"The most important lesson I learned from my clowning internship is the gravity of being vulnerable with an audience. You are present to have a heart-to-heart connection with individuals. This can be facilitated by improvising. "I was introduced to the historically sacred role of clowns worldwide and their evolution to modern-day creatures, some of whom seem very removed from their original trickster counterparts and must make sacrifices to earn a living at their craft." ~ Moona
“Honey the Clown” has an interdisciplinary approach to life, having studied dance (modern and butoh), clowning, & Waldorf education. Honey spoke openly about: the struggles women face in society (put simply: balancing family life, jobs, and the need to make art) and the challenges inherent in creating art [for social change]. She brought up some interesting points:

- “Art is inspirational to people with money because it makes them feel more soulful,”
- “There seems to be a correlation between living illegally in foreclosed, uncoded buildings and making . . . art,”
- “Art can show invalidated [aspects] of society and spread awareness” (thereby creating validation)
- “[People use the arts] to bring out something inside them. Patch Adams allows people to completely be themselves when he’s with them. Butoh lets you explore images that are living inside you.”

On the subject of clowning, Honey said she has learned to, “bring out a magical part of myself,” to play, and to share that with others. The self-identified fool (rather than clown) brought up an important question: “What environments does art thrive in?” She provided a telling answer: “Not under capitalism so much.”

“Sweet Pea” is a blossoming clown, eager and cheerful: my clown sister. She knows she is a clown at heart, and her openness to spontaneity and joy is apparent both in and out of costume. While Sweet Pea’s clown character has been specific and is now in transition, she seems to have a direction she’s heading toward: visually Victorian, always with an innocence (though simultaneously capable and independent, and sometimes sly).

Sweet Pea mentioned she’s come in contact with people who are scared of clowns. Sweet Pea also commented that clowning is necessary in a capitalist society for “cheering up and livening the workerbees, really could be a full-time job!” If a clown is “a person who brings joy and spontaneity to any room they set foot in, whether or not they’re working” (Sweet Pea’s definition), how do you separate work, play, and life? They must all be one and the same, a clown-human lifestyle. This worldview does seem particularly necessary under capitalism. Unfortunately, as with the majority of artists, I do not see much potential for many clowns to be paid as full-time workers in the current economic system without sacrificing their art and/or goals in some way. True clowns feed and free souls, and this too undermines a system based on profits over people’s needs.
**Readings**

"Clown Abuse" by Reg Bolton:
1. As a clown, I will always be partnering with the audience. They are on my side and I am on theirs. I need to respect not overstep boundaries.
2. Clowns present the unrepresentable. Unlike regular people, they have enormous power to show what is painful and somehow magically assure their audience that everything is going to be okay. Pretending to be a clown and not actually being one is dangerous. In any situation, assess whether being a clown is actually more effective than being a regular person.

"Clown & Storytelling Workshop" by Annabel Morgan of Clowns Without Borders South Africa:
This article explored clowning as a metaphor for life and went through ten useful lessons on clowning effectively. I found that some parts of clowning work nicely as a metaphor for life through a Marxist lens. William Blake was quoted in the article: “If the fool would persist in his folly, then he would become wise.” This summarizes the Marxist concepts of praxis and dialectical materialism, which are essentially other phrases for the Scientific Method taught in public schools. Through clowning, what may start as a praxis experiment, as “doing it wrong,” will transform the clown and eventually lead to success through a belief in dialectical materialism (as opposed to idealism). We do the same thing in our daily lives. Clowning also shows the paradoxes inherent in life. Morgan points out that we are taught in childhood to be smart, to do things right, to be powerful. In fact, clowns lead audiences to understand that curiosity and vulnerability (weakness) can be most powerful.

"Cinema: the shamanic origins and mythology of clowning" McNeff
It was really interesting to read about the oversized phalluses that comedians and clowns used to include as part of their costume. Sexuality was definitely a part of the clown to make a buck or two. I think there is definitely potential in re-sexualizing clowns today in perhaps more appropriate ways. The trick is to have clowns utilize stereotypes.

"House Calls" (Patch Adams) is all about serving joyously and returning to the present moment to interact positively with individuals. He has some very good concrete tips on things to do to facilitate serving joyously and staying in the present moment, such as walking like a chicken down the hall, offering to rub the shoulders of those who are working at the front desk, and organizing, an activist, a community member, and under-appreciated. Patch Adams is not a clown - he is a doctor, an artist, and like all organizations with radical clowns, the documentary mentioned it’s been difficult for Gesundheit! to receive funding. People don’t initially take clowns and social circus seriously.

**Clown Girl by Monica Drake:**
For most of the novel, Sniffles does not take herself seriously as a clown and high artiste, and she gets into all sorts of trouble because of this. She breaks the Ethical Clown Code and wears clown clothes when she’s not working. I thought it was interesting that Drake emphasized the importance of striped clothing so much. I myself gravitate toward striped clothes when I clown, and I appreciate Drake’s explanation of why striped clothing is chosen by clowns: it is the cloth of the outcast, of prostitutes and jailbirds as well as clowns. It’s also easy to spot.

This novel is really about being true to yourself, about following your instincts and your heart. It’s about eliminating contradictions in your life: if you say you want to be a high artiste, stop making excuses and go for it! Don’t abuse the role of the clown by placing yourself in situations where you must sell your integrity and body! Take care of yourself: physically, emotionally, and mentally. Keep your priorities straight. Let go of whatever is no longer healthy for you. Be open to new things and people who enter your life, and embrace them if they seem positive. Yes, our society is structured in a way that makes it challenging to pay the rent and follow your dreams simultaneously. Yet when you are truly open to the world, opportunities come to you.
**Films Viewed**

**Chaplin’s *The Circus***:
I was impressed by Chaplin’s clear body language and physical comedy. Chaplin’s character is also very clear, and his use of the role of the clown as a metaphor for the underdog in society is extremely applicable today. Chaplin’s clown is constantly fumbling and falling over, but he’s not fazed by these mishaps. He persists toward his goals: getting a job in a family circus and marrying the woman he’s fallen in love with (a trapeze artist, the ringmaster’s daughter). Chaplin is modest and, like much of the working class (the 99%, in Occupy Movement lingo), he doesn’t notice his own power until the trapeze artist awakens his consciousness and tells him what a comic genius he is. Inspired and invigorated, Clown Chaplin uses his working-class power to free this woman (the most oppressed member of the circus) from her abusive father, by helping her marry the tightrope-walker she fancies. This film highlights the truth that workers and underdogs do have power in society, and once we’re aware of this power, we can use it to our benefit.

**The Real Patch Adams (documentary)**:
Patch Adams’ work with Gesundheit! Institute and providing free care to patients is indeed helpful and also radical in nature. Patch observed that neither doctors nor patients tend to live joyously on a daily basis. He also observed that truly successful people devote themselves to social change and joy. So he decided to be “a scientist of joy for the rest of [his] life,” a doctor devoted to social change, to “serving joyously.” Patch learned that, “humor is not the point, humor is a context to help promote joyful service.” Patch also learned that joy occurs when you live in the present moment. He said in the documentary something along the lines of, “If you’re planning four steps ahead, you’re not in the present moment right now. Be in the present moment.”

**Rize (documentary)**
Tommy the Clown has legitimately helped countless inner-city kids by supporting them in his role as an alternate father figure, holding them accountable for their own actions, and giving them access to more formal opportunities as dancers and clowns than they would find on the street. In a place where no after-school arts programs exist and you can’t express yourself through fashion (some colors can’t be worn by everyone, due to gang culture), he offers a form of expression. Ultimately (speaking about long-term effects), Tommy the Clown’s dance academy seems like a band-aid solution; capitalism feeds on inequality. These kids want to leave the ghettos of LA, but they can’t, both for economic and emotional reasons - it’s their home. So at the same time, I greatly admire Tommy’s work - he’s keeping kids alive now and providing them with an opportunity, where otherwise there would be none (aside from joining a gang). It’s amazing to think that there are upward of fifty clown groups who krump and/or do clown dancing. And surely the ripple effect will play a large role in positively affecting countless ghetto youth to come.
Activities

**Westside Artwalk:** Parading in clown around the neighborhood also helped me to relate to Patch Adams’ feelings about house calls. I love seeing how other families function, how they cooperate; and I love understanding other people’s autobiographies and passions. Being in close contact with people in spaces they have some control over, places they have affected and been affected by, is very powerful to me, and these spaces offer many clues about their inhabitants.

**Clown store field trip:** Visiting the costume shop in Lakewood and trying on clown noses with Sweet Pea the Clown was great fun! It hadn’t occurred to me that there would be a lady behind the counter, our own personal nose consultant, as though we were young witches in Ollivander’s wand shop seeking our first wands. My nose’s style is “O”, which is perfect for a couple reasons. One, O is for Orgasm, and being comfortable with my sexuality is inextricably intertwined with being comfortable with myself as a whole. Two, when people make O faces, they are completely in the moment. Something has just happened, or they have just realized something, and they respond to this situation with newfound wisdom, or at least surprise. Responding in the moment is an essential clown skill as well as a life skill. My O nose reminds me to be comfortable with myself, to play, to have fun, and to be present so I can serve others joyously.

**Birthday Party:** This was the first birthday party I attended as a clown. My main challenge was staying active and in character. When people asked for my name, I had doubts about whether to give them my real name or my clown name. At gigs like birthday parties, where you provide side entertainment to enhance ambiance when you’re not performing a specific act, this seems to be the clue: have a few things you do over and over again, do them well (smoothly, seamlessly), and engage as many people as you can.

This is it. I want to study esoteric clowning.
Street clowning. And I want to do so intensively - all the time.

**Occupy Solidarity Social Forum “Occu-Pie Workshop”:** I really enjoyed Jusby’s anecdotes and observations about pieing. I hadn’t thought much about the logistical side of pieing, since I’ve never pied anyone (yet). Good points he and other workshop participants brought up: Beginning pieing is closer to tipping a pie directly onto someone’s face - it’s not throwing a pie from afar. Use non-dairy whipped cream (which won’t curdle over time). You could alternately use a foam pie with water, or knit a pie, etc. You can decorate freshly-pied faces and pie tins with a message, cherry, sprinkles, red foam nose, etc. If you’ve just been pied, the area around you is messy and slippery, and police may not want to touch you. A small pie would be harder to prosecute, and could send either of these messages: a) “I still have consideration for the rest of your day,” or b) “You’re not worth more of my resources.”

**Esoteric Red-Nose Clowning Workshop at Waves Studio:** I waited all quarter hoping to experience this workshop. I didn’t realize when I set out to study clowning that the improvisational techniques and settings I sought had a name (and multiple names, depending on who you speak to), that not all clowning is created equal. So it was difficult to articulate what I was looking for. But once the workshop was going, I knew: This is it. I want to study esoteric clowning. Street clowning. And I want to do so intensively - all the time.
Evaluation

S demonstrated a genuine and continuing passion for the theory and practice of avant-garde clowning. She demonstrated focus in this area by actively reaching out to established clowns for suggestions of study materials and opportunities to practice. She had a deep sense of curiosity about clown lore and commitment to learning relevant skills (music, prestidigitation, stilts-walking, joke selection and delivery).

S created a clown character that will allow her to express her wry sense of humor and incisive wit about society's abuses and unrealized higher potential. "Moona Riella Encantadada" quickly evolved from subtle parts of S's own personality and philosophy. Moona emerged cautiously in public at first, but took the town by storm during the Westside Arts Walk. Her household (The Pickle Jar House) agreed to host a Clown Collaborative Salon, and Moona entertained guests with her penny whistle, jokes and 'hand stands'. She also had valuable insight into the improv exercise I led which made it easier for others to participate.

At her first private birthday party, the guest of honor celebrated turning 50. Moona wrote original material (poignant and comedic), performed her Vagina Monologue, and played several birthday favorites on her concertina in his living room to a capacity audience. She was my assistant and designated photographer for the pie-in-the-face rituals.

Other members of the clown community have commented on her enthusiasm and gentle demeanor. Many are excited to share their knowledge and wisdom with her as she walks this path. We are continually trying to preserve, promote and improve the art and occupation of clowning.

It has been a distinct pleasure to share my expertise, clown community and personal library with S during this internship. S was an actively engaged participant whose curiosity and advocacy has helped enliven the field of clowning. I hope that she will be empowered to continue the work in an authentic and professional manner.

~ Jusby the Clown

Job Details:

Job Type: Internship
Job Location: Off Campus
Wage/Salary: negotiable
Hours per week: varies
Job Begins:
Job Ends:

Job Description:
Assist the clown at parties and other events. Support the clown archives: written/ photo/video documentation.
Position is on-call. No guaranteed monthly wages. Each meal is a banquet, every paycheck a fortune.
This is a hands-on, work-related learning experience. It is not a job-job.
Opportunities for compensation will be handled with a fair mix of Show & Business.

Qualifications:
Sense of humor tempered by sense of propriety.
Promptness.

Application Instructions:
Compose "Why I want to be a clown" essay including prior experience with clown. Assemble clown gear: make-up, costume, props.

CODa Job ID # 6062