

“Something mechanical encrusted upon the living”?

Alenka Zupančič

on Bergson and comedy

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The paper is part of a more extensive work that deals with comedy, its philosophical presuppositions and implications. It discusses several aspects of Henri Bergson’s famous definition of the comic, “something mechanical encrusted upon the living”, pointing out both its advantages and limitations. It focuses especially on the difficulties of the Bergsonian notion of *élan vital* (life impulse), implied also in his discussion of the comic. In other words, it focuses on the question of the relationship between automatism (repetition, inertia, rigidity) and spontaneity (elasticity, never-ending changeability of life), arguing for a different way of conceiving this relationship than the one suggested by Bergson.

Dr. Alenka Zupančič is a researcher at The Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Among her works are *Ethics of the Real* (Verso, 2000), *The Shortest Shadow. Nietzsche’s Philosophy of the Two* (MIT Press, 2002), and *Poetika. Druga Knjiga* (“Poetics, Second Book”, Analecta, 2005 (in Slovenian)).