of Jacques Lecoq.

The essence of Bouffon is mocking: the mocking figure is a specific role, existing in all human societies. The bouffons represents elements of his or her society in an amplified, distorted, exaggerated way, therefore provoking laughter or outrage.

Bouffons don't have opinions, and don't protect any side from their mocking. Their purpose is to have fun mocking humans and therefore they use everything they find. This is their power: they see and play with everything.

Satire never touches individual or private themes, but always big collective movements: themes that involve the very essence of society in its social complexity. Politics, religion, economy, power, money and finances, morality, war and the army, science, gender and race, ecology, family, education and school....institutions...etc.

Usually everybody in the audience gets scrambled by a bouffon piece, which can be often a bit difficult and or even unbearable. It's not the Bouffons who are unbearable but the truth that they reveal about humanity, what is hidden, what lies underneath, on the other side (*grotesque* comes from greek *cryptos* = hidden).

As a theatre style is often very provoking , because of its very nature of bringing hidden things to the surface and unmasking the collective games that lie behind events. This often includes the fact that the role of oppressor and victim are always intertwined.