

2014

# Sighting Circus: Perceptions of circus phenomena investigated through diverse bodies

Katrina Lavers  
*Edith Cowan University*

---

## Recommended Citation

Lavers, K. (2014). *Sighting Circus: Perceptions of circus phenomena investigated through diverse bodies*. Retrieved from <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/1496>

This Thesis is posted at Research Online.  
<http://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/1496>

# Edith Cowan University

## Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study.

The University does not authorize you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following:

- Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.
- A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement.
- A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

### **Use of Thesis**

This copy is the property of Edith Cowan University. However the literary rights of the author must also be respected. If any passage from this thesis is quoted or closely paraphrased in a paper or written work prepared by the user, the source of the passage must be acknowledged in the work. If the user desires to publish a paper or written work containing passages copied or closely paraphrased from this thesis, which passages would in total constitute an infringing copy for the purpose of the Copyright Act, he or she must first obtain the written permission of the author to do so.

**Sighting Circus:**

**Perceptions of circus phenomena investigated through diverse bodies**

A thesis submitted in total fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

June 2014

Word Count: 85,218

Submitted by Katrina

Lavers M.A.

katielavers@gmail.com

Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts

Faculty of Education and the Arts

Edith Cowan University Perth

Western Australia

## **Sighting Circus:**

### **Perceptions of circus phenomena investigated through diverse bodies**

#### **Abstract**

This thesis is an investigation into modern circus from its beginnings in 1768 through to present day contemporary circus arts. Eight diverse bodies in modern and contemporary circus are explored. These eight bodies act as different lenses to focus enquiry into gaps or ruptures in the grand narratives of circus, to reveal previously missing voices and histories and to set in place new approaches to perceiving circus phenomena.

In *The Political Body*, the phenomenon of embodied protest is identified and explored in relation to contemporary circus works. The importance of the engaged spectator is identified in determining political, poetic and metaphorical meanings in contemporary circus acts, even when those meanings go beyond what the artist may have originally intended. This active act of deciphering by the spectator can add to the perception of depth and complexity in some contemporary circus arts, which is especially relevant in works that can be read as a hybrid of performance art and circus.

In *The Body of Space*, the importance of space as a central and defining element in the development of circus is highlighted. Circus is pinpointed as a forerunner in the development of innovative performance spaces and in the resultant emergence of new and influential performance aesthetics.

In the section *The Body of Zooësis* the representations of two different animals in circus are traced. In the first chapter in this section *The Body of the Horse* - the horse

is identified as being of pivotal importance to the development of modern circus. The horse's history and its representation in circus are traced through from the beginnings of modern circus to the contemporary horse circuses now emerging in Quebec.

In *The Wild Body*, the history of the representation of wild cats in circus is investigated in relation to a rising tide of popular support for the rights of animals. Circus' responses to these shifts in public opinion are revealed in the emergence of new acts created to appease public concern, and in the emergence of new rhetoric designed to portray circuses as 'cross-species families' or 'conservation arks.'

In *The Extraordinary Body*, after an initial exploration of the history of the exhibition of freaks in circus, the lack of differently abled performers in contemporary circus is interrogated. The phenomenon of 'crip-face' or 'crip-drag' in which the mannerisms of the disabled are adopted by able-bodied performers is investigated in contemporary circus performance and newly emerging circuses in England and Australia combining both disabled and able-bodied performers are identified.

In *The Exceptional Body* the gradually reducing parameters for the performing body in contemporary circus are identified and interrogated.

In *The Unmarked Body*, a gap in the grand narrative of circus is identified and the history of African American circus in North America is developed. This history is traced from the beginnings of modern circus in North America through to the present day.

In *The Resilient Body* the origins of social circus are followed back two decades earlier than previous scholarship suggested. Father Jesus Silva in Spain would seem to

be the originator of social circus when he started circus classes with orphaned and abandoned bodies in Spain, in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War in the 1950s. Two theories concerned with the successful treatment of trauma are brought together to create a new theoretical underpinning that provides some context and points of reference to further the critical discourse surrounding the idea of social intervention and the treatment of trauma through social circus.

Following these diverse bodies into the interstices between grand circus narratives has led to oblique readings into circus histories, rhetorics and practices. This thesis has revealed previously marginalized voices that are now brought into the historiography of circus. This thesis brings to the forefront crucial issues for future critical study in the emerging field of circus studies.

Signed Statement:

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i) incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis;
- iii) contain any defamatory material.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Lavers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot at the end.

Katie Lavers



## **Acknowledgements:**

I would like to thank the following people for their help and advice:

- My supervisor, Associate Professor Maggi Phillips, Western Australian Academy for Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia, for her ongoing advice, support and encouragement. As an ex-circus performer who performed with many circuses in both Europe and South America, she was able to offer many insights and intriguing leads that were very much appreciated.
- My associate supervisor Associate Professor Cat Hope, Western Australian Academy for Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia for her perceptive feedback and helpful suggestions.
- Associate Professor, Charles Batson, Union College, New York for his detailed, and thoughtful feedback.
- Jon Burt, Cirque du Monde Instructor and Lecturer in Dance and Performance Studies at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, for his expertise, advice and encouragement.
- I would also like to acknowledge the Montreal Working Group on Circus and the inspiration gained from being part of a group of interested and supportive people with similar research interests.

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
Abstract	1-3
Acknowledgements	5
List of Illustrations	8-9
<b>INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND</b>	<b>10-40</b>
Chapter 1: Introduction	10-24
Research Question	11
Methodology	12-16
Structure of Thesis	16-20
Worldview	20-24
Chapter 2: Background and Overview	24-39
Background to Development of Contemporary Circus	24-30
Overview of Sections and Chapters of Thesis	30-39
<b>SECTION 1: THE RELATIONAL BODY</b>	<b>40-117</b>
Chapter 3: The Political Body	40-68
Part 1: New and Alternative Circus	40-54
Part 2: Hybrid Performance Art/Circus Work: Embodied Protest, Materiality and the Engaged Spectator.	55-68
Chapter 4: The Body of Space	69-117
<b>SECTION 2: THE BODY OF ZOOËSIS</b>	<b>118-191</b>
Chapter 5: The Body of the Horse	118-146
Chapter 6: The Wild Body: Big Cats	147-191
<b>SECTION 3: THE HEGEMONIC BODY</b>	<b>192-270</b>

Chapter 7: The Extraordinary Body	192-209
Chapter 8: The Familial and the Exceptional Body	210-222
Chapter 9: The Unmarked Body: Making Whiteness Strange	223-270
<b>SECTION 4: THE PROCESSUAL BODY</b>	<b>271-297</b>
Chapter 10: The Resilient Body	271-297
<b>THESIS CONCLUSION</b>	<b>298-304</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>305-337</b>

<b>List of Figures</b>		<b>Pages</b>
1	<i>Figure 1. Fan Structure</i>	16
2	<i>Figure 2. Web Structure</i>	17
<b>List of Photographs</b>		
1	<i>Students in front of the Faculty of Letter [sic], Rome, 1968</i>	41
2	<i>Program cover for Lumiere and Son Theatre Company's, Circus Lumiere 1979</i>	48
3	<i>Doukhobvors marching nude in Langham, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1903</i>	57
4	<i>Mahatma Gandhi Spinning, late1920s</i>	59
5	<i>Emmeline Pankhurst being arrested in front of Buckingham Palace</i>	60
6	<i>A.C. Pugin and Thomas Rowlandson coloured aquatint engraving of Astley's Amphitheatre first published in Rudolf Ackermann's Microcosm of London, 1808</i>	81
7	<i>John Robinson's Circus 1929</i>	97
8	<i>Circus Horse by Marc Chagall</i>	119
9	<i>Seattle – Marion Street Regrade, 1907.</i>	130
10	<i>Mazeppa and the Wolves, Horace Vernet, 1826.</i>	134
11	<i>Horse Frightened by Storm, Eugène Delacroix, 1824.</i>	135
12	<i>Battle of Pilckem Ridge 31 July-2 August. A Packhorse with a gasmask being loaded up with wiring staples and other equipment near Pilckem, 31 July 1917.</i>	137
13	<i>Odysseo by Cavalia at Laval in Quebec, 12 March 2012.</i>	145
14	<i>Portrait of Mr Van Amburgh, as He appeared at the London Theatres by Sir Edwin Henry Landseer (1847)</i>	153

15	<i>Woman Lion Tamer Adjie in Cage with Male Lion, 1897.</i>	167
16	<i>Son of Circus Lumiere Program Cover, 1981.</i>	190
17	<i>Barnum and Commodore Nut (n.d.).</i>	193
18	<i>Jo-Jo Cranfield wears Snake Arm made by Sophie de Oliveira Barrata</i>	208
19	<i>Thomas Dilward</i>	238
20	<i>Adah Isaacs Menken standing topless circa 1860</i>	258
21	<i>Con Colleano on a slack wire 1920</i>	263
22	<i>Zip Zap Circus, Cape Town, South Africa</i>	292

# **Sighting Circus: Perceptions of circus phenomena investigated through diverse bodies**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

#### **Scope of Study**

Circus is an extraordinary, vital, energetic and continually changing art form that mutates and re-emerges in different forms all over the world. The scope of one doctoral thesis could not hope to cover contemporary circus everywhere. This thesis focuses on certain geographical areas namely North America, France, Spain, England and Australia and covers aspects of modern circus from its beginnings in 1768 up to the contemporary circus arts of the present day.

#### **Definition of Terms Used**

##### **Modern Circus**

Modern Circus is the term used to designate the circus that Phillip Astley created in 1768. This genre was designed primarily to showcase new horseriding tricks that returning cavalymen brought back with them from the Seven Years War. Their trick riding was displayed in a specially designed circus ring to a paying audience, with the riding acts interspersed with episodic acts such as juggling, clowning and acrobatics (FEDEC, 2008, p. 11).

##### **New Circus**

New circus is the term used to designate a form of circus that most French commentators pinpoint as arising out of the unrest in Paris in 1968 (Jacob, 2008, p. 11). Seeking to find an art form with the ability to attract large audiences, performers from diverse backgrounds including dance, theatre and performance art started to move into circus in the 1970s. Following on from a wave of widespread interest in the Rights of Animals that occurred at the time, generally speaking, animals were ousted from circus, with the only animals visible in new circus being the human ones. Many of the iconic elements of modern circus, such as the circus ring and the ringmaster were also often excluded.

### **Contemporary Circus or Contemporary Circus Arts**

Contemporary circus or contemporary circus arts is used to describe the continuation of new circus after the year 2000, when the term *new* began to be seen as needing to be updated after thirty years of usage (Jacob, 2008, p. 11).

### **Research Question**

The research question that underlies this thesis is:

*What new knowledge of circus phenomena, temporal, spatial and/or perceptual might be uncovered by investigations into a diverse range of circus bodies?*

This thesis aims to follow bodies in the interstices between grand circus narratives, and create new oblique readings of circus narratives and practices.

Throughout this thesis, circus will be investigated through an expanded notion of the different bodies involved in the genre, encompassing the live physical presence

of the performer and spectators, and also metaphors of the body or body assemblages, as relational processes that inform understandings of the circus as a temporally, spatially and perceptually conscribed phenomenon.

## **Methodology**

Although there are numerous books on the history of circus, the field of circus studies as an area for critical discourse is relatively young and still developing. This thesis seeks to add to that emerging critical discourse.

This investigation is initiated by delving into questions surrounding different bodies in circus, with each chapter exploring a different body. The methodology chosen is interdisciplinary drawing on different fields as required in each chapter. These disciplines include historiography, zoeosis, body studies, whiteness studies and disability studies.

The overall structure for the thesis, however, is set in place by performance studies, a field of study founded by theatre director and scholar, Richard Schechner in the 1970s. How can performance studies best be defined? A fragment from Heraclitus is set at the head of the Preface to Richard Schechner's book *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (2002):

*Whoever cannot seek the unforeseen  
sees nothing,  
for the known way  
is an impasse.*

Heraclitus, Fragment 7, Brooks Haxton  
Translator, (as cited in Schechner, 2013, p.ix)



This fragment serves to crystallize the open-ended form of enquiry that exemplifies one of the most exciting elements of performance studies as a discipline, or rather, as some call it, an anti-discipline.

Wrestling with an attempt to define performance studies, Henry Bial writes, “the only definition that is universally applicable to the field is a tautology: performance studies is what performance studies people do” (Bial & Brady, 2004, p. 1). The founder of performance studies, Schechner, when asked to formalize the fundamental canons of performance studies came back with the response that “performance studies resists fixed definition” (Schechner, 2013, p. 24). Performance studies shares many fundamental characteristics with circus including this ability to elude precise definition. Often writings start by attempting to define circus with the usual result being that ultimately the only thing that can be said with any clarity is that circus has a wholeheartedly resistance to any fixed definition. Circus bucks and chafes at any attempt made to pin it down, metamorphosing into another being entirely as a response. The same may perhaps be said of performance studies.

Schechner writes that performance studies has drawn on and/or synthesized approaches from the “social sciences, feminist studies, gender studies, history, psychoanalysis, queer theory, semiotics, ethology, cybernetics, area studies, media and popular culture theory and cultural studies. What future borrowings may occur cannot be reliably determined” (Schechner, 2002, p. x). He argues that one of the fundamental characteristics of performance studies is a predilection to borrow from other disciplines. There is nothing that inherently “‘really belongs to’ or ‘really does not belong to’ performance studies” (Schechner, 2002, p. x). The choice of performance studies to

structure this thesis is prompted by the aim of furthering the critical debate on circus by setting in place a structure which then allows the interdisciplinary bringing together of different discourses from fields as diverse as body studies, historiography, animal studies, disability studies, and whiteness studies.

It could be said that circus itself, as an art form, has also drawn on and/or synthesized approaches from a range of diverse fields including Gothic literature, current affairs, zoological gardens, military technologies, freak shows, jazz, blackface minstrelsy, gymnastics, street theatre, installation art, happenings, events, performance art, political demonstrations, and contemporary dance, and that what future borrowings may occur in circus cannot reliably be determined. Also nothing could be said to inherently belong to or really not belong to circus.

Circus and performance studies have other interesting similarities. Schechner writes that, “performance studies does not value ‘purity’” (Schechner, 2013, p. 24). Circus also does not value ‘purity.’ Circus is a hybrid creature, borrowing enthusiastically from any discipline that attracts its attention. From its inception in 1768, modern circus has been in its very essence hybrid. The founder of modern circus, Philip Astley adopted a stratagem that was just coming into use in theatres of the time in London, such as Drury Lane and Covent Garden, to create the new genre. These theatres, newly independent from patrons, had found ways of becoming commercially viable through interspersing popular short turns from jugglers, acrobats and contortionists between the theatrical acts to keep the crowds engaged. Astley, looking around for ways to keep audiences coming back to his riding displays, inserted some of the same sort of acts in between his trick riding displays, and, in this way, modern

circus was born. So circus, in its very essence and from its beginnings, is fundamentally hybrid, does not value 'purity' and often displays a magpie delight in acquiring and adapting anything interesting that attracts its attention.

Performance studies has now become an "influential anti-discipline" and is based on a "paradoxical assertion of a discipline without borders" (Harding, 2004, p. 535). Circus could also be said to be based on the paradoxical notion of a discipline without borders. Circus is a demanding, rigorous and challenging discipline but one, it could be argued, that has developed into an anti-discipline or a discipline without specific borders.

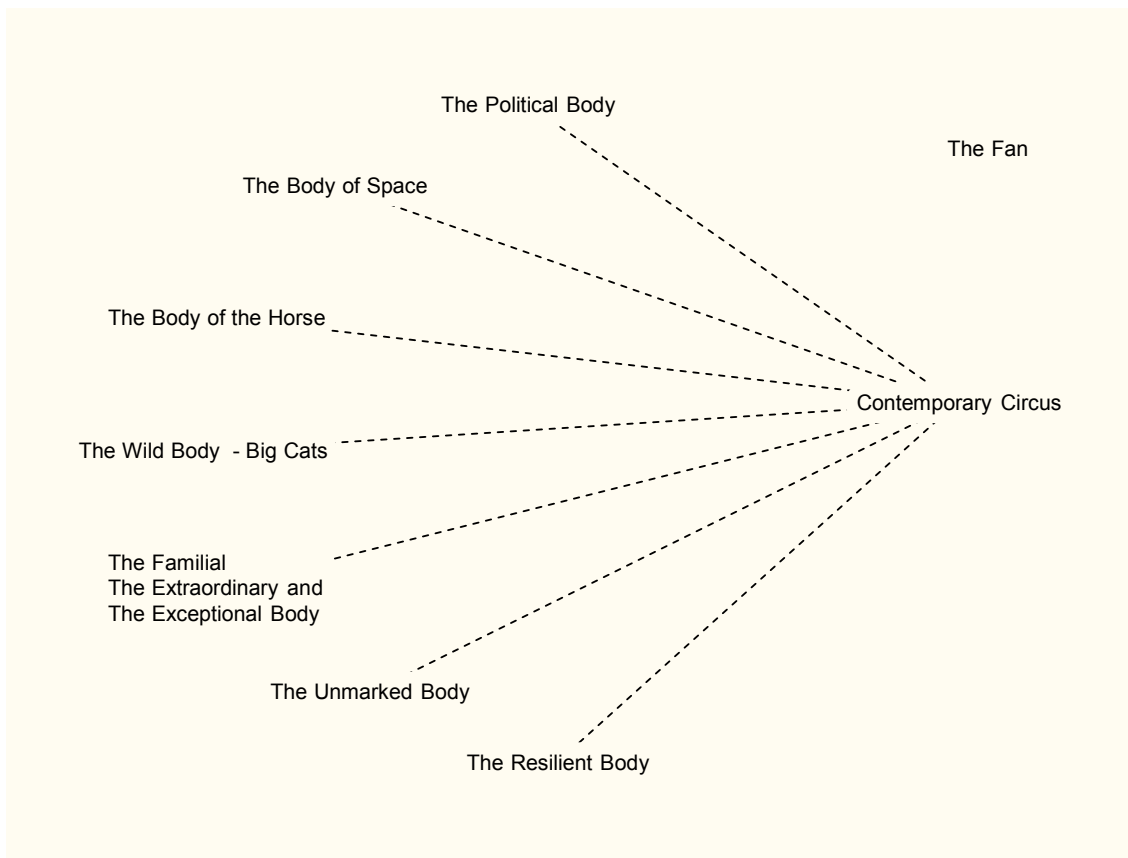
Schechner describes performance studies as often acting against settled hierarchies of ideas, organizations, and people and "[t]herefore it is hard to imagine performance studies getting its act together or settling down or even wanting to" (Schechner, 2002, p. 4). Circus has a long history of positioning itself on the margins and also of performing its marginality. As Kenneth Little writes in his paper on the French new circus company Archaos: "the circus and the circus artist, like the marginal that Foucault discusses, are positioned literally and figuratively on the periphery ... outside the bounds of the normal" (Little, 1995, p. 18). It is hard to imagine circus getting its act together, settling down or even wanting to. All these synergies set performance studies in place as uniquely apposite as a method for approaching and structuring studies of circus.

Above all, as Schechner urges performance studies' practitioners to do, I aim in this thesis to find new histories and vantage points that have been overlooked in the grand narrative of circus. I aim to bring together new assemblages of ideas and

narratives from the margins or the gaps in previous circus studies and, in this way, broaden discourse in the emerging field of contemporary circus studies.

### Structure of Thesis

The structure of the thesis is not linear, but rather acts as a series of entry points into the gaps or ruptures in the conventional narratives of circus. Each of these entry points is guided by a trajectory following one particular kind of *body* as a lead into an investigation of circus.



*Figure 1: Fan Structure*

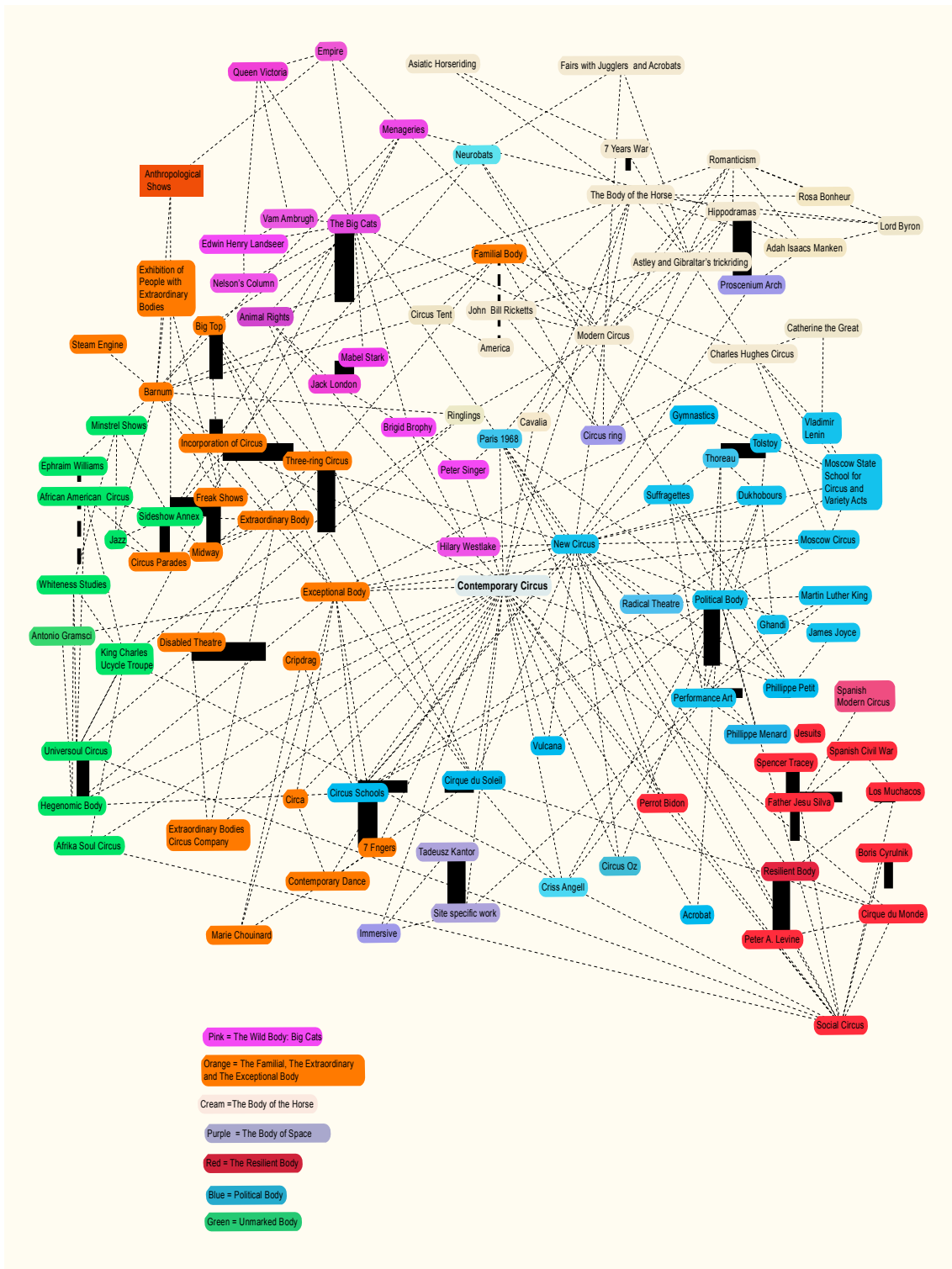


Figure 2: Web Structure

Schechner outlines the structure of his book *Performance Theory* noting that it “isn’t a potluck book. The essays are organized around a system that can be configured as a fan or a web” (Schechner, 2004, p. vii). This thesis adopts a similar approach to structure as can be seen in the two visualizations above.

The web is a more dynamic visualization of the fan structure, showing the different nodes of intersection that can be made in this non-linear structure. Schechner explains that he puts historical events side by side with speculative ideas and artistic performances, creating a network of ideas that effectively crosses different planes of reality, attributing equal importance to each plane. He notes that the powerful theatrical tradition of living *as if*, which involves dreaming and imagination, is an intrinsic part of his study.

Contemporary circus, the art form in which I work, and the genre I am investigating in this thesis, sits at the centre of the web structure to indicate its pivotal importance as the subject of this thesis.

The thesis uses a performance studies approach to permit exploration of the fan and/or web structure and to allow the reader freedom to have each chapter, in one sense, stand-alone. However this writing often does not use the particular sorts of analysis of live performance that might characterize many performance studies approaches. Rather than focusing on a close analysis or case in a performance studies context or paying analytic attention to a performance’s signifiers, symbols and flow as might be expected, a contextual review of each performance or act is undertaken which is interdisciplinary. The writing investigates how circus influences, and is in its turn influenced by culture and by theatrical cultures in particular contemporary performance, performance art,

dance and live cultures, and by theatrical commentary on personal, social, or political issues of the time. The writing sometimes investigates shifts in approach through circus examples and, sometimes in order to make points about circus' evolutionary trajectories, explores interconnections through examples from other disciplines. For instance, in the chapter entitled the Extraordinary Body or the chapter entitled the Exceptional Body, the issues influencing changes in circus aesthetics are exemplified by reference to contemporary dance and ballet namely through looking at Compagnie Marie Chouinard and the San Francisco Ballet rather than by circus examples *per se*. These examples from other disciplines are explored because they shed light on the attitudes and aesthetics that inform circus.

Historiography forms a major contributory part of this thesis with the aim of following diverse bodies into the gaps in grand circus narratives and creating new oblique readings into circus narratives and practices.

‘What is historiography?’ asked the American historian Carl Becker in 1938. [...] professional historians have themselves differed over the meaning of the term, defining it variously to mean the writing of history, the study of historical methodology, the analysis of the different schools of interpretation on a particular historical topic, or the history of historical writing. (Cheng, 2012, p.1)

The scholar Eileen Ka-May Cheng, in her approach to historiography, places emphasis on the subjective nature of any historical interpretation (Cheng, 2012, p.1). In this writing, the major interest is in the possibilities offered by historiography as an

approach allowing a plurality of voices that reflect a range of subjective experiences. This writing sets out to add a multiplicity of voices to the history of circus by revealing histories or phenomena that have been overlooked or marginalized.

### **Worldview**

Performance studies could be said to be a field that is driven by a refusal to succumb to any single totalizing worldview. Performance studies is fundamentally liminal and interdisciplinary with the standpoint that “knowledge can not be reduced to a singular coherence” (Schechner, 2013, p. 3). Schechner’s underlying position, that all knowledge is partial, relational and predicated on its social, historical and cultural context, lies at the heart of performance studies. As he points out, knowledge forms part of:

a contradictory and turbulent world ... In fact a hallmark of performance studies is the exposition of the tensions and contradictions driving today’s world. No-one in performance studies is able to profess the whole field. This is because performance studies has a huge appetite for encountering, even inventing, new kinds of performing and ways of analyzing performances while insisting that cultural knowledge can never be complete. (Schechner, 2013, p. 3)

This interest in acknowledging the partial and relational nature of knowledge has prompted me to structure this thesis as a series of sections, although they all interrelate, to create a nexus of sightings of the shifting, mutating creature at the heart of this writing, that is, contemporary circus. The thesis itself draws on disciplines as



diverse as zooësis, philosophy, disability studies, animal studies, cultural studies, historiography and ‘body studies’ which in and of itself is “markedly trans-disciplinary, crossing over the borders and boundaries between psychology, sociology, cultural theory, anthropology and sociology” (Blackman, 2008, p. 7).

However, the assumption of openness in performance studies does not mean that there are no values. As Schechner observes: “Values are hard won and contingent ... values are a function of cultures, groups and individuals” (Schechner, 2004, p. 1). Schechner believes that it is a charade for a writer to present a position of neutrality and he emphasizes the importance of writers clearly identifying their stance and their values. “The challenge is to become as aware as possible of one’s own positions in relation to the positions of others” (Schechner, 2002, p. xi). Schechner clearly identifies his own background, writing the following passage in the third person.

His book embodies the values, theories and practices of a certain field of scholarship as understood by one particular person in the eighth decade of his life. This person is a Jewish Hindu Buddhist atheist living in New York City, married and the father of two children. He is a university professor in the Performance Studies Department of New York University and the *Editor of TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies*. He directs plays, writes essays and books, lectures and leads workshops. He has travelled and worked in many parts of the world. Who I am is not irrelevant. I will be leading you on a journey. You ought to know a little about your guide. (Schechner, 2002, p. 1)

Following Schechner's example, I too will be leading you on a journey and you should know a little about me.

This thesis embodies the values, theories and practices of a certain field of scholarship as understood by one person who is a Buddhist agnostic vegan environmentalist who lives in Sydney, Australia, and is married. She directs and produces multi-artform performances, and contemporary circus shows, writes essays, science fiction and fantasy short stories and poetry, lectures, and leads workshops. She has travelled and worked in many parts of the world.

A certain amount of discomfort is attached to revealing my personal and/or political affiliations, however through this uncovering of my personal stance, the reader is empowered to interact with the writing much more directly, even if only by being able to identify specifically a position with which he/she disagrees.

Although I have not referred to it specifically in this thesis, my own personal experience as a circus director and producer underlies and informs the writing in this thesis. After my initial training as a visual artist, training in installation and performance, I moved into cross-disciplinary collaborative performance making, which then developed into creating multi-artform circus. I have spent over 15 years working as a dramaturg, *concepteur*, visual director and/or director and producer of multi-artform circus performance, creating and touring works throughout Australia and internationally. I am currently based in Sydney and have recently founded a new aerial training program and multi-artform circus arts company.

## Chapter 2: Background and Overview

### Clarification of the term *bodies* as used in this thesis

This writing investigates modern and contemporary circus through the lenses of different bodies. So what precisely is meant when bodies are referred to in this thesis? One of the main themes emerging in recent writings in body studies is that bodies are not to be considered discreet bounded entities, but are rather constituted by a series of relational interactions which, as scholar Lisa Blackman explains, go beyond viewing bodies as entities which are “singular, bounded, molar and discretely human.”

The body is not a thing to retreat to, a material basis to explain how social processes take hold. The body is in process and is assembled and made up from the diverse relays, connections and relationships between artefacts, technologies, practices and matter, which temporarily form it as a particular object.

(Blackman, 2008, p. 132)

Blackman claims that, at this point in time, body studies has expanded the notion of the body to include “*species bodies, psychic bodies, vitalist bodies and other worldly bodies*” (Blackman, 2005, p. 131).

This perspective of a complex series of inter-relationships in process, which are constantly shifting and changing, lies at the heart of the understandings of the body that inform this thesis. These inter-relationships create a nexus between habit, customs, objects and matter which, at a certain moment in time, comes to constitute a body.

These bodies then are clusters of ideas and processes that can move across traditional boundaries between disciplines and also across the existing historical categorizations between traditional modern circus, new circus and contemporary circus arts.

### **Background to the Development of Modern Circus**

Modern circus was created and developed by cavalryman Philip Astley in 1768 as an art form based on his own and his wife's spectacular horseriding. This new genre, with the horse at its heart, was an instant success spreading quickly and developing its own codes and traditions. One tradition that quickly established itself was of the secret, almost masonic, transmission of skills, handed on through bloodlines and taught only within the old circus families. Members of a circus family specialized in a particular set of skills and became renowned for their expertise in that field. One example is the Italian Cristianis whose history in circus dates back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century who are famous for their horse riding skills and acrobatics. In a similar way the Wallenda family or *The Flying Wallendas* are renowned for their high wire walking. In his introduction to his book, *Walking the Straight and Narrow: Lessons in Faith from the High Wire*, Tino Wallenda writes:

My name is Tino Wallenda and I come from one of the most famous circus families in history ... I was born into a family that has enjoyed a worldwide reputation for centuries: the Wallendas ... I try my best to give honor to the Wallenda name ... I'm steeped in circus tradition and heritage because it comes from my father's side and my mother's side. In Italy, on my father's side

we had the first tented circus in 1842. On the Wallenda side, of course, people are a little more familiar with our accomplishments. (Wallenda, 2005, p.xiii)

This strong sense of family and tradition became an inherent part of modern circus with particular circus skills handed down through the family and usually restricted to family members, with children learning the particular circus skills specific to their family from an early age. Tino Wallenda describes how he took each of his four children, Alida, Andrea, Amelia and Alessandro on his shoulders as he crossed the high wire and how in this situation the children can't do any balancing – he is the one who has to balance and support them, and they trust him completely because he is their father (Wallenda, 2005, p. xiv). In this way his children learnt about high wire walking, became familiar with being at heights, experienced the kinaesthetic sensation of being in close contact with a wire walker's body, and also learn the trust required to work as a team and develop multi-person acts such as the Wallenda famous seven-chair pyramid. Nik Wallenda, a seventh generation high wire walker carries on the tradition today, becoming the first person to walk a high wire across the Niagara Falls from the United States into Canada in 2012, and in 2013 successfully completing a walk across the Little River Gorge in Arizona which forms part of the Grand Canyon.

Traditional modern circus was, and still is, a dynasty. Family is everything and the traditional circus world is almost totally impenetrable to outsiders. “Everyone in the circus world knows everyone, or is married to them, or related by birth. And your business is their business. Circus families have married, re-married and inter-married over many generations, and call their children by many of the same traditional names”

(Lemon, 2007, p. 8).

However, a seismological change occurred in the world of modern circus in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Everything shifted, everything changed. In 1968, in response to the urgent sense of unrest and the political energy sweeping through Paris and other major cities at the time, artists and performers from many different disciplines looked for new forms of expression with the potential to reach out to, and connect with, large audiences. A sense of excitement about the untapped possibilities of circus drove new experiments and unforgettable new works began to be created that were completely different from anything that had come before. As Pascal Jacob, the circus scholar writes, “Everything which once defined circus [was] called into question either patiently or with brutality” (Jacob, 2008, p. 12).

People, coming into new circus in the early 1970s, questioned this tight-knit structure of family dynasties within traditional modern circus in much the same way that traditional family structures were being questioned in the rest of society at this time. There was a general sense of rebellion and a rejection of the structure of traditional modern circus as outmoded and feudal. Jon Hawkes, one of the original founders of the iconic new circus company Circus Oz in Australia, says that the company was founded by twenty-five people, and not one of them came from a traditional circus family.

None of the original twenty-five members [of Circus Oz] had a traditional circus background ... Rather, the group chose circus as its medium through an intellectual (and somewhat romantic) process. The circus form, at least theoretically, provided the perfect context in which to develop the sort of

performance and, as important at the time, the sort of life, which the group wanted. On the one hand, the group was frustrated by being unable to match the populist rhetoric of the new theatre with a practical capacity to attract large audiences. On the other hand, it found the ossification and semi-feudal structure of traditional circus too hard to deal with. (Hawkes, 2010)

Moscow Circus's first tour to the West in 1956 had caused a sensation. The excitement in the West was palpable. The Moscow Circus was dynamic and the breathtaking acrobatics caused a sensation. It toured to Brussels and then to Paris, and Paris then became its major touring venue for the next few years. All of a sudden circus, which had previously seemed a dinosaur, outmoded and out of step with the times, appeared full of potential, ready to revivify and attract new artists.

Both Western and Russian modern circus had the same Astley lineage but had evolved differently. A trick rider and circus producer named Charles Hughes, who had at one time been a riding student of Astley's, visited the court of Catherine the Great in Russia in 1773, to give a command performance with a troupe of circus performers. Catherine the Great became so enthralled with circus that she commanded two circus rings be built immediately. Most of Charles Hughes' troupe of circus performers stayed behind to continue giving performances to the court.

The circus in Russia continued in this way, with a constant stream of performers brought in from Europe, until after the Russian Revolution, in 1919, when Vladimir Lenin declared that circus was an art of the people, just like opera and ballet, and so would receive similar state support and backing. In 1927, the Moscow State College for

Circus and Variety Arts was set up. Described by Dominique Jando, the circus scholar, as “the first circus university” (Jando, 2008), it was a groundbreaking training school that taught circus skills but also brought into the mix Russian gymnastics skills and innovative choreography.

Circus in Russia started to evolve independently and, by its first international tour in 1956, had become a different creature. “The superb artistry, amazing technique, and constant innovation the Soviet circus artists displayed in the Moscow Circus tours led to a much needed change in the public perception of the circus in the West, and its subsequent renaissance in the 1970s” (Jando and Forcey, 2010).

Showcasing a form of circus that proved wildly popular in the West, the Moscow Circus attracted huge crowds and generated intense interest in what was seen as the new potential of circus as an art form. Circus suddenly had a buzz to it. Artists from all sorts of disciplines became interested in working in circus. A new form of circus came into being, in which most of the iconic imagery and content that had previously defined modern circus was rejected. New circus incorporated ideas and physicality from radical theatre and contemporary dance, from street theatre and performance art. Sequins and lamé were thrown out and, instead, circus costumes often replicated everyday dress, reinforcing the notion and the political position that new circus had emerged from the street and was open to everyone.

Eventually new circus schools and colleges started to be set up. Annie Fratellini, renowned as the first female circus clown and herself the granddaughter of a famous clown of the Fratellini dynasty, set up the first circus school in France, the National Circus School in 1974, and Alexis Gruss’ Conservatoire National des Arts du Cirque



was also set up at around the same time. The schools attracted many students from outside circus families bringing fresh blood and new ideas into the art form. In 1981, the National Circus School was set up in Montreal, Canada. The new catch cry, ‘circus for everyone,’ opened the genre to anyone who wanted to learn and gain circus skills.

Newcomers entering the world of new circus were unhindered by any sense of claustrophobia from inherited circus tradition. The French circus artist and director, Pierrot Bidon founded the legendary punk circus group Archaos in 1984 setting out to re-invent the genre. “No-one at Archaos is born in a circus,” he said later. “So we don’t have all the influence of tradition on our shoulders. We can invent everything. We are free” (Pierrot Bidon, 2010).

Youth circus companies, such as The Flying Fruit Fly Circus in Albury-Wodonga in Australia, which was founded in 1979 during the International Year of the Child, are another manifestation of this desire to democratize circus. The Fruit Flies are young performers who are encouraged to achieve at a high level in circus skills which include acrobatics, clowning and physical theatre, and they are then given opportunities to perform with the company all around the world.

Social circus, although with earlier beginnings in Spain in the 1950s, began to emerge in different locations around the world in the 1990s with the radical agenda of social intervention especially with the disaffected, the vulnerable and youth in perilous situations. The company Zip Zap Circus in Cape Town, South Africa, for example, which was set up by two trapeze artists in 1992, has been giving workshops since its inception. These workshops are completely free for young people from every walk of life including the townships within reach of Cape Town.

New circus generally banished animals from performances and focused on just the human animal. Very often even the circus ring itself was rejected as was the ringmaster, and traditional clowns were seen as passé. In response to this move away from all the iconic imagery and content which had defined modern circus, Pascal Jacobs, in a report compiled for the European Federation of Circus Schools in 2008, asks, “What is the sense of a circus? Does circus still exist?” (Jacob, 2008, p. 12) Peta Tait, the noted Australian circus scholar, grappling with this same question of what exactly defines circus writes that “the crucial element of circus, [is] its bodies and their different physicalities” (Tait, 1999, p. 130). This definition pinpoints the central importance to circus of bodies. This thesis explores what perceptions of circus may be gained through investigating the art form through some of its diverse bodies.

## **Overview of Sections and Chapters of Thesis**

### **Section 1. *The Relational Body***

The first section, *The Relational Body*, seeks to emphasize the notion of bodies as being constituted by the relationships in which they are involved. Within mainstream 20<sup>th</sup> century thinking, the focus is most often on the performer in theatrical performance. This section will engage with this view of theatre or performance, but through an expanded notion of the body of the actor or performer as a relational process.

The understanding of the body as a series of shifting, changing assemblages created through interaction, complements the vision of performance posited by Schechner, whose different vision of performance points to the crucial element being the interconnections created between performers and spectators, which he terms

*performance relationships*. “Performances exist only as actions, interactions and relationships” (Schechner, 2002, p. 30). Schechner construes performance relationships as consisting of three main modes of interconnection, firstly the relationship between the performers, secondly, the relationship between the audience members, and thirdly the relationship between the performers and the audience members.

In the chapter, entitled *The Political Body*, one of these relationships, that which lies between the circus performer and the circus spectator, is explored. The notion of the body of the circus performer is extended to include an expanded notion of the body of the performer with affect, that is, as an active performer with agency wishing to express and communicate compelling ideas through the live medium of the body to the spectator. This I have termed the *agentic body*. The performing body is thus investigated as a relational body, an assemblage positioned in the nexus between agency, embodiment, materiality and the decoding of both by the actively engaged spectator.

*The Political Body* is divided into two sections. Part I starts by exploring how new circus companies such as Circus Oz in Australia, and Cirque Bidon in France, aimed to display their political ideals through their choice of alternative lifestyle and their form of radical performance.

Part 2 of this chapter explores the notion of embodied political protest that is found in performance art. The question is then posed whether ideas from performance art can offer ways of approaching the decoding of new and contemporary circus works, especially those which can be read as hybrid works combining performance art and circus. These ideas are then taken into an exploration of the provocative work of two

French circus artists, Philippe Petit and Philippe Ménard, and the work of the Australian circus group Acrobat.

The second chapter in *The Relational Body* is entitled The Body of Space. The title is taken from the work of Polish artist and theatre director, Tadeusz Kantor. In his writings, Kantor shows himself as a passionate advocate for the importance of the role of space in performance. Kantor writes:

SPACE is charged with ENERGY...

It is space that GIVES BIRTH to forms! (Kantor, trans. 2009, p.50)

Taking the metaphor of space as a body from Kantor's writing, this chapter argues that space is an energetic body of primary importance for circus. The spatial shaping and structuring of circus performance is explored in the genre of circus over the span of time since its creation in 1768. This notion of the body of space as a profound and essential element, contributing to both the physical reading and the metaphorical resonances of the performance, is considered in light of the continuous self-reinvention of circus.

## **Section 2. *The Body of Zooësis***

The Body of Zooësis investigates some of the bodies of non-human animal performers in circus.

Una Choudouri has coined the term *zooësis* to describe the activity at the intersections between “the burgeoning field of animal studies, which encompasses a

vast cultural territory, ranging - contentiously - from philosophy to activism, and including anthropology, sociology, history, psychology, art history, cinema and literary studies ... and the intersections of this new field with performance studies” (Chaudhuri, 2007, p. 8). Chaudhuri herself, writing about the origins of the new word *zooësis*, states that the word itself is inspired partly by Plato’s *poïesis* and Aristotelian *mimesis* but also by the word *gynesis*, a word created by an early feminist theorist, Alice Jardine. Jardine defined *gynesis* as “the putting into discourse of ‘woman’ as ... intrinsic to the condition of modernity; indeed the valorization of the feminine, woman, and her obligatory, that is historical, connotations, as somehow intrinsic to new and necessary ways of thinking, writing, speaking” (Jardine as cited in Chaudhuri, 2014, p. 6). Chaudhuri writes she wants the term *zooësis* to distinguish how the animal is inserted into discourse and she also hopes that the word will “contribute to the valorization of animals and teach us that they are ‘intrinsic to new and necessary ways of thinking, writing, speaking’” (Chaudhuri, 2014, p. 6). Judith Hamera observes that *zooësis*, as an intersection between animal studies and performance studies, is a “generative frame within critical animal studies, for understanding animal acts as socially and politically consequential” (Hamera, 2012, p. 127).

Circus, as the only artform that has an animal, the horse, at its hub, is an extraordinary territory for *zooësis* projects. Modern circus covers a period, from 1768 to the contemporary present day circus, in which perceptions about animal beingness have altered radically. Circus provides a remarkable lens through which to look at these changing ideas, in particular those that relate to the horse.

In response to the rhetorical question as to whether there is an emerging field of

work that can be called the *history of animals*, Erica Fudge replies:

My answer to this question is both yes and no. The emerging field is clearly there, but it is not the history of animals; such a thing is impossible. I continue to use the term ‘history of animals’ as it were, as Derrida has proposed, *sur rature* [*sic*] - under erasure: it is both indispensable and impossible. (Fudge, 2002, p. 6)

Fudge argues that the history of animals, by necessity, has to be a history of human writing about animals and that the process of uncovering this history forms “a necessary part of our reconceptualization of ourselves as human” (Fudge, 2002, p. 5).

The first chapter of this section, *The Body of the Horse*, puts forward the proposition that the defining body of the circus genre, either in its presence or in its absence, is the horse. The circus ring itself and the iconic figure of the ringmaster both developed through the presence of the horse and the relationship between horse and rider lies at the heart of the genre.

The second chapter in this section, *The Wild Body*, is a zooësis project exploring the way in which big cats have been represented in circus acts. Since the original moment when Andrew Ducrow, manager of Philip Astley’s company, introduced a lion tamer into circus in 1833, a dramatic change in the attitude of the public towards big cats has taken place. This chapter follows representations of the big cat in circus from the creature rendered savage and goaded into response by the use of whips to the equally implausible, current representation of the big cats either as part of

an interspecies family or part of some ‘conservation ark.’

### **Section 3. *The Hegemonic Body***

In section three, *The Hegemonic Body*, the word *hegemonic* is used in Antonio Gramsci’s sense as a *cultural hegemony* or a prevailing view of reality that has been assimilated by the general populace to the extent that it seems to be normal or common sense. Gramsci, writing whilst imprisoned by Mussolini’s fascist regime, described cultural hegemony as,

the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is ‘historically’ caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12)

Cultural theorist Stephen Duncombe sums up Gramsci’s ideas of cultural hegemony as “politics [which] is fought out not only in state houses, workplaces or on battlefields, but also in the language we use, the stories we tell, and the images we conjure – in short in the ways we make sense of the world” (Duncombe, 2012, p. 222). Gramsci posited that in order to create a new society it was necessary to change consciousness, and that consciousness resided in culture, not just in aesthetic forms but also in an anthropological sense, where culture is constituted by ideas, beliefs or customs that allow to us “to navigate our world, guiding our ideas of right and wrong,

beautiful and ugly, just and unjust, possible and impossible” (Duncombe, 2012, p. 222).

The power of cultural hegemony resides in the fact that for the most part it is invisible, as it has been assimilated and forms a norm. As David Foster Wallace, the American novelist, recounted in a speech published in *The Guardian* in 2008:

There are these two young fish swimming along, and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, “Morning, boys, how’s the water?” And the two young fish swim on for a bit and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes ‘What the hell is water?’ (Wallace, 2008)

This is a perfect example of the way in which everyday phenomena become invisible and assume the status of a given, in the same way that the water has become invisible to the young fish. To challenge cultural hegemony, the first step is to make it visible or, as in this story, to make the young fish aware of the water. Furthermore, Wallace observes that,

the most obvious, ubiquitous, important realities are often the ones that are the hardest to see and talk about. Stated as an English sentence, of course, this is just a banal platitude – but the fact is that, in the day-to-day trenches of adult existence, banal platitudes can have life-or-death importance. (Wallace, 2008)

This section investigates contemporary circus as defined by the hegemonic limits



placed on the visibility of bodies and, as such, interrogates the bodies that are marginalized or ostracized by the constraining parameters of circus.

In *The Extraordinary Body*, the history of differently abled performers in circus is investigated. In late Victorian circus, the entrepreneur P.T. Barnum introduced the *extraordinary* body of performers who were displayed as *freaks*, such as Siamese twins, or fat ladies, hunchbacks or women with unusually long hair, who were displayed in the sideshow tents. These out of the ordinary, or extraordinary, bodies were initially viewed as sites of wonder. As the boundaries of the normal became increasingly policed by the medical profession, these bodies eventually became pathologized and, as such, began to be considered unsuitable for public display or circus performance. The meme of crip-face or crip-drag is investigated and the situation for disabled or differently abled performers within contemporary circus is explored.

In *The Exceptional Body*, the norm for the body of contemporary circus performers is examined. Before P.T. Barnum entered circus in 1871, the *familial* body in circus was widespread, as circus acts were traditionally transmitted within families. The performers often represented a wide range of body shapes and sizes as found in most families. In the late Victorian era, the body of the professional athlete, the exceptional body, became increasingly visible as the larger circuses went on the hunt for elite professional athletes from around the world. In contemporary circus, the range of performing bodies is now narrowing again. This chapter investigates the reasons for these increasingly restrictive parameters.

*The Unmarked Body* explores the hegemony that leads to the majority of bodies of performers on display in North American contemporary circus almost always being

white. The same could be said to apply to contemporary circus in many other countries, however this chapter focuses on North America. This whiteness of the contemporary circus body is generally seen as normative or unmarked. This area of academic interest that was originally known as *critical race and whiteness studies* is now usually referred to as *whiteness studies* for short. Scholar, Toby Ganley identifies a long history of work engaging with the problematic of whiteness, originating in America and now found in post-colonial or post-imperial critical discourse. Ganley identifies two main positions underlying this work. Firstly, the notion that there is particular privilege and power associated with being identified as white and, secondly, “that much of this white race privilege extends from the monopoly that whiteness has over the norm” (Ganley, 2003, p. 13).

The *unmarked body* is a term widely used to designate the white body and to indicate that, as a result of the prevailing hegemony, the white body is widely perceived as an unracialized or an unmarked normative body. This monopoly over the norm means that one of the major projects in whiteness studies is the attempt to make whiteness visible as one of a range of racial identities and to change the current status of the white body as an unmarked or unremarked body.

Richard Dyer underscores this point, pointing out that “white people need to learn to see themselves as white, to see their particularity. In other words whiteness needs to be made strange” (Dyer, 2000, p. 541). This chapter aims to make the white body in circus strange by highlighting a hidden history of circus, hardly ever written about or discussed, a history of African American circus in North America.

#### **Section 4. *The Processual Body***

In the final section, *The Processual Body*, an emphasis is placed on circus bodies outside of actual performance situations, that is, as participants taking part in a process of workshops and courses.

An increasingly important aspect of circus lies in its processes especially in community workshops and, above all, in social circus. Social circus takes the new circus cry of ‘circus for everybody,’ out onto the streets and uses circus as a tool for community wellbeing, and to promote healing within some of the most deprived sectors in society. In social circus, emphasis is placed firmly on the process, on the gradual building of self-confidence, of trust in others and the ability to work in a team.

Although a performance outcome may take place, in many smaller social circus workshops, this performance can be in-house or for the benefit of the local community.

In the chapter entitled *The Resilient Body*, the origins of social circus and a new theoretical grounding for its successes are explored.

-----

## **SECTION 1: THE RELATIONAL BODY**

This section consists of:

Chapter 3 -The Political Body, Part 1 and Part 2, and

Chapter 4 - The Body of Space.

### **Chapter 3: The Political Body**

#### **Part 1**

*I think Art is the only political power, the only revolutionary power, the only evolutionary power, the only power to free mankind from all repression. I say not that art has already realized this, on the contrary, and because it has not, it has to be developed as a weapon.*

Joseph Beuys (cited in Kuoni, 1993, p.34)

#### **Background to New Circus**

Spring 1968 is the date that many French commentators see as the beginning of new circus. Pascal Jacob, the circus scholar, observes that, “having first emerged one Spring morning in 1768, the modern circus underwent a transformation in Spring 1968, and faced a public rejection of its codes” (Jacob, 2008, p. 11). New artists entering circus proved to be iconoclasts who called into question everything that defined modern circus. “The entire sector was brutally and brusquely shaken” (Jacob, 2008, p. 11). In



*1. Students in front of the Faculty of Letter[sic], Rome, 1968  
Image retrieved from <<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roma68.png>>  
Image in Public Domain*

In May 1968, students everywhere were protesting from Paris to Berkley, Mexico City to Berlin, Rome and Bangkok. In Paris, the student protests led to a general strike in which millions of workers and thousands of other sympathizers participated. Julia Kristeva, the Eastern European philosopher, who arrived in France in 1966, notes: “One word on everyone’s lips in May ’68 was ‘contestation’” (Kristeva, 2002, p. 12). In Kristeva’s terms contestation expresses “a fundamental version of freedom: not

freedom to change or to succeed, but freedom to revolt, to call things into question” (Kristeva, 2002, p. 12). In her summary, *Art and Action in the 1960s*, scholar Karen Zouaoui describes the decade of the sixties as, “the nexus of the challenge to authority in the twentieth century. Whether it be in political, cultural, public or private spheres, polarities are upset by a questioning of every stratum of power” (Zouaoui, 2010).

Joseph Beuys, the German performance artist and member of the international performance art group Fluxus, began to challenge the notion of art as a specialized profession. Boundaries between politics, personal life and art were breaking down. The feminist dictum of ‘the personal is political’ became widespread. Four hundred women from the group, New York Radical Women, demonstrated against the Miss America beauty pageant’s oppression of women. They symbolically crowned a sheep as Miss America, and filled a ‘Freedom Trash Can’ with high-heeled shoes, girdles, curlers, bras, false eyelashes, and other ‘instruments of torture’ of enforced femininity.

In the same year, Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin founded the Youth International Party or the Yippies. The Yippies and Abbie Hoffman performed numerous political actions including one in which they nominated a pig as candidate for President of the USA. “‘It’s all conceived as total theater with everyone becoming an actor,’ said Abbie Hoffman about the Yippies” (The Yippies, 2007). In a political action, accompanied by Tibetan chants from poet Allan Ginsberg, the Yippies staged a mock levitation and an exorcism of the Pentagon in protest against the Vietnam War. Another of the Yippie actions spread chaos in the New York Stock Exchange when the Yippies threw handfuls of real and fake dollars from the balcony. Some of the traders below dived around trying to get hold of the money while others booed and trading

came to a standstill.

As journalist Christopher Hitchens wrote of the period, “Just to blink was to miss something” (cited in Watts, 2001, p. 161). Across Europe, similar actions were taking place with, “the Strasbourg Situationists denouncing boredom; the Dutch provos unleashing pandemonium in Amsterdam by releasing thousands of chickens in rush hour traffic; the Diggers declaring love a commodity; and not least Ed Sanders and the Fugs setting off on their march to Prague to masturbate on the Soviet tanks” (Watts, 2001, p. 161). These actions have been described as “pointed spectacles that use symbolic gestures to make a point through non-verbal physical means and can be considered a form of ... performance” (Mullett, 2005, p. 62).

It was around this time that new artists from different areas, including music, radical theatre, performance art and dance, started being attracted to circus as a medium for their creativity. In the late sixties, circus generated a new feel of excitement about its potential. In 1956, the Moscow Circus had toured to Europe for the first time. Circus, which had previously seemed like a failing relic of the past in the new media landscape of film and television, now began to seem fresh and exciting.

The Moscow Circus (a generic name used at that time for all Russian circuses touring abroad) revealed how circus had been developing behind the Iron Curtain. An altogether new form of circus was revealed, state-funded and produced in an academy, where traditional circus skills had been combined with Russian gymnastics. The Moscow Circus toured to Paris and, subsequently, through Europe every year after that. Circus began to be seen as vibrant, innovative and, perhaps most importantly, it was attracting huge crowds.

Jon Hawkes, a founder of Circus Oz, who came into circus from a background in radical theatre, described how the other founders of Circus Oz were attracted to circus largely because they were frustrated by the small audiences that radical theatre attracted. They wanted to move into a form of performance that was popular, which had the power to draw in crowds (Hawkes, 2011). Traditional non-Russian circus, however, seemed feudal and old fashioned, plus it was almost completely closed to outsiders, with skills usually only taught to family members and so, in 1977, these newcomers founded Circus Oz, the iconic Australian circus company and gave their first performance in 1978.

It is difficult to pinpoint an exact starting date for new circus. In Quebec, Cirque du Soleil, the multi-billion dollar Quebec new circus company, developed in 1984 through a process described by the company as “street performers who began putting their performances under a tent in 1984” (Coté, 2003). In France, Martine Maleval points to various possible origins of new circus in France including in 1973, when Christian Taguet founded the company Les Puits aux Image which in 1987 became Cirque Baroque, or to 1975 when Paul Rouleau and Pierric Pillot (who later took the name Pierrot Bidon) started touring shows around France in caravans as Cirque Bidon. Another departure point involved the brothers Kudlak who were playing in a brass band in 1975 and then went on to found Circus Plume in 1983 (Maleval, 2002, p.64).

All new circus companies banished wild animals from their performances and most of them also got rid of the horses. Although various reasons are cited for this, for example, “happenstance” (Coté, 2003) and “economic reasons” (Mullett, 2011), in the climate of heated political debate about animal rights at the time, this action can be read



as profoundly significant, reflecting increasing social concern about the rights of animals. It was in tune with the emergence of the writings of the Oxford Group, a collection of intellectuals, artists and writers based at Oxford University. In 1964, Ruth Harrison of the Oxford Group published *Animal Machines*, which was deeply critical of factory farming. In 1965, the writer Brigid Brophy published *The Rights of Animals* and an article of the same name made the front page of *The Times* newspaper in England, triggering intense debate. The rights of animals became a hot political issue. In 1975, Peter Singer, a young Australian philosophy student, influenced by the Oxford Group, published his landmark book *Animal Liberation*. Singer states that his book is about,

the tyranny of human over non-human animals. The tyranny has caused, and today is still causing an amount of pain and suffering, that can only be compared with that which resulted from the centuries of tyranny by white humans over black humans. The struggle against this tyranny is a struggle as important as any of the moral and social issues that have been fought over recent years. (Singer, 1995, p. ix)

Peter Singer's 'animal liberation' purposefully linked the liberation of animals to other liberation movements. This link, which became clearly drawn between civil rights and animal rights, surfaces in the comedian and civil rights activist, Dick Gregory's comment: "When I look at animals held captive by circuses, I think of slavery. Animals in circuses represent the domination and oppression we have fought against for so long" (Dick, 2010). The animal rights movement flourished and Singer's ideas were ubiquitous, including his position on the use of animals in circuses:

Attempts to defend amusement parks and circuses on the grounds that they “educate” people about animals should not be taken seriously. Such enterprises are part of the commercial entertainment industry. The most important lesson they teach impressionable young minds is that it is acceptable to keep animals in captivity for human amusement. That is the opposite of the ethical attitude to animals that we should be seeking to impart to children. (Singer, 2010)

In this climate of fiery controversy and debate, new circus emerged, a form of circus with, by and large, no animals - a circus in which human performers would take the place of animals. The climate of opinion in the 1970s meant that, even if a particular performance under the umbrella of new circus in itself had no overt political comment, the very act of animal exclusion packed a powerful political punch.

The English art critic, novelist and poet, John Berger, wrote an influential essay entitled *Why Look at Animals?* in 1977, which was the first of an array of works on the subject of the “symbolic uses of animals in popular culture and art, zoological displays of animals and animal performances, and the literal place of animals in contemporary life, which now constitute the emergent interdisciplinary field of animals studies” (Chris, 2006, p. xvi). Animal studies and media scholar, Cynthia Chris observes that it was at about the same time that animals began to appear in new and unexpected ways within visual arts and performance art contexts. She cites the example of Beuys’s 1974 performance with a live coyote, *I like America and America likes me*. In this performance, Beuys, an artist who saw art as a means of effecting political and social

change, shared a space in the René Block Gallery in New York with a wild coyote over the course of three days. Beuys viewed the coyote as a symbol of the human impact in America on the environment and its animals. Beuys pinpointed this performance as touching on a point of trauma in American history: “You could say that a reckoning has to be made with the coyote, and only then can this trauma be lifted” (Beuys, 1974, as cited in Kuoni, 1992, p. 141).

Hilary Westlake, the English theatre and circus director, founded a new circus company called Circus Lumiere in London, in 1979. Semiotician and renowned circus scholar, Paul Bouissac, writing about one of the new acts shown by Circus Lumiere called *Liberty Horses*, says, “The Liberty Horse Act was rendered by a female trainer in dominatrix attire who was controlling eight men, harnessed like circus horses, who were made to cavort round the ring and mimic whatever circus horses do” (Bouissac, 2006, p. 66). Horses had been banished from the ring and, in their place, the female rider had harnessed and used a group of men to carry her. This iconic image, aside from its obvious sexual and sado-masochistic overtones, can be read, in the context of the intense debate around the issue, as an act to question the treatment of animals and to ignite further debate around the issue of rights of animals. Although liberty horses is a traditional discipline in riding displays and competitions, in this context the name can be read as a provocation, with its deliberate referencing of other liberation movements of the time such as women’s liberation and gay liberation, to align the rights of animals with the fight for human civil rights. The program for the Circus Lumiere and Sons show featured a provocative image of an enormous rabbit using its mouth to pull a tiny man out of an enormous magician’s hat by his arm. This surreal image reverses the

normal roles in magician's tricks and poses questions about the power dynamics of the animal/human relationship.

The program for Westlake's follow-up show in 1980, *Son of Circus Lumiere*,



Program cover for Lumiere and Son Theatre Company's *Circus Lumiere*, 1979  
Director Hilary Westlake, Image designed and photographed by Paul Derrick  
Image reproduced by kind permission of Hilary Westlake.

also had a provocative image on the cover, a face composed of the bald pate and the exaggerated curls of a traditional circus clown, whilst the bottom half is that of a snarling tiger. As the show had no exotic animals in it, this poetic and resonant image can be read as proposing that the 'savagery' of the human will be quite sufficient to keep the audience entertained during the performance.

It was a radical move to eliminate animals from circus because much of the iconic imagery of circus was centered around the horse. Modern circus had been

created in 1768 to display the stunt riding of Philip Astley and his wife, Patty. The very circus ring was designed to be the perfect size for circus tricks on a galloping horse. The figure of the ringmaster had been developed from the image of Astley standing in the centre of the circus ring wearing a jacket with tails and a top hat, the riding costume of his day, and holding a whip to guide the galloping horses round the edge of the ring at a steady pace to maintain the safety of the acrobats on their backs. The horse was pivotal to the understanding that circus had of itself. If there were no horses, what, indeed, was circus? The rejection of animals brought the focus in new circus directly onto the human body alone. Mullet, one of the founders of Circus Oz and a circus historian, writing about the many conflicting definitions of what exactly constitutes new circus, concludes that the only common aspect amongst the commentaries and interviews she examined is that new circus, “is ... defined by the bodies that perform it” (Mullett, 2005, p.34). So the study of the human body is pivotal to any understanding of new circus.

The body of the circus artist in new circus was often seen as an active embodiment of an alternative and radical political standpoint, a key and defining characteristic of new circus. Why was the image of the body seen as a site that could be imbued with an oppositional and radical personal politics?

Karen Zouaoui’s determination of agency as “the leitmotif of the ethics and aesthetics of the Sixties” (Zouaoui, 2010) depends on a recognition, emerging in many political speeches of the time, of “a renewed faith in the potential of individual actions” (Zouaoui, 2010). This notion of agency has entered discourse about the body with the idea of the agentic body, an active body which *does*. In her discussion of new directions

in body studies, Lisa Blackman writes that “if there is one guiding principle towards which work on the body has moved, it is the assumption that what defines bodies is their capacity to affect and be affected” (Blackman, 2008, p. 141). The idea of *the agentic body with affect* is an exciting one to bring into thinking about body in new circus. Nelly Richard, the French-born cultural theorist now living in Chile, offers a powerful description of the agentic body with affect: “The body is the physical agent of the structures of everyday experience. It is the producer of dreams, the transmitter and receiver of cultural messages, a creature of habits, a desiring machine, a repository of memories, an actor in the theater of power, a tissue of affects and feelings” (Cited in Richard, 2000, p. 188).

Returning once more to new circus, the art form defined by the bodies that perform it, Mullett argues that the radical politics of the era influenced new circus and puts forward a case for new circus to be named *alternative circus* to acknowledge the alternative political stance put forward in much new circus work (Mullett, 2005, p. 191). There are many ways in which the bodies of the performers in new circus companies, like Archaos from France and Circus Oz from Australia, reveal this influence of radical politics, one of which is the idea of individuation. John Hawkes encapsulates the idea:

The company eschewed the corps de ballet notion of indistinguishable ciphers breathtaking in their ability to all do exactly the same thing at exactly the same time. Rather, Circus Oz grapples with the challenge of a group of autonomous individuals finding a way of working together so that all can find realization in a supportive environment. (Hawkes, 2011)

Circus Oz and many other new circuses (with the notable exception of Cirque du Soleil) followed the desire for individuation rejecting the heavy theatrical makeup and wigs of modern circus and presenting performers as recognizable individuals with their own movement quirks, character and faces.

Democratization was another driving force in new circus. The move towards democratization brought a change to the ground-based movement language of circus with the adoption of accessible pedestrian movement or quotidian movement, as in contemporary dance with dancer and choreographer, Steve Paxton and the Judson group (Banes, 2011, p. 58). It also led to a rejection of the pointed feet and balletic gestures of traditional circus. In many cases, a simpler level of circus skills emerged with an emphasis on accessibility, as many of the new artists coming into circus had little or no previous circus training. The performance of democratization also led to a rejection of the sequins and feathers of traditional circus. Performers often wore their own street clothes or costumes portraying street clothes, in effect clothes similar to those worn by people in the audience, thus indicating that the performers were no different from the spectators and that circus was an art of the people.

The desire for inclusivity and accessibility also led to moves to extend circus training to a wider range of people especially through social circus. The work of the visionary French circus performer and director, Pierrot Bidon, for example, brought a much bigger range of people and different racial body types into circus. In 1996 in Brazil, Bidon ran a series of workshops initiated as an exchange between Brazil and France, which formed part of a social program for the people living in the *favelas* or

shantytowns. Out of these workshops, he created Circo da Madrugada. In 1998, Bidon went to Guinea in Africa where, from this extended residency, Circus Baobab was founded. Circus Baobab featured a mix of dancing, acrobatics, juggling and clowning accompanied by West African music.

The attraction of a radical alternative life-style was a major motivating factor for many artists attracted into new circus because it offered a lifestyle outside the norm, one that was nomadic, anti-bourgeois and very appealing (Hawkes, 2011). Many new circuses strove to set up an alternative family model in contrast to the normal bourgeois model of the family or even the feudal family model of traditional circus. This notion of the alternative family filtered into the performances by the new circus companies (Mullett, 2005, p. 158). The performed alternative family was very much a part of the identity of many new circuses for example, Cirque Bidon. This was the first circus company that Bidon set up in the late sixties, which toured around rural France as a kind of nomadic, alternative family living in caravans. Audience members were invited to climb inside and walk through the caravans to see different parts of the performance.

When Circus Oz was on tour and arrived in a new town, the performance of the alternative family began, with the normal divisions of labour broken down so that everybody did everything: women could be seen rigging tents, setting up their own aerial equipment and driving trucks and the men could be seen cooking and washing up. Circus Oz originally lived in their touring tent and when the audience entered for a show the performers greeted them by saying, "Welcome to our living room."

Mullett also points to the American Pickle Family Circus, whose name was an ironic take on the traditional family circuses, as a company that also celebrated and



performed the idea of an alternative family. The Terry Lorant photographs of the time documented this vision of an alternative family. One of the most memorable of the Pickle Family circus photographs shows a group of pregnant women standing together with their tops pulled up exposing their big bellies. This photo of an alternative kind of family group was profoundly shocking as, at that point in time, the bodies of pregnant women were taboo with women hiding their bodies beneath large tent-shaped dresses until they gave birth.

People coming into new circus from radical theatre brought with them the idea of a commitment to the collective, and of collaborative processes becoming an integral part of the creation of new work. Tim Robertson of Circus Oz observes that the “cultural superhero of the time was the Group, the energy field of a set of individuals that created a charismatic surplus value” (Robertson, 2001, p. 1). The group worked together trying to erase hierarchies and this was visible in the disappearance of the circus star and the presence and promotion of the collective.

Feminism was also a driving force in much new circus with many women viewing their performances as manifestations of their personal politics and an expression of the embodiment of their feminist beliefs.

The Wimmin’s Circus, that operated between 1980 and 1981 in Melbourne and would seem to be the first women’s circus in the world, used the gender confusion generated around the image of the strong women in circus to ‘present images of women that challenged stereotypes.’ (Mullett, 2005, p. 163)

Tait, writing about female aerialists, noted that the performance of femininity occurred at the beginning and end of a trick but not throughout the tricks themselves (Tait, 2005, p. 122). Mullett views this slippage between the performed persona of the circus artist and the actual artist to be characteristic of the new circus women pioneers. This presentation of the gap between the performed femininity of the beginning and end of the trick, and the lack of such performance during the trick itself, creates a space that allows for a deconstruction of the social nature of constructed gender to take place. This recognition of social identity was accorded gesture and choreographed into the staging (Mullett, 2005, p. 165). Role reversal was often seen in aerial acts, with male aerialists performing on the Spinning Web, a traditionally female apparatus, aerial partnering duos with women tackling the traditional weight-taking or loadbearing position traditionally taken by the male aerialists, and men performing as flyers, the role traditionally performed by women (Tait, 2005, p. 122).

The acceptance and performance of alternative sexualities was also another driving interest. Archaos performed alternative sexual mores, causing a stir with their naked trapeze artists and men dancing together, and being banned by some of the London councils and even being banished to the outskirts of town in Canada. In one performance at Dunkirk in 1990, two men are described as lying on stage “smooching,” while another scene showed male courtiers trying to win the affections of a Roman senator who was wearing green lipstick and a see-through skirt (Tait, 2005 p. 122).

## **The Political Body: Part 2:**

As new circus began to hybridize with other art forms including contemporary dance and radical theatre, some of the more experimental new circus works can be viewed as having hybridized circus with performance art, which is another discipline in which the human body is central. The origins and resonances of some of the thinking in performance art are investigated in this next section to discover whether these ideas can help to decipher meanings in hybrid circus/performance art works. Contemporary circus artists Philippe Petit and Philippe Ménéard have created compelling works that, it could be argued, have combined circus with performance art in particular Petit's *Twin Towers High Wire Walk* (1974), and Ménéard's *P.P.P. or Position Parallèle au Plancher* (2005). These works now stand as limit-text works in their relative fields, that is to say they are works that go beyond the previously accepted limits, and now point to new boundaries, or new questions as to the reaches of the field.

### **Embodied Protest**

When thinking about the body of the performer in performance art, one idea is central, and this is that the body of the performer with no text, no script, with no theatrical props, and in a very reduced, but carefully considered, context, is believed capable of holding encoded political, social and personal meanings and can function as a site of embodied protest. The body of the performer is a site of embodied protest, a political body, in much performance art. Yoko Ono, for example, a founding member of performance art group Fluxus, is one of the many performance artists to explore embodied protest in her work.

In 1964 in Kyoto and Tokyo, Ono gave the first performances of her work *Cut Piece*, usually characterized as an “early feminist work” (Jones *Shocking*). In this work, Ono knelt on the ground placing a pair of scissors in front of her. Members of the audience were invited to come forward and to use the scissors to cut away a piece of her clothing. “It started politely but became more and more threatening as her clothes were reduced to rags and she kneeled in her underwear” (Jones, 2013). This powerful work was re-created in September 2003, when at the age of seventy, Ono performed *Cut Piece* in Paris. *Cut Piece* functions as a work of embodied political protest, with Ono saying that the performance stood “against ageism, against racism, against sexism and against violence” (Ono in Concannon).

Investigating the origins of this idea of embodied protest found in much performance art, the Religious Studies scholar, Isaac Souweine, traces one lineage to the Doukhobors, and the Performance Studies scholar, Leslie Hill traces another to the Suffragettes.

Souweine points to the Doukhobors as the originators of embodied protest. The Doukhobors are Russian, Christian anarchists who are vegetarian and also pacifist. In Russia in the 1890s, they protested against conscription by the Czar, by burning their weapons. Then in 1899, nearly 8,000 Doukhobors fled violent reprisals by emigrating from Russia to Canada. In Canada they began calling themselves Svobodniki, or Sons of Freedom. They soon began to protest again, this time against the Canadian government’s refusal to allow them to legally own land communally. “By 1903, the Sons of Freedom had added nakedness to their repertoire, seeking through nakedness to walk with the simplicity and moral purity of Jesus ... For the next fifty years, public

nakedness remained a central aspect of their proselytisation and dissent” (Souweine, 2005, p.526).



*Doukhobors marching nude in Langham, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1903.*

*Retrieved from :*

*<[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DoukhoborsLangham\\_Saskatchewan-1903.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DoukhoborsLangham_Saskatchewan-1903.jpg)>*

*Image in Public Domain*

Souweine draws a lineage of embodied political protest from the Doukhobors, through to Mahatma Gandhi. Although Gandhi wrote extensively, it was his embodied protest that was his most effective tool in his political campaigns:

From 1893 when he refused to accept apartheid seating on a train in South Africa ... the essence of both Gandhi’s writing and his political allegiances are expressed in his bodily acts of political dissent ... Gandhi melded the political and the personal so completely that by the 1940s his hunger strikes effectively pitted his moral and religious potency against the very fate of his nation’s history. (Souweine, 2005, p.532)

Souweine goes on to trace this effective use of embodied protest from Gandhi to Martin Luther King, whose civil rights movement became built around organized key acts creating potent images of civil disobedience and embodied protest, for example, in 1956 when Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to surrender her seat to a white person, and in the 1960 sit-in by black students at the whites-only restaurant of their local Woolworth's store in Greenboro, North Carolina. These graphic images of embodied protest spread the message of civil rights to the world. The violent suppression of the Paris protests in 1968, pushed large-scale acts of civil disobedience out of the street, and protestors turned to the body as an individual's key way of manifesting political, ethical and philosophical protest. This physical embodiment of political personalism with the body as a site of protest (Souweine, 2005, p. 532) was a key idea in the development of performance art. The body began to be seen as being invested with the power to be read as a statement of personal protest, as a political body.



*Mahatma Gandhi spinning, late 1920s.*

Retrieved from <[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gandhi\\_spinning.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gandhi_spinning.jpg)>

*Image in Public Domain*

Leslie Hill, on the other hand, argues that the origins of embodied protest can be traced to the Suffragettes. She writes, “Edwardian ladies [pioneered] a new hybrid art form in which the personal was political, the political was performative and the performance was public” (Hill, 2000, p.150). Many examples of political performance can be found in the suffrage movement including Mrs Drummond’s megaphone address from the cabin roof of a river launch to members of the Commons on their terrace tea-break; Mary Richardson’s slashing of the Velasquez *Rokeby Venus* in the National Gallery as a protest against the imprisonment of Emmeline Pankhurst; to their hunger strikes in prison. Hill proposes that it was this cross-fertilization of politics, theatre and

philosophy in the actions of the Suffragettes that gave rise to many of the ideas in contemporary performance art.



*Emmeline Pankhurst being arrested at King's Gate, May, 1914.*  
Retrieved from :<[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Emmeline\\_Pankhurst](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Emmeline_Pankhurst)>  
Source : *My Own Story* by Emmeline Pankhurst, London, Virago, Ltd 1979  
Image in Public Domain

In both these lineages, the Doukhobors, as proposed by Souweine, and the Suffragettes, as suggested by Hill, the influence of the American philosopher Henry David Thoreau can be traced. The Doukhobors flight from Russia to Canada was partially funded by the Russian writer and philosopher, Leo Tolstoy, who himself had an extensive correspondence with Thoreau, and Lady Constance Lytton, a suffragette, when under arrest in 1910, actually inscribed a quotation from Thoreau on the wall of her prison-cell (Harrison, 1982, p.39).

Thoreau's profoundly influential text, *Civil Disobedience: Resistance to Civil Government*, had been published in 1849. In the text, Thoreau, motivated by his abhorrence of slavery and his intense disapproval of the Mexican-American War, proposed that individuals should never allow their personal conscience to be overruled by government, and that laws which cause injustice to be perpetrated should not be



obeyed. The influence of this essay *Civil Disobedience* was widespread. “The list of people influenced by this writing is astonishing. It famously includes Tolstoy, Gandhi and Martin Luther King” (Cain, 2000, p.153). As Staughton Lynd writes, “What was central for Thoreau was neither violence nor civil disobedience but direct action: the absolute demand that one practice -- right now, all alone if necessary -- what one preaches” (cited in Cain, 2000, p.65).

These lineages of embodied protest, both traceable to Thoreau, brought several key ideas with them into performance art. These were the conviction that the personal is political, the belief in the importance and the power of live presence, the notion that political truth can be embodied, and an emphasis on performing personal truths rather than ‘acting’ (Hill, 2000, p.1).

### **The Role of the Spectator**

Another crucial element that performance art has embedded within it is the emphasis on the importance of the actively engaged spectator in gleaning multiple allegorical meanings from the body of the performer. Joseph Beuys’ work encourages spectators into an active engagement to decipher or ‘glean’ meaning from the work. Beuys was a passionate admirer of the writer James Joyce and actually included a copy of *Finnegan’s Wake* in one of his installations, and carefully annotated editions of Joyce’s work were found in his library after his death (Hayes, 2003, p.35). It could be argued that the same kind of active engagement required in reading Joyce, with its highly referential, poetic, allusive layering of meanings, is also required as part of the engaged spectator’s involvement with Beuys’ performance and installation, and in so

much other performance art.

### **The Location of Meaning**

Beuys is a key figure in the discussion about the meaning of performance art and installation, and whether meaning is located in the performer's expressed and conscious intentions, or whether it is located in the way the piece is deciphered by the engaged spectator. Jonathan Jones, the influential art critic and one of the Judges for the 2011 Turner Prize in London, writes, "Beuys was very articulate, almost too articulate about the meanings of his performances" (Jones, 2005). Beuys, Jones argues, presented his work as being concerned with democratic politics, optimism, and New Age ideas, but in fact Beuys' work resonates with multiple layers of meaning many of which are far darker. Jones writes:

Because Beuys is a German artist, it is impossible not to see the wounds of history everywhere, with a surpassing melancholy that dwarfs his attempts to commit his sculpture to an optimistic democratic politics. Beuys hoped his lumps of fat spoke of fluidity and progressive change. In fact, they are blocks of rancid yellow memory -- fat from Germany. (Jones, 2005)

Jones goes on to argue that it is the darker political resonances about German culture and its recent history that Beuys did not himself identify, that add depth and complexity to his work. It is these darker layers of meaning that Jones intuitively discerns which in fact lead him to point to Beuys as the greatest German artist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Jones

observes that “[w]e can mine Beuys for meanings we need because there is such a generous excess of content” (Jones, 2005).

### **Philippe Petit, Philippe Ménard and Acrobat.**

Returning to circus, both Philippe Petit and Philippe Ménard have created *limit-text* works in their own fields. In the work of Philippe Petit, it could be argued that the traditional circus skill of high-wire walking and performance art came together to create an astonishing limit-text work in his *Twin Towers High Wire Walk* in New York in 1974. There is a long history of spectacular high-wire walks including high-wire walkers in ancient Greece, who were known as *neurobats*, through to Madame Saqui in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century who walked between the towers of the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and on to Blondin with his breath-taking walks across the Niagara River (Demoriane, 2009). On August 7<sup>th</sup> 1974, Philippe Petit walked across a cable between the tops of the two tallest buildings in the world at that time, the twin towers of The World Trade Center. He performed for 45 minutes with no harness, buffeted by the wind and shouted at by police and security guards. Documentary photos of the event taken by his friend and associate Blondeau, show that Petit is not wearing a special costume but his street clothes. He is not performing as a fictional character in a fictional world. All theatrical pretense or pretext has been stripped away. He does not have any fancy props: all he has are the tools of the trade, the bare minimum that he needs to do the walk. The power of this performance resides in his live presence. He is not acting, he is performing personal truths. It is the intersection of performance art with circus that requires the spectator to actively engage with the image of Petit’s body in space and the

context he has placed it in, and to read it for meaning, searching for political and poetic resonances, even if they exceed the artist's expressed and conscious intent.

Approaching the images of Petit's Twin Towers walk with these ideas in mind, the documentary photographs become invested with the fragility of life -- that is the fragility of Petit's own life, and also with a poetic intensity that underscores the precarious nature of all human life, not only as individuals but also as a species. With our current knowledge of the 9/11 attacks and the resultant destruction of the World Trade Center, these images become even more potent as they point to an ephemerality of not only the performer's body itself but also of the two highest buildings in the world, the World Trade Center and by extension potentially Western culture itself. His high-wire walk has been memorably documented in the film *Man on Wire*, directed by the English Director, James Marsh. The image of Petit's wire walk is also explored by the award-winning Irish writer, Colum McCann in his 2009 novel, *Let the Great World Spin*. McCann's description of Petit's wire walk is five pages long and is a thrilling piece of writing. It shows how Petit's walk is effectively embedded in the contemporary psyche. The work can be deciphered as presenting a political body that resonates on many levels. It is a life-changing, limit-text work of new circus.

### **Philippe Ménard**

Philippe Ménard is a juggler who originally studied with the master juggler, Jérôme Thomas. One of Ménard's most powerful works is *Transformation P.P.P.* (which stands for *Position Parallèle au Plancher*, or *Parallel Position to the Floor*). This is a solo performance that is an investigation of juggling and also a limit-text work contesting the limits and boundaries of the art of juggling. Ménard juggles with balls of

ice that freeze his hands so he can't move them, and as the balls of ice melt, and change size, they slip and become uncatchable.

In this work, Ménard investigates the materiality, the physical presence and the poetic resonances of ice. This investigation into the actual substance of ice itself throughout this performance opposes the theatrical convention of substituting one substance for another, in which, for example, tea is often used to represent whisky on stage and the actor merely acts out a response to drinking whisky while in fact drinking tea. The exploration of the materiality of an object underlies much performance art, the idea being to ground the experience in the physical body of the spectator through the use of actual substances that are familiar. In his 1965 performance, *How to Explain Paintings to a Dead Hare*, Beuys anointed his head with honey and gold. Some of the associations that the spectator could bring to seeing honey in an installation or performance are described by Beuys: "in mythology honey was regarded as a spiritual substance and bees were godly" (Beuys in Tisdall 44). In the catalogue introduction for his show, *Joseph Beuys, Process 1971-1985*, at the Rooster Gallery in New York, Beuys is quoted as saying, "I want to get to the origin of matter, to the thought behind it" (Beuys in Rooney n/p, n/d).

This interest in the allegorical or metaphorical resonances of a material has, through the contact between performance art and circus, informed some of the most memorable new circus works. The materiality in Ménard's work repays in-depth readings, in *P.P.P.* for example in which Ménard juggles with ice. Performance critic, Thomas Ferrand describes how difficult the process of learning to juggle with ice was for Ménard. "Ice is a hostile material [...] The ball of ice breaks, slides, crashes and

burns the skin. It cannot be controlled [...] Philippe Ménard tells us that total control is an illusion and that the material tames us” (Ferrand, 2011, p. 8).

Circus scholar, Stine Degerbol describes how, as the ice changes into water, Ménard explores the dynamics of transformation. As the ice melts and changes shape it points to a metaphorical reading underscoring the notion of the transformation of the traditional art of juggling from tradition to renewal (Degerbol, 2009, p.8).

The transformation of the material also reflects the performer’s own personal journey, through a process of sex change operations, from being a man into being a woman. Ferrand writes, “Philippe Ménard reveals himself to a disconcerting degree... He suggests several times that his sex change is [...] a voyage from one state to another, just like ice changes from a solid state to a liquid one” (Ferrand, 2011, p.8).

Degerbol writes that “By using ice, the artist brings a natural element onto the stage, an element that is both powerful and fragile -- just like her and just like life. I am left with a feeling of restlessness and uncertainty brought on by my thoughts about identity and existence” (Degerbol, 2009, p.8). This work of Ménard’s can be seen as presenting a political body of embodied protest. This sense of impermanence and flux in relation to the body, and the emphasis on the body in process with an ability to affect and be affected by its environment, is potentially highly charged politically, as the notions of permeability and process, both in body and identity, challenge the concept of a fixed and stable identity on which societal control is based.

## **Acrobat**

The Australian contemporary circus group Acrobat was founded in the mid

1990s by circus artists Simon Yates and Jo Lancaster. In the show *Smaller, Poorer, Cheaper* (2007), they perform with an invited guest, the rope artist Mozes. This work is focused on the nature of circus and could be said to be a limit text work on the life of an acrobat. The work represents a *circus pauvre* in which the art form is stripped of its sequins and glamour and the focus is sharply on the essential daily discipline of the hard physical training which forms the core of any circus act. In Yates' slack wire act, he obsessively tries to train while he also tries to accommodate the basic daily demands of life such as having breakfast and getting dressed. It pinpoints the obsessive training required by top acrobats that leaves little time for much else. The act also culminates with failure as Yates continually pushes his body's limits, aiming to perform a flip higher and higher until he eventually reaches the point where he can go no further. These daily struggles with the body's limits represent the essence of circus. Jo Lancaster shows the problems of adapting to being a mother, as a vacuum cleaner sucks at her nipple in the compelling and constant demands of domesticity and motherhood.

Rope artist, Mozes, performs a cord act almost naked while a blood-red liquid drips down the rope and spills over him. The obsessive training required to create a world class circus act is re-created in front of your eyes as you watch the acrobat struggling with the equipment, battling the rope for the mastery. The physicality is confronting and the metaphorical resonances remind the spectator that the body is all that any of us has, and is mortal, fragile and ephemeral. Theatre critic, Lyn Gardner admits that the section with Mozes was so confronting that she wanted to avert her eyes. She describes Mozes as "hanging exposed in mid-air, both a bloody carcass and a naked newborn attached to its umbilical cord" (Gardner, 2007).

The work of the three artists in *Acrobat* stands as a powerful rejection of the trappings of consumerism. It is also an existential engagement through circus with the nature of being human, as everything that is surplus is stripped away, props, costumes, artifice, music, until all that is left is the body, the political body in embodied protest.

This chapter has traced the origins of embodied protest within performance art, explored the notion of materiality, and the importance of the active and engaged spectator in deciphering allusive layers of meaning which, even though they may often exceed the expressed intention of the performer, offer diverse resonances that have the potential to increase the potency of the work. These ideas when brought to bear on hybrid circus/performance artwork can potentially offer a wealth of meanings to mine, and also reveal new ways of reading the political body in new circus and contemporary circus arts.



## Chapter 4: The Body of Space

*SPACE is charged with ENERGY.*

*Space shrinks and expands.*

*And these motions mould forms and objects,*

*It is space that GIVES BIRTH to forms!*

*It is space that conditions the network of relations and tensions between objects*

*TENSION is the principle actor of space.*

Tadeusz Kantor (in Kobialka, 2009, p.50-51)

### Background

If circus is to be read through a performance studies lens, in which performance is seen as a “liminal space” (Schechner, 2002, p. 24) existing between modalities, then this liminality needs to be deconstructed and examined in different ways. In this section, liminality is explored as it relates to a metaphorical reading of space, which is perceived to be a vital body of particular importance to circus. The body of space in circus is replete with dynamic, relational energy, permeating all the physical forms of performance taking place within it. The physical and metaphorical resonances of the body of space are investigated in this chapter in relation to the various historical manifestations of circus.

Space is an essential contributory dynamic in circus, one that shapes and informs our perceptions. It is a vital *body* contributing both meaning and resonance to all aspects of performance. The metaphor of space as a body is drawn from the writings of Tadeusz Kantor (1915 - 1990), the Polish theatre director and visual artist who is

arguably the strongest proponent of the importance of space in performance (Wiles, 2003, p.13). Calling for the recognition of the importance of space as a vital element in the field of performance theory, Kantor writes:

Space is not a passive receptacle

In which objects and forms are posited...

SPACE itself is an OBJECT [of creation].

And the main one! (Kantor, cited in Kobialka, 2009, p.50-51)

David Wiles offers a concise history of the emergence of space as an element of importance in performance theory:

Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Grotowski and Adolhe Appia, the pioneer of modern stage design, represent the dominant twentieth-century line with their championship of the actor. Brecht argued for the story, and was content to work in conventional theatre buildings. Craig was ultimately more interested in shaping the stage than actor-audience relationships. Artaud hinted at a new direction with his notion of “spatial poetry,” but it is above all Tadeusz Kantor who rooted his understanding of theatre in an understanding of space ... He describes space as the ‘ur-matter’ of theatre, alive and independent of the artist. (Wiles, 2003, p.13)

Art historian, Sarah Wilson, from the Courtauld Institute describes Tadeusz

Kantor's artwork as an essential source of his creativity that informed his theatre (Wilson, 2011, p. 129). She emphasizes his foundational training as a painter and his importance as a key figure in the development of Polish visual arts. His paintings were included in major exhibitions including the Venice Biennale in 1960. However Kantor's work moved away from painting towards installation art, happenings, and events, as in shown by his inclusion in *Art and Theatre* Kunsthalle Berlin, Baden-Baden 1966, and *Happenings and Fluxus* at the Kolnischer Kunstverein in Cologne 1971. Wilson points to Kantor's "relationship with objects, environments, and happenings at the time of Nouveau Realisme in France, Beuys and the Zero Group in Germany, and Arte Povera in Italy" (Wilson, 2011, p.137). She emphasizes that "Kantor anticipated the expansion of art itself to the now preferred medium of spaces and time-capsules to traverse" (Wilson, 2011, p.137).

Kantor concentrated on the relational connections between the space and the objects in it, whether human or not. Within the visual arts, space as a vital constitutive element came to the foreground in the emergence of events and happenings, performance art and installations of the 1950s and 1960s, which, as scholar Michael Kirby points out in his anthology, *Happenings* (1965), resulted from the merging of various historical threads from visual arts and performance. Some of these historical threads included Futurist-Dada performance, the theatre of the Bauhaus, the evolution of collage into assemblages and then environments; and the emergence of action painting (Kirby, 1965).

Julie Reiss' writing about installation art summarizes the essential elements that make up the relationships involved in the experience of installation art. She expresses

the interactions in installation work as being based on a series of inter-relationships between the viewer, the work and the space itself, noting that “installation art can be abstract or pictorial, controlled or spontaneous. Separate objects can be included, or no objects at all. There is always a reciprocal relationship of some kind between the viewer and the work, the work and the space and the space and the viewer” (Reiss, 2000, p. xiii).

Schechner, although strongly influenced by Alan Kaprow’s 1966 book *Assemblages, Environments, Happenings*, initially did not include space as a vital element in his articulation of performance relationships. Schechner’s performance relationships are based on three primary interactions, the relationships between the performers; secondly, the relationships between audience members; and thirdly, the relationships between the performers and the audience members. In this understanding of performance relationships, everyone present at the event is involved in some way. These performance relationships are radical as they demolish the idea of a detached impartial observer, however, Schechner makes no mention of space and its dynamic relational impact on performance relationships (Wiles, 2003, p. 3). However, Schechner’s ideas about space evolve and, in the late eighties, he proposed that *space* is a secondary constituent of performance relationships noting that space’s importance could increase in time (Schechner, 1994, p. xxiv).

Schechner’s fluid approach to the development of ideas is one of the real strengths of performance studies and his re-evaluation of the importance of space as a vital relational constituent of performance-making reflects the fact that philosophers had been re-thinking the significance of space. “Kristeva, Foucault, and Deleuze and

Guattari, are all interested in the manner in which the spaces which we inhabit are to be understood as processes - as dynamic, ongoing series of events of which we ourselves are a part” (West-Pavlov, 2009, p. 22). The interrelationships between space, its inhabitants and the artefacts within it have been investigated by theorists such as Henri Lefebvre who redefines space as “at once result and cause, product and producer” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.142). This means that space is “not a pre-existing container for artefacts and practices, but [is something] which is constituted by them in a relationship of reciprocal influence and inflection” (West-Pavlov, 2009, p. 24).

So anything that takes place in space, is affected by the space and also, in turn, affects the space through a dynamic, complementary relationship. The vital thinking is that ‘artefacts’ or, in performance terms, the performance relationships themselves

are made possible by the spatial configurations which give rise to them, but artefacts in turn reconfigure the spaces they inhabit. Indeed, to pursue this logic to its inevitable conclusion, one must eventually abandon, this distinction between space and artefact, or between space and meaning. Instead space emerges as the sum of relations between artefacts; artefacts in turn are pervaded and traversed by the space which they helped to configure. (West-Pavlov, 2009, p. 24)

This chapter focuses on space in circus and examines the way in which the diverse performance spaces of circus are dynamic contributors to the changing readings of circus. This notion of the body of space as a profound and essential element

contributing to the physical and metaphorical resonance of performance is, in fact, rendered particularly clear by the continuously innovative, self-re-invention of circus.

From Philip Astley's dynamic and inventive use of the circus ring, which revolutionized the performance relationships between audience members and performers, to his introduction of the multi-leveled space for hippodramas, the brilliant color of chemically developed new paints, the chiascuro effects of the new lighting technologies, to the military technologies and the pre-cinematic technology of the panorama, spatial relationships in circus evolved. On the other side of the Atlantic, space in circus transformed from the nomadic itinerancy of the original small circus tents, to the simultaneity of the huge three-ring circus and to the emerging possibilities of contemporary immersive circus. This writing will explore how the body of space in circus alters in a fundamental way the dynamic connections between the bodies of the spectators and the performers, contributing new dynamics and manifestations of the performance event by, in a sense, *performing* the bodies of those present within it. This section explores the changing dynamics of different performance spaces in circus and interactions with both performers and audiences to create shifting loci of meaning inextricably linked with re-defining and re-imagining the genre of circus as an art form.

### **The Circus Ring and the Amphitheatre**

In 1768, when Philip Astley created the new genre of circus, the innovative performance space that he developed was one of the key factors that determined the immediate, popular success of the genre. Every single individual feature of circus, the daredevil trick riding displays, the clowning, the juggling, the acrobatics and the rope-

dancing, had all been seen before. The trick riding could be seen in the Leisure Gardens in London and the juggling, clowning and acrobatics were normal performances at any fair and also had been taken up as ‘fillers’ performed in intervals between acts in commercial theatres in London such as Sadler’s Wells. It could be argued that what was inventive was the way Astley had brought all these component parts together. However, what was, without doubt, innovative was the specially developed new space.

Several individual elements of the new space made it innovative. One key spatial change that Astley introduced into the performance environment was fencing to surround the entire area. This profoundly changed the nature of equestrian displays which had previously been public spectacles taking place in a field, a paddock or in the Leisure Gardens. Previously, people could stroll up to the display, gaze at it for as long as they wished and then put some money into a hat circulating through the crowd when, and if, they felt like it. Now Astley had placed the circus show behind barriers. “With its surrounding fence, [it] excluded the gaze of non-payers, while intensifying the expectations of the audience” (Kwint, 2002a, p. 78). Astley charged for admission and holders of tickets came to their seats for performances at specific time.

This meant that modern circus as an art form was unique in being “comparatively highly from the start” (Kwint, 1995, p. 17). These entrepreneurial beginnings meant that revenue was generated immediately and, as a consequence, the growth of circus was exponential.

The second key feature that Astley introduced was the circus ring, which created an iconic and distinctive identity for the new form. The ring became an instantly recognizable feature that attracted the attention of visual artists. The circus ring

continued to be featured in drawings, paintings and sculptures by diverse artists for the next two hundred years, including, Degas, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard, Seurat, Tissot, Chagall, Picasso, Leger and Calder. In their paintings and sculptures, the ring formed an emblematic and immediately identifiable signifier of circus.

Astley experimented with a number of different sized circus rings and finally found that the diameter of forty-two feet created the optimal shape to sustain the centrifugal and centripetal forces to enable the horse and rider to perform increasingly daring tricks. The size of the circus ring was determined by the *performance relations* between horse and trick-rider. The horse and rider and the way they interacted, in effect their *performance relations*, impacted on the development of the body of the circus space. Through the development of the ring, the body of space in circus evolved and changed the way in which the performers and spectators interacted with each other.

The placement of the ring in the centre of the performance space surrounded by the audience meant that the actual physical presence of the horses and riders, the smells and the sounds, was brought right into the middle of the audience creating an intense, new sensory environment. Spectators of trick riding had previously watched the horse and rider gallop past them, turn round, and then gallop back past them again. Through this new spatial design of the ring, spectators could now keep the horse and rider in sight at all times. A new way of seeing was introduced, a revolving three-dimensionality that revolutionized performance relationships.

The ring had some other profound and dynamic effects on the performance relationships in circus. In conventional theatres, the spectator's focus is proscribed by the proscenium arch that designates the area designed for audience focus, by framing a



portion of the theatrical world within it. This architectural division of the space in proscenium arch theatres creates the problem of a ‘knowing subject,’ that is, the audience member as critic who is outside the action and removed and thus feels able to pass what is traditionally considered *impartial* judgment on the action. Bourdieu describes the ‘fundamental and pernicious alteration’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p.5) created by the ‘knowing subject,’ which usually passes unnoticed, and occurs when ‘in taking up a point of view on the action, withdrawing from it in order to observe from above and from a distance, he constitutes practical activity as an *object of observation and analysis, a representation.*’ (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 2) To watch a performance as an external critic or observer is thus to change it from an immediate event into a representation.

However, in this new circus ring of Astley’s, the performance area namely the ring is only lightly defined by low barriers. There is no stage, no proscenium, and there are no divisive boundaries. In this spatial arrangement, the spectators are not removed from the performance practice by the architectural divisions of the space. They are, instead, actively involved as participants in the dynamics of the space and the performance, involved in the immediacy of the sensory environment.

The ring demands a different kind of performance from the performers since they must become more active in defining and creating the central focus of the performance, or rather, they must become

its beating heart ... The [performers] who incarnate this heart, this *punctum saliens*, this dynamic centre of the play’s universe are officiants, magicians.

They are the centre and the circumference is nowhere - forced to recede into infinity, absorbing the spectators themselves, catching them into the unbounded sphere. (Etienne Souriau, 1950, cited in Wiles, 2003, p. 66)

In the ring, the performers, without the framing of the proscenium arch, have to attract and hold the focus of the audience through their own bodies, their energy and physical presence and the interaction between themselves. The performers need to be powerful and compelling in order to hold the attention of the spectator as, in this in-the-round performance space, they have to compete with the proffered temptation to stare at other audience members who come into view with the curving of seats around the circular ring. As the novelist Charles Dickens notes of his experience at Astley's circus, it is "with shame we confess, that we are far more delighted and amused with the audience, than with the pageantry" (Dickens, 1839, p. 113). In this spatial configuration, the body of space introduces the spectators as performers and, in effect, the space could be said to *perform* the spectators.

However, if the actual performers do succeed in capturing the focus of the spectators, the ring can act as a crucible, intensifying and heightening the experience of the spectator. "The excitement ... of a performance in the round comes from the feedback [it] provides. ... The stimulus to laugh, cry, boo or applaud is reinforced as strongly as it can be by the rest of the audience. Compare this self-confrontation with the stimulating view of the back of a neck provided by the conventional theatre layout. (Peter Laurie, 1966 cited in Wiles, 2003, p. 185)

This emotional interaction can create a heightened, intense experience and, in

turn, engender a sense of community between audience members. The ring also provides a conceptual device to provoke specific readings of the performances taking place within it. Ascribing a metaphorical reading to performance spaces, Schechner observes that

[t]heater [or performance] places are maps of the cultures where they exist. That is theater is analogical not only in the literary sense - the stories dramas tell, the convention of explicating action by staging it - but also in the architectonic sense ... Thus for example, the Athenian theater of the fifth BCE had as its center the altar of Dionysus. (Schechner, 2004, p. 179)

Scholar David Wiles proposes that the spatial relationship between horse and ringmaster could be read as representing the ability of the heroic human being to conquer and overcome nature. Spatially, the central point of the ring is dominated by the human, the ringmaster, while the inner periphery belongs to the animal, the horse which can be read as an embodiment of the power of nature. “The challenge of circus was for the human being to conquer that periphery” (Wiles, 2003, p. 199).

Scenes were painted on the inside walls of the amphitheatres, that is the buildings housing the circus. These paintings enhanced and extended the metaphorical readings of the performer and horse within the ring. Astley’s first amphitheatre, called the Royal Grove (1786-91), had pastoral scenes of trees painted on the walls creating the feeling that the audience and the performers shared the same natural environment, a cultivated, pastoral grove of trees that surrounded them on all sides. Readings are

always polyvalent and open to different interpretations, however, Wiles proposes, that one way these images could be read, reinforcing the metaphorical reading of the ring, was that the wild forces of nature had been tamed by the hard work of pioneers; in much the same way that the horse had been tamed by the rider in the ring, who had conquered and tamed nature in the form of the animal he/she was now riding (Wiles, 2003, p. 200). By 1803, Astley had built a second amphitheatre with the zodiac painted on the ceiling which showed Britannia receiving gifts or tribute from all four corners of the known world. Wiles proposes that this mural engendered metaphorical resonances proclaiming the circus “a microcosm, placing spectators at the centre of the empire” (Wiles, 2003, p. 200).

Astley expanded his circus rapidly and soon had built so many amphitheatres, that he was nicknamed “Amphi-Philip” (Jando & Forcey, 2007). The swift initial success of circus may have been due to the architectural structure of the amphitheatre itself, which provided a calm, focused atmosphere, as opposed to the confusing mazes of the fairground, where many of the acts found in circus had originated. Astley used the new architecture as a focusing device to enable him to create a composed atmosphere, whilst maintaining a light airiness similar to the pleasure gardens with which both Astley’s and the Royal Circus were associated (Kwint, 2000a, p. 104). This stood in firm contrast to the heavy reds drapes and the velvets in use in the winter theatres. Scholar, Marius Kwint suggests that Astley’s building displayed many qualities found in the designs which social reformers of the time were demanding for public building, including prisons.

Whatever the Foucauldian implications of the last comparison, it is certainly possible to see how the neat white building originally conceived by Astley, with its seating and ‘commodious Room apart for the Nobility and Gentry,’ helped to discipline and focus the attention of spectators and performers alike. (Kwint, 2002a, p. 104)



6. A.C. Pugin and Thomas Rowlandson coloured aquatint engraving of Astley's Amphitheatre first published in Rudolf Ackermann's *Microcosm of London*, 1808  
Retrieved from: <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/illustration-of-astleys-amphitheatre>  
Held by British Library. Free from known copyright restrictions  
Image In Public Domain

Kwint cites a puff (popular press) writer (1787) who claimed that the circus engaged audiences in a new kind of ambience: “instead of noise, confusion, blasphemy, vice and

folly, sound sense, rational entertainment and pleasant entertainment took place”  
(Kwint, 2002a, p. 106).

Early circus was a place where “people of fashion came, but do not seem to have felt threatened by the massed plebs as they did in theatre” (Wiles, 2003, p. 199). Scholar Jane Moody observes that Astley’s was frequented by what she terms “genteel people with their children and servants,” noting that when Queen Caroline toured London in 1821 she visited Astley’s Amphitheatre (Moody, 2000, p. 171). Circus acquired an international dimension as amphitheatres spread throughout England and to France where Astley opened Amphithéâtre Astley (1782), a temporary arena at Versailles (1786) and Cirque du Palais Royale in Paris (1787).

Astley achieved success very quickly and, as a successful entrepreneur, he kept developing and innovating to keep attracting audiences. Two years after he had put on the first show in his circus ring, Astley developed a temporary stage that could be erected on trestles in a few minutes. The temporary stage was placed in the centre of the circus ring and proved advantageous in lifting performers up above the level of the horses at pertinent moments for intimate scenes between performers. It then could be quickly dismantled again when a conventional ring was required for the equestrian acts.

Astley’s Amphitheatre was not granted a license allowing it to perform plays or anything text-based which had a script that resembled a play. It was instead granted an annual licence for “public dancing and music” and “other public entertainments of like kind” (St. Leon, 2011, p. 9). As Drury Lane and Covent Garden were the only two theatres in London with royal patents allowing them to produce plays or productions that were text-based, the other venues started experimenting and trying to develop a

whole range of other ways to communicate with audiences rather than through a conventional script-based play.

In these *illegitimate* theaters as scholar Jane Moody calls them (Moody, 2000), there started to emerge, an alternative performance that invaded the legitimate theatre's territory of "moral and exemplary reason" (Bratton, 2007a, p.117). The work staged at these *illegitimate* theatres, which included the circus amphitheatres, produced a different kind of theatre, a theatre of the body, featuring spectacle and athleticism which ran in constant fear of being taken to court and shut down if performances ventured too far into the territory of the legitimate theatre. There emerged a new "sensuous, spectacular aesthetic largely wordless except for the lyrics of songs" (Bratton, 2007a, p. 117).

Astley found a way around the law by developing shows in which the dramaturgy already existed. As an experienced cavalryman who had fought in the Seven Years War in Europe and "who had received four horses in gratitude for his gallantry at the siege of Valenciennes" (Moody, 2000, p. 27), Astley was in a perfect position to create physical enactments depicting current battles and events. "Revolution and war now provided the script for an illegitimate theatre of peril, danger and spectacular illusion" (Moody, 2000, p. 28). Through Astley's meticulous choreography, the productions *Tippoo Saib or British Valour in India* (1791), *Tippoo Sultan, or The Seige of Bangalaore* (1792), *Tippoo Saib, or East India Campaigning* (1792) and *Tippoo Saib's Two Sons* (1792) presented dramatized events from the campaigns against Tipu Sultan in the Third Mysore War (1789-92), a war in South India between the Kingdom of Mysore and the East India Company and its allies who included the

Maratha Empire and the Nizam of Hyderabad. Scholar Daniel O'Quinn suggests that these productions "generated intense fantasies of imperial supremacy through the enactment of imperial discipline in an enclosed viewing space" (O'Quinn, 2005, p. 241).

Astley's staging presented the imperial conduct and discipline of the British forces in contrast with the chaos and disorder on the Mysorean side. In addition, developing technologies were adapted for use in the space to reinforce this theatrical representation of technological superiority. Some of the new visual technologies that Astley used have been termed pre-cinematic, including the panorama (or diorama as it is sometimes called) and "the phantasmagoria and other visual machines [which] expanded the means through which an audience could be addressed" (O'Quinn, 2005, p. 312). The panorama or diorama ran in the same way that a film used to run in an old-fashioned camera, rolling between vertical rollers on either side of the stage.

In Astley's production *The Siege and Storming of Seringapatam* (1800), events from the Fourth Mysore War (1798-99) were depicted. The production used a panorama, painted by Robert Ker Porter, which was one of the largest paintings in the world at 120 feet (37 metres) long. This panorama depicted the scene of the storming of Seringapatam and the eventual defeat of Tipu Sultan. The panorama was exhibited at Astley's Amphitheatre as a vast spectacular that formed a moving backdrop carried around three-quarters of a circle (V&A, Homepage, 2013). In effect, the performance space, with its incorporation of cutting-edge pre-cinematic technology, effectively represented in a vivid, visual way, antiquated Indian skills being "literally subsumed by exhibitions of European technological and logistical supremacy" (O'Quinn, 2007, p. 241).



Other cutting edge technologies, many of which came directly from contemporaneous warfare, were introduced into the performance space including explosions using redfire, a new military explosive which combined “strontia, shellac and chlorate of potash, [which] produce ... spectacular flame effects” (Moody, 2000, p. 28). Redfire was used for ‘blow-ups’ which were explosions often occurring at the end of the performance when the villain’s castle or hideout was destroyed. In the production of *The Seige and Storming of Seringapatam*, the action moved through a series of blowups and demonstrated the effects of a “tightly drilled artillery battery, [and] the audience [was] left contemplating the spectacle of Tipu’s zenana (the residence of his wives) on fire and modernity’s overwhelming superiority” (O’Quinn, 2007, p. 241).

Astley continued experimenting with his performance space and between 1804 and 1841 installed a permanent stage at one side of the amphitheatre. Scholar Gillian Arrighi writes that the performance space that Astley developed was a “completely new theatrical configuration that had not been seen in Western culture before” (Arrighi, 2012, p.177) that combined the circus ring with a raised theatre stage joined together by ramps that were large enough and strong enough to allow horses to be ridden over them during performances. Astley developed the staging so that it had the capacity to be multi-level, involving “immense [moveable] platforms or floors, rising above each other, and extending the whole width of the stage” (Meisel, 1983, p. 214). O’Quinn suggests that this complex, hybrid staging found in Astley’s Amphitheatre, reflects the desire to represent colonial space within the performance space:

It could be argued that these new amphitheaters in bringing together the circus

ring and different levels of moveable stages, and introducing new technologies, present us with an architectonic map of colonial space with its contestations, anxieties and complexities, and changing physical, cultural and political territories. (O'Quinn, 2007, p. 241)

The ability to transform the space was enhanced with draped and masked moveable platforms and these proved central to the creation of a “new hybrid genre of swashbuckling melodramas on horseback, or ‘hippodramas’” (Kwint 2002b, p. 46). The moveable platforms could “carry galloping or skirmishing horsemen, and be masked to represent battlements, heights, bridges, and mountains” (Meisel, 1983, p. 214). Foot soldiers and mounted cavalry would fight their way across the elaborate sets and the production would culminate with a big finale with usually a burning castle (Kwint, 2002a, p. 95). One of the first hippodramas was called *The Blood Red Knight* and opened in 1810 at Astley's Amphitheatre. Moody writes that the performance had an astonishing run of 175 performances and brought in £18,000. Presented in dumbshow, and interspersed with grand chivalric processions, the show featured Alphonso's rescue of his wife Isabella from her imprisonment and forced marriage to the evil knight Sir Roland and concluded with the spectacular, fiery destruction of the castle and Sir Rowland's death (Moody, 2000, p. 69).

Wiles suggests that the interplay between stage and ring meant that early circus in these hippodramas represented two worlds. These two worlds oscillated between the real action in the ring and the illusionistic representations of activity on stage. The multilevel staging in circus “set up a balance between the pleasures of the gladiator in

the ring and the pantomime in the theatre. In the ring, a hero exposed himself to physical danger, whilst on stage a mythic other world was created” (Wiles, 2003, p. 199).

The mythic potential of the other world represented on stage was profoundly enhanced by emerging new technologies quickly adapted for theatrical use. Scenic design and painting changed from being dingy, muddy backdrops created in opaque earth-colored pigments to being glowing, transparent and brightly colored. The new colors and transparencies in the painting of scenic backdrops were made possible by new chemistry emerging from the coal mining industry which led to the development of brightly colored paints which were relatively cheap and affordable. Newly synthesized ultramarines and Prussian blue became available, as was an intense green created from chromium dioxide. By the 1820s, bright yellows, oranges and strong reds from chromium came into use. Zinc white, instead of the chalk that had been used previously, meant that pigments could be tinted with durable luminosity. These new pigments totally eclipsed the earth colours that had previously been available (Baugh, 2007, p. 53).

A commentator writing in 1828 about the pantomime *Queen Bee* at Drury Lane, wrote that when he thought back about the performance space and the scenery as it had been a few years previously and,

the dingy, filthy scenery which was exhibited there - trees, like inverted mops, of a brick dust hue - buildings generally at war with perspective - water as opaque as the surrounding rocks, and clouds not a bit more transparent - when

we compare these things with what we now see, the alteration strikes us as nearly miraculous. (cited in Baugh, 2007, p. 53)

The introduction of limelight into the theatre also revolutionized the look and feel of the performance space. Before the invention of limelight, lighting in the amphitheatres had been gaslight that could be dimmed and even taken to blackout. The colour could be changed by the use of a 'medium' - pieces of cloth, cotton wool or silk stretched over a wire grid and placed in front of the gas jet. Gaslight was limited, however, in that it tended to create an all-over wash at a low level which produced a relatively dim, flat lighting offering no highlights or shadows (Redler, 2013, p. 53).

Limelight, invented by Thomas Drummond in 1816 but first introduced as theatre lighting in 1837, was created by heating limestone to the point where it became incandescent, emitting a strong white light. This new form of theatrical lighting created by incandescent lime "produce[d] a wide spectrum, almost identical to that of sunlight" (Baugh, 2007, p. 53). It was generally used as a beam coming from high up on the side of the stage or later on from the back of the house or auditorium. New spectacles emerged often with strong romantic overtones. The new limelight focused intense bright white light on the desired areas and intensified all the colours and "really threw open the realms of glittering fairyland to the scenic artist" (Baugh, 2007, p. 53) and thus to the audiences.

Performance areas could be spot lit with limelight and the intensity of the spotlights created a new space of darkness and shadows, a chiaroscuro, allowing for the interplay of light and shadow on stage in a way that was perfect for the emerging

interest in Gothic spectacles. The separation of performing lights from the lights for the audience or the house lights, and the habit of darkening the house lights only became the normal procedure towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Redler, 2013, p. 53)).

The *Circusiana* plays written by John Cross in the early years of the nineteenth century existed in a “hinterland between circus and theatre” (Moody, 2000, p. 29). “These plays abound with Gothic horrors in the form of skeletons and apparitions. Most are set in wild and picturesque scenery, whether in the Appenine mountains (*Rinaldo Rinaldini*) in a distant sea view after a tempest (*The False Friend*) or on the edge of a precipice in the West Indies (*Blackbeard; or The Captive Princess*)” (Moody, 2000, p. 29). Pruitt proposes that the essence of the *Circusiana* lies in the way in which the productions conveyed an archetypal narrative “of the villainous usurper finally defeated amidst various horrors in wild and picturesque settings and the final restoration of domestic and political hierarchies” (Pruitt, 2009).

Wiles proposes that one of the dynamics created by the relationship between the ring and the multi-level stages was to introduce an architectonic structure reflecting social hierarchies. He writes that “the horse-borne human protagonists tended to be lower class figures: tars, flower-girls, highwaymen, couriers and the like. Echoing the Greek space of the circling chorus, the ring belonged to ordinary mortal beings” (Wiles, 2003, p. 200-201). The circus ring was the site for the display of the beauty of the physical body through spectacular trick riding and also the stillness of the living statues, renditions of classical statues brought to life in the ring often showing virtually naked performers.

The stage however was the place where “plebeians escape environmental dangers and discover they have noble blood. Nobility of spirit and the ethereal beauty of exotic landscapes were displayed within the idealist world of the stage” (Wiles, 2003, p. 200-201). Wiles suggests that when horses in hippodrama “invaded the high-status space of the stage which did not belong to them as members of a lower order, tragedy might follow” (Wiles, 2003, p. 200-201). As an example, Wiles cites the production of Byron’s *Mazeppa*, and the ultimate death of the Tartar horse after it has carried Mazeppa to safety up onto the stage and over the ramps and stages of the theatrical mountain range (p. 200-201).

For the first seventy-five years, “circuses took place in buildings, [or amphitheatres] which were known as hard circuses or cirques en dur” (Wall, 2013, p.182). Moody writes:

In London, the architecture and design of the [amphitheatres and] minor theatres evolved haphazardly from the existing urban fabric - an old clothes factory (the Pavilion), a disused chapel (the New City) a tennis court (The Albion) ... or an old French warship bought from the Admiralty, from whose timbers Philip Astley built his whimsical Olympic Theatre in Wych Street, complete with a whimsical line of horses heads which ran along the architrave ... Many performers came to live in the streets around the playhouse in which they worked so that miniature theatrical neighbourhoods grew up. (Moody, 2000, p. 150)

Some of the circus amphitheatres were constructed from stone and were as luxurious as the finest opera houses, with hand carved ornamental stone friezes and sculptures decorating their exterior facades. “Each great European city had its version - the Cirque Royal in Brussels; the Tivoli in Copenhagen; in Budapest; The Orpheus” (Wall, 2013, p. 182). This style of circus, Wall notes, was known as *l’élégance française* and he describes it as spreading around the world from Moscow to Buenos Aires, but peaking in Paris with the Cirque des Champs-Élysées. Interest in complex and highly choreographed circus and hippodramas continued in Europe within these luxurious permanent buildings, and allowed for the development of the complex use of multi-level stages, brilliantly colored backdrops, and sophisticated lighting and performances with evolved use of staging technology, lighting and scenery. For a brief period from the middle of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth, these luxurious permanent buildings and the magnificent foyers and performance spaces within them, reflected appreciation of circus as an art form perceived as being “highbrow” (Wall, 2013, p. 183) which received acclaim from not only the audience but also from critics. Aristocratic spectators dressed in tuxedos and evening gowns, “bantered, cheered and scoffed as clowns capered and equestriennes in tutus struck refined poses on horseback” (Wall, 2013, p. 183).

### **The Circus Tent**

Meanwhile, John Bill Ricketts, one of Astley’s students, had travelled to America in 1792 and opened a riding academy in Philadelphia. Ricketts tried to continue to present circus using amphitheatres, however the populations in most cities

were too small to sustain a permanent amphitheatre. Initially Ricketts and his competitors toured shows between New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, the only cities considered big enough to guarantee an audience large enough to cover the construction costs of amphitheatres. Large, temporary wooden amphitheatres or arenas were constructed before the circus arrived, and after the end of the season usually dismantled and sold off as lumber.

In 1825, Joshua Purdy Brown, from New York, responded to the challenges that showing circus in America presented, by coming up with a game-changing idea which altered the whole future direction of circus in America. He presented circus in a canvas tent. The tent in early America circus “was a small affair, circular in shape and supported by a single central pole and a number of side poles around its circumference” (St. Leon, 2011, p. 15). This development was revolutionary, changing the course of circus history and setting in place patterns and rhythms of itinerancy for North American circus. “Its constant movements made the American circus unique in relation to its relatively settled European counterpart” (Davis, 2002, Chapter 2, p. 17).

To re-iterate Schechner’s idea, the performance space of the touring tent formed an architectonic map reflecting the itinerant life of colonial pioneers forging their way to new frontiers in early America. Wall describes these early American shows as being “small almost ramshackle affairs” (Wall, 2013, p. 191). He writes how they came

into town with a canvas tent rolled into a pair of covered wagons, the team of performers and crew, usually fewer than a dozen men, would set up camp ... Since lighting was expensive and a fire hazard, performances were often



scheduled for the afternoon. (Wall, 2013, p. 191)

Touring was arduous for these early American circuses with the horse-drawn wagons often encountering roads blocked by snow or fallen trees or slippery and treacherous with ice or mud. These early touring tent shows were known affectionately as “mud shows” (St. Leon, 2012, p. 15) perhaps because of the state the circus arrived in after the difficulties of traversing the roads.

By 1840, the design had been developed to allow the size of the tent to be changed: “By the insertion of one or more rectangular pieces between the two semi-circular ends, the use of two or more centre poles and the insertion of quarter poles, the capacity of the tent could be adjusted to meet the expected size of the audience” (St Leon, 2012, p. 15). Circus now had a portable and flexible touring tenting system that could be adjusted to suit the size of audience.

This itinerancy had several noticeable effects on the performance relationships in circus in America. As the new circuses pushed out west across much of the US, the impact of hard touring meant that little new work was developed, also circuses could keep presenting the same acts because they were constantly playing to different audiences. The style of the shows however changed to adapt to the new audiences of farmers and frontiersmen and “equestrians performed cowboy stunts in spurs and britches” (Wall, 2013, p. 192). This pioneering travelling circus began to play to a ‘rough and tumble’ audience and itself became ‘rough and tumble.’ In the lawless world of the frontier towns, circuses “sabotaged one another by slashing tents and stealing horses” (Wall, 2013, p. 192). ‘Grift’ - from pickpocketing to con games was

sanctioned. Ticket-buyers were knowingly short-changed and “if locals found out and came looking for them, the circus crew would shout ‘Hey Rube’ and dive into a ‘clem’ a raucous brawl involving dozens of men wielding sledgehammers and chains” (Wall, 2013, p. 192).

American towns soon passed anti-circus legislation. Connecticut banned circuses outright. Sunbury, Pennsylvania prosecuted six acrobats for witchcraft in 1829, for having “‘private conferences with the spirits of darkness’ as well as exposing their populace to such performances of magic as ‘leaping over a horse through hoops’” (Wall, 2013 p. 192).

The history of the spatial marginality of circus or the fact of circus travelling and setting up on the edges of towns runs parallel to a “dramatic symbolic history captured in the common expression ‘running away to join the circus’” (Stephens, 2012, p. 14). Stephens argues that the circus has inhabited the virtual *outside* for generations of North Americans and that this culture tends “to make an interpretive leap between disrepute and dissent and assume that the popular may always at some point either voice or at least harbor dangerous politics” (Stephens, 2012, p. 14).

This identification of the nomadic circus touring in its big top, disturbing the normality of the places it visits, introducing dangers, taboos or the dissident, is still present in North America. Jay Leno, the American comic and TV show host speaking in the late 1990s, framed a common perception of circus, when he stated:

It’s a traveling syphilitic sideshow: I don’t like the circus. Diseased animals and hermaphrodite clowns throwing anthrax spores at the children. This is like

entertainment from the ninth century. Greeks, trolls, mutants, all these inbred circus people. They come out from under bridges, releasing disease and pestilence into the air. I don't like the circus. (Leno, as cited in Brownfield, 2000)

At the other end of the spectrum, some observers sensed that the itinerant way of life touched a sentimental chord with the nation's pioneering spirit: "The itinerant nature of American circus resonated with the American public and over the years created an iconic nomadic identity," which, on the one hand, is sometimes viewed as "tragically rootless" and, on the other hand, can be seen as a lifestyle "blissfully free of constraint" (Tobier, 1999, p. 19).

The spread of the railways across America was a development that offered huge potential for touring circus and many circuses travelled by train. However there was a logistical problem with the loading and unloading of the railway cars. Dan Castello and William Coup approached P.T. Barnum to back a venture and invest in developing a new way to tour circus by rail. They proposed buying the railway cars and fitting them out specifically for touring circus. Barnum backed the idea, agreeing to combine the exhibits from his museum in New York (which had recently burnt down) with the circus show and to tour the whole combination in the new specially fitted out railway cars. With the logistical problems of touring by train resolved, the scale of big-tops grew exponentially. "The tents became huge, from one that could seat 5,000 in 1872, the Barnum tent had increased to a capacity of 14,000 in 1898" (Loxton, 1997, p. 28).

With such huge tents, the distances inside the tents became too great for the

entire audience to see the action clearly and audiences were losing the sense of immediacy and connection that they had previously had with artists in the circus ring. It was not practical to think of making the circus ring any larger, as all the existing horse and rider acts were custom-made for the forty-two foot diameter ring and so would have involved intensive re-training of all the horses.

Barnum came up with an innovative solution to this problem, a solution that had a revolutionary impact on the dynamics of the performance space and the performances relationships in the way the spectators experienced circus. In 1881, Barnum and his new partner James A. Bailey put three rings into the big top and created the three-ring format, one of the most distinctive features of American touring circus. The term ‘three-ring circus’ only begins to give a hint of the actual experience of watching one of these shows because, as well as the three rings and a track going right around the edge of the performing area known as the hippodrome track, Barnum placed two stages in between the three circus rings.

The stages accommodated those acts that required a hard surface, such as trick cycling or roller-skating. Above the three rings and adjacent stages, there were performances from artists on high wires and sometimes up to three trapeze troupes performing at the same time. These *incorporations* into circus mirrored the societal process of industrialization, and could be said to have presented what Schechner describes as an architectonic map of the growing complexity and sensorial overload of city life as experienced by city dwellers in the growing urban centres at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the winter of 1889-1890, Barnum took his gigantic new circus to London. British audiences, still used to the one-ring circus, “hardly knew what to make of it. It was bewildering, overwhelming, apt to give spectators ‘fits of indigestion,’ critics wrote. Yet nearly all agreed it was a magnificent spectacle” (Saxon, 1988, p. 32)

Barnum sometimes also placed an enormous raised stage, over 100 meters wide, at one side of the arena on which pantomimes were performed such as *Nero, or the Destruction of Rome*. *Nero*, performed in 1889 and 1890, featured a full orchestra and a 100-voice choir, a cast of over 1000 actors and dancers, and nearly all the animals in



7. John Robinson's Circus, 1929,  
Performance of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba during a spec,-a procession around the edge of the inside of the bid top. Photographer Henry Atwell. 1879 -1957  
Retrieved from: [http://Wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John\\_Robinson%27s\\_Circus\\_WDL10696png](http://Wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John_Robinson%27s_Circus_WDL10696png)  
Image in Public Doman

the circus, “besides scenery depicting the interior of Nero’s palace, the Circus Maximus,

and Rome itself, which spectacularly burned at the end, of course, amidst a glorious apotheosis celebrating the DAWN OF CHRISTIANITY!” (Saxon, 1988, p. 32)

Stoddart observes that “the existence of three rings with simultaneous entertainment in each ... transformed the nature of spectatorship ... and an appreciation of individual acts was replaced by [an] impression of the show as a whole” (Stoddart, 2000, p. 43-44). In some senses, however, it could be argued that, in a large circus tent with three, or sometimes even 4 circus rings, nobody could possibly have an impression of the circus performance ‘as a whole,’ as it would be impossible to see everything going on. Even if you sat in the most expensive seats, you would not be able to see the whole show, as the space was simply too big and the events too plentiful. In this sense, every single spectator, even the ones in the best seats, could only have had a partial experience of the total event. The different spatial organization prompted Stoddart’s suggestion that

the organization of the rings in this fashion may have been panoramic in shape but was really closer to an animated triptych which perhaps has its closest parallel in Abel Gance’s epic cinematic experiment in simultaneous projection, *Napoleon* (1927 Fr.). (Stoddart, 2000, p. 43-44)

This comparison may provide an impression about the audiences’ experience in one of these huge three-ring circuses, however, it is also worth considering that this notable ‘avant-garde’ filmic experiment with simultaneity in 1927 occurred almost five decades after the first three-ring circus which Barnum presented in 1881. In fact, it is arguable

that some of the very earliest manifestations of an emerging aesthetic of fragmentation, collage and simultaneity could be seen in the three-ring circus.

The three-ring circus, in many ways, was instrumental in introducing a notion of *bricolage* into spectatorship, which was to have a profound influence on contemporary arts and aesthetics. Each spectator in the three-ring circus would have had a unique experience created from different and partial fragments as the direction of their focus determined the portions of the show that they saw and absorbed. *Bricolage* or the gathering of available fragments to construct something is the underlying principle of collage in which fragments are collected and collated to create an image or collage. The idea of collage could be said to be one of the major guiding principles of art in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in all media from visual arts to performance. Bricolage, collage and simultaneity began to emerge in the work of artists just after the turn of the century. This collaged, fragmented experience of simultaneity that the spectator in the three ring circus experienced proved influential perhaps largely because its complexity mirrored the congestion of cities, and the fragmentation of visual information caused by speed, as people en masse travelled by steam train and motor cars. The principles of fragmentation, bricolage, collage, and simultaneity stimulated and inspired the Dadaists, and the Futurists, and eventually became defining ideas in arts in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Collage, in this later understanding of space, has been used as an organizing stratagem in performance as can be seen in works by “Elizabeth LaCompte and the Wooster Group, the plays of Heinrich Mueller, the theatre pieces of Robert Wilson, the choreography of Pina Bausch, the music of John Zorn, and the films of Jean-Luc Goddard” (Copeland, 2004, p. 154). Copeland suggests that unlike the

*Gesamtkunstwerk*, “which exemplifies a hunger for wholeness, collage appeals to an age that had come to distrust claims of closure, ‘unity’ and fixed boundaries” (Copeland, 2004, p. 154). Copeland quotes Donald Barthelme: “Fragments are the only forms I trust” (Copeland, 2004, p. 154).

Kaprow’s *Eighteen Happenings in Six Parts* (1959,) that took place at the Reuben Gallery in Manhattan, has been described as a kind of simultaneous action collage (Wegenstein, 2006, p. 44). Kaprow, the painter and assemblage artist who coined the term “Happenings,” developed his events as “anti-art audience participation works” (Cotter, 2006). Wegenstein describes a Kaprow event as a collage of simultaneity, with events all happening at once which

could be experienced only through a compartmental logic of simultaneity (one next to the other). Through the trope of simultaneity it becomes clear that here performance no longer is based on unity as in traditional theatre, but rather on fragmentation, separation, and difference. One of Kaprow’s teachers, the composer John Cage, highly inspired by the Dadaist-futurist tradition himself, used the term *simultaneity* for one of his early works from 1952: ‘Simultaneous presentation of unrelated events’ (Wegenstein, 2006, p. 44).

Artists in performance and mixed media used simultaneity to challenge the notion of singularity and aura identified by Walter Benjamin as the ethos pertaining to the traditional art object. The aim was to introduce many simultaneous activities or points of focus to disrupt the conventional singular, fixed gaze of the participant and to



challenge the notion of art as a singular and fixed experience. American three-ring circus could be said to have been highly influential in the awakening of this radical, innovative, spatial aesthetic of simultaneity and fragmentation within the body of the performance space.

### **New Circus**

With the emergence of new media such as television, radio and cinema, circus had been relegated to the back lots, both in reality and metaphorically. It was vital for circus to re-imagine itself if it were to survive as an art form. The Moscow Circus stimulated new interest in circus and this combined with the political protests of 1968 led to the development of new circus, and a reaction against the huge spectacles of Barnum with the desire to make circus contemporary and relevant. When alternative new circus, or alternative circus as it is sometimes called, began, most companies either built their own tents or used their own aerial rigs and performed outside.

The first tents of Cirque Aligre (1976), Big Apple Circus (1979) and Circus Oz (1978) are classic. They all have a single ring surrounded by bleacher seating and were put up by the artists and their friends. The earliest alternative circuses Cirque Bidon (1974), New Circus (1974) and the Pickle Family Circus (1974) all operated with aerial rigs, performed within a ring, under the open sky.

(Mullett, 2006, p. 2)

The small one ring tent or the simple aerial rig became a symbol of a radical political

agenda, of an alternative performance which stood as an architectonic symbol of the new circus companies desire to reach out beyond the privileged middle-class audiences of much traditional theatre, ballet and opera. New circus, which from its conception had strong connections with radical street theatre and busking, used these small tents and aerial rigs to take circus out into the streets, into the workplace and to connect with new audiences.

The performed sense of an alternative home and of the circus troupe as an alternative family model, as discussed previously, became a strong image of early new circus. Some contemporary circus companies today still aim to bring a performed space of 'home' to the performance space in spite of the fact that they no longer live and tour in tents. Mullet compares two posters of circus companies from 2006. She points out that the poster for *Loft*, a show from the Quebec contemporary circus company 7 Fingers, depicted the whole cast coming out of a large old-fashioned fridge "clearly linking their work with the domestic daily routine of a family" (Mullett, 2006, p. 4). The show took place in a representation of a home, which Mullett describes as being more like a student share house than a traditional family home, and the characters enter using domestic props including a bath and a bed. At the beginning of the show, the company members invited the spectators to enter their home by "escorting them through the back stage and through the fridge on the set on the stage before getting to their seats, implying that the audience was also part of this domesticity" (Mullett, 2006, p. 5). Likewise, Acrobat, in a 2006 poster, used an image of a performer caught in mid-air as he somersaults inside a house. Mullett points out that the posters for both these shows present a suburban image of 'home' and that this representation of a suburban

life-style has replaced the representation of the nomadic alternative circus home of the caravan or small one-ring tent on the road. Mullett notes, of both the 7 Fingers image and the Acrobat poster, that “the circus home in both these images is not the caravan on the road but the suburban house. The life of the circus that was so clearly associated with progressive politics is no longer on show” (Mullett, 2006, p. 5).

However there are a few exceptions. Cirque Bidon still tours France in its horse-drawn caravans. Cirque Rasposo, which was founded in 1987 in Bourgogne, still performs *Chant du Dindon*, which presents the lives of the company as an alternative family travelling in a small one-ring circus. On my viewing of this show, in 2011, in a tent on the grass outside Tohu which is the major contemporary circus venue in Montreal, Canada, the space inside the tent seemed intimate and inviting yet in many ways signaled a space of impossible sentiment, a family singing together accompanied by accordions, laughing and enjoying a simulated bohemian togetherness, an unreachable hallowed space of nostalgia which may only ever have existed as a figment of the imagination.

Performer Johann le Guillerm formed Cirque Ici in 1994. His solo shows in a single ring circus tent involve interactions with sculptural objects that he both designs and creates. It has been suggested that his use of the circus ring is metaphorical and signals his desire to expand the audience’s gaze from a scrutiny of what is directly in front of them to “a 360° vision, as imposed by the ring, the circus” (Barcelona Dance House, 2013).

Now, however, it is mainly the large circus companies that still perform in tents, and they now have access to spaces of privilege that were not available to the original

new circus companies. These sites tend to exclude traditional modern circuses because of by-laws restricting the public exhibition of animals, they are also prohibitively expensive and so by default the smaller contemporary circus companies are excluded from accessing them. “Big Apple Circus puts its tent up in collaboration with the Lincoln Centre in central New York, Circus Oz puts its tent up in central Melbourne with the support of Melbourne City Council, Cirque du Soleil as a rule looks for strategic sites of privilege to place its tents” (Mullett, 2006, p. 4). Thus, for example, the main Quebec contemporary circuses that choose to use a circus tent to tour are the multi-billion dollar Cirque du Soleil and Cavalia, the highly successful new horse circus set up by one of the Cirque du Soleil founders.

The two mid-size contemporary circuses in Quebec, 7 Fingers and Cirque Eloise, generally choose to perform in conventional theatre spaces largely due to the prohibitive costs associated with touring tented shows, however this also serves to differentiate their performances from the larger tented shows of Cirque du Soleil. In Australia, Circus Oz, the major new circus company tours in a circus tent and has access to the costly sites of privilege for putting up a tent, whilst Circa, a small contemporary Australian company from Brisbane with a much tighter budget, generally performs in theatre spaces. However this choice of venue also serves to differentiate Circa’s performances, which combine contemporary dance and circus arts, from those of Circus Oz.

Many smaller contemporary circus companies have now taken to using traditional proscenium arch theatres for their shows. This can be due to the lack of the funds necessary to be able to tour a large tent and to pay all the costs involved, however,

sometimes in contemporary circus, the use of proscenium arch theatre spaces can represent a stance taken against the conventional image of modern circus happening in a tent. Sometimes circus in proscenium arch theatres can also, consciously or subconsciously, be positioning itself as an art form, with connections to other more established art forms such as theatre, ballet and opera.

Re-framing circus into a traditional proscenium arch performing art space can be viewed as in many respects inappropriate for the spatial nature of circus. The proscenium arch theatre itself creates major difficulties in the physical rigging and staging of many circus acts as space and height is seriously limited, and can also cause sightline problems for the audience, which for an art form with little text, which is largely dependent on the audience being able to see what is happening on stage, can be disastrous.

With the desire to shift away from circus tents and in response to a reluctance to engage with the conventional, constrictive parameters of the proscenium arch stage, some of the more experimental new circus companies began to explore the resonances of site-specific work. This move away from conventional theatre spaces also occurred in experimental performance.

As Peter Brook succinctly put it, “I always nod off in a theatre” (reported by Smith, 1972, p.225). Mike Pearson describes the experience of a spectator in a proscenium arch theatre as like sitting passively staring into a hole in the wall. He goes on to elaborate, describing the proscenium arch theatre as “a spatial machine that distances us from the spectacle and that allies subsidy, theatrical orthodoxy and political conservatism ... in a way that literally ‘keeps us in our place’ ” (cited in Wiles,

2003, p. 3). His quest is to find alternative spaces for performance “places of work, play and worship - where the laws and bye-laws, the decorum and learned contracts of performance can be suspended” (cited in Wiles, 2003, p. 3).

An interest in investigating the presence or materiality of the lived space and searching for unusual sites for performance-making with sedimented, archaeological traces of history to explore and uncover led to the development of installations and site-specific work. Site-specific work focuses on developing an essential and vital relationship between the work and the site that requires the actual physical presence of the spectator for the completion of the work. In visual arts this shift also involves an aesthetic desire to reach out beyond the limits of traditional media such as painting and sculpture and to issue an “epistemological challenge to relocate meaning from within the art object to the contingencies of its context” (Kwon, 2002, p. 11).

This desire to escape the conventions of galleries and traditional theatre spaces and to explore the dynamics and resonances of new spaces came into circus with the influx of new people into the field from the fields of installation, performance, and experimental theatre in the mid-1970s. Revisited in the context of an installed performance the new circus high-wire walk of Philippe Petit between the Twin Towers is worth re-examining. When the resonances of the site are closely examined, and an emphasis placed on the spatial context of the walk, negative space becomes an important part of his action. In Petit’s performance and exploration of the space in which the performance is situated, the attention of the viewer is repeatedly brought not only to the Twin Towers but also on the absence of wealth delineated metaphorically by the negative space between the two buildings. In this way attention is focused not

only on the wealth represented by the physical presence of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center but also on the negative space between the two towers, or the political underscoring of the absence of wealth that is also delineated metaphorically by the negative space between these two buildings.

The re-positioning of visual arts in the form of installations and performances was not only linked to a strong desire to oppose the commodification of art, but was also driven by a desire to move the viewer towards a new phenomenological appreciation of the experience of the event as being located in the entire body, rather than just consisting of a visual experience assimilated through a disembodied eye.

Miwon Kwon observes that within visual arts,

the space of art was no longer considered a blank slate, a *tabula rasa*, but a real place. The art object or event in this context was to be singularly or multiply experienced in the here and now through the bodily presence of each viewing subject, in a sensorial immediacy of spatial extension and temporal duration ... rather than instantaneously perceived in a visual epiphany by a dis-embodied eye. (Kwon, 2002, p. 11)

Site-specific performance sometimes led to a promenade-style event in which the audience was guided through the environment to a series of performances exploring different aspects of the space. The idea of involving the spectator's experiential body often involved events timed to occur behind, below or above the audience, aiming to make the spectator aware that his visual field did not encompass the whole event and to

actively provoke the participant into standing, turning and moving through the totality of the space.

Marinetti had touched on the idea of involving all the spectator's senses in his *Tactilism Manifesto* (1921), his "tactile theatre was to appeal primarily to the spectators' sense of touch, and Marinetti envisioned moving bands or turning wheels that were to be touched by the spectators and provide different surfaces and textural rhythms, accompanied by music and lights" (de Laurentis, 1981, p. 143). Some of the Futurists play scripts, or more exactly play scores, contain stage directions that include "altering the temperature in the auditorium as well as lighting, and Marinetti even thought of a 'perfumer' that would spread scents in the theatre" (de Laurentis, 1981, p. 143).

Cirque Bidon investigated similar ideas to involve the audience, albeit in a slightly more anarchic, punk-influenced way. Such experimentation can be seen in this description of the opening of one of the company's shows in the early 1980s.

At the start of the show they made you enter through a truck where they had suspended a dead chicken by one foot, which was going off. The ticket box was there. You bought your tickets and you waited a long time. Bells rang. The wait was so long that people started talking amongst themselves and at that moment Bartabas surged in on his horse with his lance, the others with ropes. They caught the people, tied them up and pushed them into the tent. Branlo was suspended from a tent pole and you took out your ticket to give it to the usher, at that moment Branlo bit it and ate it ... The people passed under the legs of Paillette who was on stilts. (Mullett, 2005, p. 152)



NoFit State is a contemporary British circus company based in Cardiff in Wales. Although their show *Tabu* is usually performed in a big top, when I saw the show it was presented as part of *Complètement Cirque*, the contemporary circus festival in Montreal in 2010, and the performance was presented in La Tohu, the main circus space in the city. Under the direction of Firenza Guidi, the Milan-based director and performance creator who focuses on site-specific performance, the show was in effect installed in Tohu, in response to the particularities of the space. It turned out that the site-specific nature of the performance became one of its major strengths.

The normal entrances into the performing area were curtained off and so the entering audience members found that they had to walk around the entire circumference of the performance space inside the curtained off area. Performers moved against the flow of the crowd, juggling, riding children's tricycles and interacting with the audience. Around the edge of the space, in between the exposed legs of the raked theatre seating, performers could be seen lying in beds, pieces of fruit were balanced on the structural trussing at the edges of the space, and projections were shot into alcoves.

Promenading through the curving entrance lobby, audience members encountered open areas where performers were rehearsing, swinging on trapezes and interacting with the audience. The performance itself continued with the audience being led into the main performance space. Performances took place in different parts of the space with fire-twirling taking place on ledges twenty metres in the air and the band playing eight metres above ground level. At one point, the roof space twenty metres above the heads of the audience was lit from within, and the spectators could see the

performers from underneath as they ran across a metal grille above their heads. The exploration of the space gave the audience an unexpected experience of the specifics of the Tohu space, which are largely ignored in most performances.

NoFit State, again under the direction of Firenza Guidi, is advertising its 2014 circus show *Bianco*, as an “immersive” experience (No Fit State, 2013). ‘Immersive’ is a word that seems ubiquitous at the moment - so what exactly constitutes ‘immersive’ performance, especially in terms of its relation to the body of space? It is hard to pinpoint precisely what is meant by the term ‘immersive performance.’ Immersive performance companies now span a huge range of different kinds of work ranging from what has been described as the ‘fully immersive experience’ of *You Me Bum Bum Train*, created in 2004 featuring a huge cast of over 200 (unpaid) performers and just one audience member moving through a labyrinth of live scenes, to Badac, a group who create what they themselves term ‘extreme political art.’ In their work, *The Factory* (2008), audience members are led by company members “through an underground network of abandoned beer cellars creating a ‘simulacra of the mechanisms of extermination of Auschwitz’” (Shaughnessy, 2012).

What is referred to as the ‘Punchdrunk phenomenon’ began with a breakthrough performance of *Faust* in 2006 that took place over five floors of an old warehouse in Wapping in East London “and, a year later, *The Masque of the Red Death*, which used every nook and cranny of the Battersea Arts Centre in its epic distillation of Edgar Allan Poe” (Cavendish, 2013). Punchdrunk is still seen as leading what is sometimes referred to as ‘the immersive pack’ that includes companies ranging from dreamthinkspeak, Look Left, Look Right and You Me Bum Bum Train (Cavendish,

2013). Alston suggests that it is possible that it is precisely because of a certain slippery, hard to define quality that the meme has spread so quickly and that immersive performance “is replicating itself in New York with Woodshed Collective’s *The Tenant* and in Brazil with the theatre collective ZecoraUra and their immersive performance *Hotel Medea* (2009)” (Alston, 2013).

One important aspect of immersive performance seems to be a rejection of a linear trajectory through time and space. Sophie Nield points to the exhibitions created by museum curators and designers throughout the 1980s and 1990s as pointing the way towards one model of immersion, citing the exhibition *Les Immaterieaux* which, French philosopher, Jean-François Lyotard, co-curated in 1985 with the design historian and theorist Thierry Chaput, as one example (Nield, 2008). Lyotard designed this exhibition so there would be no “clearly sign-posted itinerary, given the uneasy reflection which the exhibition wishes to provoke” (Lyotard, 2005, p. 121). He describes the traditional pathway through a conventional art gallery as being structured like a linear narrative which, through its process, forms the character of the person who experiences it, in much the same way as the hero in mythic or fictional journeys such as *The Odyssey* or James Joyce’s *Ulysses* “sets out to have adventures and returns fully formed” (Lyotard, 2005, p. 120). Lyotard then contrasts this linear, transformational and narrative experience with that of post-modern time-space when travelling from San Diego to Santa Barbara, a drive of several hundred kilometres, in which the traveler passes through

a zone of conurbation, neither town nor country nor desert. The opposition between a centre and a periphery disappears, as does even the opposition

between an inside (the city of men) and an outside (nature). You have to change the car radio wavelength several times, as you go through several different broadcasting zones. It is more like a nebula where materials (buildings, highways) are metastable states of energy. The streets and boulevards have no facades. Information circulates by radiation and invisible interfaces (Lyotard, 2005, p.121).

This is remarkably similar in many ways to Foucault's description of space: "The present age may be the age of space ... We exist in a moment when the world is experiencing, I believe something less like a great life that would develop through time, than like a network that connects points and weaves its skein" (Foucault, 1994, p. 175).

So in immersive performance there is often a rejection of a linear experience of time and space, and a rejection of the sense of a transformational journey or a heroic quest, in favor of an experience more akin to a skein of time and space that occurs all around the spectator. This description of the opening moments of the Argentine circus company, De La Guarda's show *Villa Villa* gives this sense of a non-linear experience of space and time.

We are standing under a paper ceiling, wondering what's going on, or going to happen. Though there are occasional dips in the performance, that sense of anticipation never leaves us. We never know what will happen next. Perhaps the paper ceiling is a sky in a surreal dream, pelted by raindrops like a tin roof. Or it's the surface of an ocean. (Heilpern, 1999)

Many current narratives of the emergence of immersive performance would seem to leave out the work of this highly influential circus company. In 1995, De La Guarda premiered the show *Villa Villa* in Buenos Aires, and the show went on to tour to London, Amsterdam, Seoul, Las Vegas, Berlin, Mexico City, Tel Aviv and Tokyo. The reach and the influence of this show were immense. *Villa Villa* introduced a new kind of performance emerging out of happenings and club culture, an immersive circus show in which the audience is on its feet for the entire show and aerialists slam-dance in mid-air above their heads while the show “sort of rains on everyone, encouraging deranged rain dances and wet kisses” (Heilpern, 1999). The *Villa, Villa* program states that the impulse to create the show came out of “the uncontrollable desire to explode, to expand, to choose a space and take complete hold of it, while leaving nothing out of the game” (*Villa Villa* Program cited Heilpern, 1999). In this repositioning of De La Guarda as an influential forerunner leading to the emergence of immersive performance, circus can be seen yet again to be innovatory and influential in contemporary performance in terms of its relation to the body of space.

*Villa Villa* also challenged another traditional structural device in theatre that can be seen to be breaking down in much immersive performance - this is the normal spatial division between the audience and the performers. Sophie Nield proposes that ‘immersive theatre’ is the sort of performance work in which the “audience inhabits the space of the play alongside the actors” (Nield, 2008). In 2000, Schechner wrote that for vital new work the breaking down of the boundaries between the audience and the performers is essential.

The kind of work I’m talking about can’t happen if one territory belongs to the

audience and another to the performers. The bifurcation of space must be ended. The final exchange between performers and audience is the exchange of space, spectators as scene makers as well as scene watchers. This will not result in chaos: rules are not done away with, they are simply changed. (Schechner, 2000, p.xxvi)

Pichon Baldinu from De La Guarda, the co-creator of *Villa Villa* (1995), talking about the show, emphasizes his desire to erase the boundaries between audience and performers. He observes that, “Our idea was to make the audience very, very close to the performers” (Low, 2004). Describing the experience of being part of the audience at *Villa Villa*, Heilpern writes:

Silhouettes, part human, part animal, seem to be scurrying and flying across the surface high above us. We’re submerged in a shadowy firmament. Then without warning, a figure crashes through the sky to grab a woman in the audience and take her flying up to the heavens where she disappears. And the heavens open. (Heilpern, 1999)

The performers in *Villa Villa* break through the sky, that is the paper screen which is acting as a spatial division between audience and performers situated above the audience’s heads, and they swing down, grab an audience member, harness them onto their own harness and take them flying up way above the heads of the audience. This effectively breaks down all the normal spatial boundaries in theatre and

performance and in a very real way the spectators also become performers themselves.

Shaughnessy positions this eradication of the bifurcation of space as political, analyzing some of Rancière's writing that connects the poetics and politics of the immersive with Debord's critique of the society of the spectacle, which he summarizes as a scheme in which man [sic] "gazes at ... the activity that has been stolen from him ... his own essence torn away from him, turned foreign to him, hostile to him, making for a collective world whose reality is nothing but man's own dispossession" (Shaughnessy, 2012). Rancière demolishes the convenient binary between passive theatre watchers and active performance participants in favour of Augusto Boal's figure of spectators with agency, who have the responsibility to intervene, as "active interpreters, who render their own translation, who appropriate the story for themselves and who ultimately make their own story out of it" (Ranciere, 2007, p.280).

In this vision of the performance relations between audience member and performers it is not just the inclusion of the audience member in the performance relations that is important but also the notion of agency - that is, the choice of the audience member to become an active engaged participant in the event and seize back the activity that has, as Debord described, been stolen from him.

De La Guarda have acknowledged being greatly influenced by La Fura dels Baus, the Catalan performance company that also usually performs to a standing audience (Low, 2004). La Fura dels Baus' performances often contain circus elements, aerials, performances with fire, and acrobatics and the group's hybrid mixture of elements is, in many respects, pure circus. La Fura dels Baus and another Catalan performance group, Els Commediants, are usually left out of discussion of immersive

performance but in many ways they could be said to be early progenitors of the current immersive performance movement.

Els Commediants could be considered a circus performance company as they include many circus elements for their performance. The performance of theirs that I was present at in 1985 in Battersea Park in London could be described as a fully immersive performance. As Bim Mason notes: “Everyone that saw this renowned show ... has a different story to tell” (Mason, 1992, p. 47). My story is of a promenade performance but the trajectory of the performance was the antithesis of the journey of the hero, as it led into a chaotic confused sense of movement but with no sense of direction. This performance was an experience of mediaeval visions of Hell, chaotic, confronting, anarchic and dangerous with performers on German wheels rolling across Battersea Park with fireworks attached to their apparatus firing off fireworks into the audience of around 5,000 people causing chaos and stampedes as they rolled through the crowd. In the pitch dark with just a few spotlights on the crowd and serious Spanish fireworks being thrown in amongst the crowd, stampedes developed into full scale crowd movements with performers running with the groups of people and shouting and chanting.

The bifurcation between audience and performers was completely eradicated. As the crowds stampeded with performers rolling through them in rings of fire, other performers herded panicking groups of spectators to the growing chant of ‘Satan,’ the grounds of Battersea Park became an immersive experience of a Breughel or Bosch painting of hell. The spectators in very fundamental ways became the performers, with the agency to intervene, to withdraw or to perform as they wished, making the



trajectory through space and time a very tangled skein. The show was banned by the Greater London Council as being unsafe after one performance. Unsafe it may have been, but it was also immersive, chaotic, anarchic circus at it most memorable.

This writing has explored how circus is vitally involved with the body of space as a central element in performance relationships. From the introduction of the circus ring which revolutionized the performance relationships between audience members and performers, to the introduction of the multi-leveled performance space for hippodramas and the fragmented bricolage of the three ring circus, to site-specific circus and the emerging possibilities of immersive circus, the body of space in circus affects performance relationships in a fundamental way through changes to the dynamic connections between the bodies of the spectators and the performers.

Circus, in its engagement with space, is surprising, constantly inventive, imbued with revolutionary possibility and continually re-writing the rules of performance relationships.

## SECTION 2: THE BODY OF ZOOËSIS

This sections consists of:

Chapter 5: The Body of the Horse

Chapter 6: The Wild Body – wild cats in circus.

---

### Chapter 5: The Body of the Horse

*Dauphin: When I bestride him I soar; I am a hawk; he trots the air. The earth sings when he touches it. The basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.*

*Orléans: He's of the colour of the nutmeg.*

*Dauphin: And of the heat of the ginger... he is pure air and fire; and the dull elements of earth and water never appear in him, but only in patient stillness while his rider mounts him. (Shakespeare, Henry V, Act 3, Scene 7)*

#### Introduction

Philip Astley and Gibraltar could be added to the following list of celebrated rider and horse pairings: “Alexander the Great and Bucephalus, El Cid and Babieca, Napoleon and Marengo, Roy Rogers and Trigger” (Williams, 2000, p.46). Scholar, Marius Kwint describes Astley as “undoubtedly one of the finest horsemen of his generation” (Kwint, 2002a, p. 77). Astley was presented with Gibraltar, a white charger, on his discharge from the cavalry regiment the Light Dragoons after his service in the

Seven Years' War (1756-63). Astley and Gibraltar together performed some of the most breathtaking and dazzling trick riding in London in the 1760s. Astley went on to found modern circus in 1768 and the relationship between horse and rider became pivotal to the genre. The horse, whether in its presence or in its absence, remains the defining body of modern circus

Many of the exuberant drawings of circuses by the artist Marc Chagall, such as the one shown here, show the absolute centrality of the horse to circus. A panoplied



8. *Marc Chagall, Date unknown.*  
*Drawing in the collection of the author, Katie Lavers*

horse, with an equestrienne dancing on its back, is positioned in the centre, not only of the drawing itself, but also of the circus ring depicted within it. The ring, as noted previously, was an innovation specifically developed for circus trick riding in the 1760s which revolutionized the way equestrian acts were presented, creating an immersive experience with the sights, smells and sounds of horse and rider positioned right in the centre of the audience.

Astley's circus ring of a diameter of forty-two metres, allowed the horseback acrobatics to become more daring, and thus much more exciting for the spectator, and this size of ring remains the norm for circus today. The ringmaster is a figure that dates from the moment when Astley retired and took up the role of Equestrian Director or, as it came to be known, the Ringmaster who directed the proceedings and introduced different acts and kept the horses on track as they cantered around the ring. The image of the ringmaster has become so resonant that it appears in many different artworks including paintings, poetry, films and novels. The ringmasters in Chagall's work mostly appear charming and welcoming, but in works by other artists this iconic figure often shows a darker side. In the 1955 film, *Lola Montes*, directed by Ophuls, a sadistic ringmaster, played by a young Peter Ustinov, forces a caged courtesan, Lola Montes, to act out her life (especially her love affairs) as a series of *tableaux vivants* as the central act of a circus. For his 2003 tour *mObscene*, which featured burlesque performance by Dita Von Teese, Marilyn Manson, the musician, adopted the persona of an evil ringmaster, described vividly as "dripping with absinthe and animosity" (Quelland, 2003).

These two powerful elements, the circus ring and the ringmaster, which have permeated writing, films, paintings, and popular culture, have come to represent the very heart of circus, and both demonstrate the pivotal importance of the horse. This chapter will examine how modern circus challenged, and changed for the better, the ways in which the horse was treated in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It will then examine how 19<sup>th</sup> century circus positioned itself, in opposition to the widely held rationalist view of the horse-as-machine, to present an emerging romantic view of the horse as an

embodiment of passion and the sublime. It will trace how modern circus, the only art form with a horse at its very hub, rises to a peak of success as the horse gains importance in society and then declines in popularity as the horse's social relevance drops away in the early years of the twentieth century. In this way, circus acts as an embodied metaphor of the changing social and cultural relevance of the horse to society in its evolution from pastoral, to industrial and then on to post-industrial contexts.

### **The Origins of Trick Riding in Modern Circus**

In 1766, in London, breathtaking trick riding displays were taking place in the leisure gardens. These shows were given by cavalymen returned from fighting in the Seven Years' War (1756-63) in Europe. The trick riding was new and thrilling, featuring daredevil horseback acrobatics. The London leisure gardens were packed with people who came to see the athletic, ex-cavalymen performing, standing on the backs of the galloping horses, doing headstands on the saddles or turning somersaults in the air above the horses. These were displays of athleticism, strength and power. They showcased the fighting elite of the British cavalry, recently returned from victories that had brought into the British Empire vast new territories in both North America and India.

As a returned cavalryman, Astley had gained a reputation as being a remarkable horse trainer and a superb rider. He was a hero, and had "captured an enemy standard in battle; [and] rescued the Duke of Brunswick, who had fallen behind enemy lines" (Jando, 2012). With his white horse Gibraltar, Astley offered trick riding displays and riding lessons in a paddock near modern-day Waterloo station and his new venture

began to turn a good profit. His entertainment did well because it was exciting and “because the authorities, who were usually suspicious of popular gatherings, tolerated its robust loyalism and martial overtones” (Kwint, 2003). By 1768, Astley had built an arena for his performances. When he followed the major London theatres’ format of interspersing musicians, jugglers and acrobats between acts, in Astley’s case between the trick riding displays, the genre of circus came into being. Astley also hired a clown, who “filled the pauses between acts with burlesques of juggling, tumbling, rope-dancing, and even trick-riding” (Jando and Forcey, 2010). These additions proved popular, but the horse and trick rider remained the main draw for audiences. Andrew Ducrow, one of Astley’s most famous riders and the eventual manager of Astley’s Amphitheatre famously directed his performers to “Cut the cackle and get to the ‘osses”” (cited in Kwint, 2002b, p. 51).

For his first circus season in 1768, Astley developed new types of equestrian acts, setting his trick riding in social contexts by embedding them in everyday situations. One of these new acts, *Billy Button’s Ride to Brentford*, showed a tailor struggling to control a bolting horse. In a chapbook dating from around 1830, the act is described as, “a novice horseman mounting backwards, losing his book and measures when the horse is startled by geese, threatening to cut off the horse’s ears with his scissors, flying off the horse when it bucks, remounting and being terrified when the horse sets off at full gallop, [and then] tumbling off” (Anonymous, 1830, cited in Schlicke, 1985, p. 161). The act ends with the tailor being chased around the ring by his horse. The act proved so popular that many different circus companies restaged the same act for the next hundred years.

Another act that Astley developed was entitled *Prologue on the Death of a Horse*. As the horse lay presumably dead at his feet, Astley would command the horse to rise and serve a well known general in the recent Seven Years War, “Rise Young Bill, & be a little Handy/ To rise and serve the war-like Hero [the Marquis of] Granby,” (cited in Kwint, 2002b, p. 48) and the horse, which had seemed dead, without further ado stood up. After this first circus season, the act was often presented by circuses wanting to astonish audiences by demonstrating how well their horses were trained.

Astley’s sensational ability to train horses, his extreme skill as a trick rider, the specially designed ring constructed for the optimum viewing and performing of trick riding, the introduction of new trick riding acts imbued with social contexts, combined with musicians, jugglers, acrobats and a clown between riding acts to create this entirely new genre, modern circus, a spectacle that had, at its very centre, the body of the horse.

### **The Battlefield Connection**

The relationship between human and horse in modern circus is, without doubt, rooted in its martial beginnings, and springs from the battlefield. The equestrians who created modern circus were cavalymen, soldiers returning from war. In 1768, the horse galloped at the fastest then-known land speed and represented one of the most potent military weapons of the time. As American scientist and author Jared Diamond points out that, as soon as horses began to be domesticated by humans in 4000 BC in the steppes by the Black Sea, warfare was completely transformed. Diamond writes that “the shock of a horse’s charge, its manoeuvrability, the speed of attack that it permitted,

and the raised fighting platform that it provided, left foot-soldiers nearly helpless in the open” (Diamond, 1992, p. 76). Their military value “lasted for 6,000 years, and became applied on all the inhabited continents” (Diamond, 1992, p. 77). The cavalymen were the elite of the fighting forces and Astley, and the other men in his cavalry regiment, carried swords and rode into battle in the same way that generations had done before him.

The trick riding that Astley and the other cavalymen performed emerged as the extreme sport of its time. These soldiers displayed their athletic prowess astride one of the most powerful weapons of the time, the horse. The form of acrobatic riding they displayed was new to London. In all probability, the origins of this form of horsemanship sprang from the first interactions that the British cavalry had with other cavalry forces whilst they were overseas fighting in the Seven Years War. The Seven Years War marked the first time Russia had entered a major war in Europe. Prussia, Great Britain and Hanover fought on one side with the united power of France, Austria, Sweden, Saxony and Russia on the other. The cavalry on both sides was vitally important on the field of battle, and both sides contained some of the most superb horsemen in the world. Seventy thousand Cossacks supplemented the Russian cavalry and the Russian government also hired around four thousand Asiatic horsemen, including two thousand Kalmuks from the area around Astrakhan, in the Volga delta, and a similar number of other Asiatic horsemen who included Bashkirs from Serbia. All these horsemen were known for their acrobatic skill in the saddle (Konstam, 1996, p. 20-22). The Magyar hussars, who were primarily Hungarian, were horsemen famed for their athletic prowess and fought alongside the Austrians. The Russian Cossacks



and the Magyar hussars used acrobatic moves developed in long training to increase manoeuvrability and dexterity in battle, utilizing many of the acrobatic tricks later shown by the British cavalrymen on their return to England.

Female trick riders also formed a vital part of early circus. Astley's wife, who is sometimes referred to as Petsy, Patty or Patti, was a remarkable equestrienne, and was "dubbed *La fille de l'air* [and] danced on a horse's back as it circled the ring" (Adams and Keene, 2012, p. 5). She was famous for circling the ring "on horseback with swarms of bees covering her hands and arms like a muff" (V&A, 2013). Other sources report that Astley's sister also performed with bees sometimes "with as many as three swarms of them flying around the ring with her as she galloped" (Jay, 1986, p. 322). Performing with swarms of bees is described as being "accomplished by a method called 'caging the queen.' The leader bee was confined by a hair or very fine thread tied around her thorax by which her movements could be controlled. The other bees would follow the lead of their queen and consequently move from place to place" (Jay, 1986, p. 115).

Astley wrote texts and speeches that can be studied in relation to attitudes to the horses with whom he worked. In his speech, *Prologue to a Dead Horse*, Astley proclaimed that, "brutes by heaven were design'd /To be in full subjection to mankind" (cited Kwint, 2002b, p. 48). These words reflect the belief in humankind's natural dominion over animals found in the foundational texts of the Christian cosmogony. For example, Genesis explicitly states the right to the domination of the human. In commenting on this description of Creation, Erica Fudge observes:

Humanity was the final and greatest of God's creations, and so humans, created after the animals, were given dominion over them. That is, as one seventeenth-century commentator noted, man (and it was *man*) was 'a petty God ... all things being put in subjection under his feet.' As God had absolute power over Adam, so Adam had absolute power over animals. (Fudge, 2002b, p. 13)

In spite of endorsing this commonly held view, Astley supported the use of a gentler method of training horses that had started to be adopted in the late seventeenth century. In his best-selling book on riding, *Modern Riding Master* of 1775, he writes that, if the horse shows some obedience in the first training session "take him into the Stable and caress him; for observe this as a golden Rule, *mad Men and mad Horses will never agree together*" (cited in Kwint, 2002b p. 50).

Astley also created a new form of circus act that he named the *Liberty Act* with his horse, Billy. One of the performance relations that Schechner discusses, that is the relationship between performers, in this case between man and horse, is played out clearly in this act that portrays a different way of relating to the horse. In this act, the trainer or Equestrian Director guides the horse, which has no rider, through a series of tricks without the use of a tether. Although the 'liberty' of the horse is of course illusory, as the horse must remain obedient to its human master at all times or face punishment, nevertheless, the *Liberty Act*, was unique at the time and indicates an aspiration to a less brutal, more empathetic relationship with the horse.

Shortly before the first animal protection act was passed by parliament in 1822, Astley's staged a hit pantomime called *The Life, Death and Restoration of the High-*

*Mettled Racer* which traced the downward trajectory of a famed thoroughbred horse who ended up pulling a dray at the Elephant and Castle in London, and then finally was sent off to the knackers' yard, "only to find heavenly reward in a 'Grand Palace of the HHOUYNMS'[sic]" (Kwint. 2002b, p. 51). Kwint notes that in order for the pantomime to convey

horses [as] a nobler species than the supposedly civilized humans who debased them, the last scene drew upon Jonathan Swift's satirical fantasy novel *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) where a nation of horse-like creatures called Houyhnhnms stands out as the most rational and sympathetic of all the strange societies that Gulliver visits. (Kwint, 2002b, p. 51)

Astley may have developed his feelings of admiration and empathy towards horses on the battlefield where, in the heightened and intense situation, a strong bond could develop between a soldier and his warhorse. J. M. Brereton in his book, *The Horse in War*, writes that, "the soldier came to regard his horse almost as an extension of his being" (Brereton, 1976, p. 129).

John Berger, at the beginning of his landmark essay *Looking at Animals* (1980), argues that, before Descartes, there was a direct sense of connection through mortality with the animal. He quotes two passages from Homer's *Iliad*, one of which describes the death of a soldier and the other the death of a horse. Berger argues that Homer expresses each death as the same direct experience of mortality, without differentiating between human and horse (Berger, 1980, p. 9). This direct experience of mortality as a

connection between human and animal must have been intensely experienced on the battlefield by the cavalymen in the Seven Years War, and was, in all likelihood, a strong factor in Astley's respect and admiration for his horses. Astley could be said to have brought back with him from the war this very particular and distinctive bond with his horses. It could be argued that it was Astley's strong bond with his horses, together with his influence as the founder of modern circus that set circus on a different path from much of the rest of late 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century Western society in terms of its relationship with the horse.

### **Rational and Romantic Thinking**

The impact of the two different facets of the thinking of this period, rationalism and romanticism, is encapsulated in reference to notions about animal being.

Rationalism or, as scholar J. David Black proposes, the cultural projection of the left hemisphere of the brain, became dominant in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with particularly dire consequences for animals. "Rationalism," Black writes, "adopted a scorched earth policy towards anything in culture not definable in strictly logical terms," and began "warring against religion, aesthetics, sentiment, and other non-rational phenomena" (Black, 2002, p. 2). Most damaged of all was nature itself, which was "regarded by the Enlightenment as dead matter, emptied of its spiritual sublimity. The tragic result was that the world was stripped of its mystery, value and surprise, and was perceived as something entirely knowable and controllable" (Black, 2002, p. 2).

John Berger points out that Descartes' writing divorcing the mind from the body

eventually began to fundamentally alter the way people connected with animals. “In dividing absolutely body from soul, [Descartes] bequeathed the body to the laws of physics and mechanics, and, since animals were soulless, the animal was reduced to the model of a machine” (Berger, 1980, p. 11). Berger claims that Descartes’ ideas filtered through slowly and, in parallel with the industrial revolution and the development of productive machinery, these ideas began to affect the relationship that humans had with animals. Robert Thurston, founder of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, wrote that all vertebrate animals, such as the horse, were prime motors where “the latent forces and energies of a combustible food or fuel ... are evolved, transferred and transformed to perform the work of the organism itself, to supply heat to keep it at the temperature necessary for the efficient operation of the machine, and for the performance of external work” (Thurston, 1839, as cited in McShane and Tarr, 2007, p. 3).

Throughout the nineteenth century, the numbers of horses increased exponentially with the industrial revolution. Horses could be seen everywhere, “working in cities, towns, factories, on farms and frontiers, on streets and roads, alongside canals, around forts, ports and railroad depots ... The numbers of horses grew particularly dense around cities” (Greene, 2008, p. 5). The nineteenth century represents the peak of the use of horsepower by humans.

The enormous wealth-generating urban centres of the nineteenth century could not have been built or inhabited without the exploitation of horses. Horses were literally treated as machines and if they even became slightly lame, owners were willing to end their lives immediately, as renderers and tanners paid well for horse carcasses. “Par

excellence, the trade in living beings, used to the extent possible as machines, typified what has been described as the late Victorian definition of civilization: ‘the necessary, rational management of nature’” (McShane and Tarr, 2007, p.1).

Romanticism, or what Black describes as the cultural projection of the right



9. Seattle – Marion Street Regrade, 1907

Seattle Municipal Archives, Seattle WA

Retrieved:

<[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seattle\\_Marion\\_Street\\_during\\_1907\\_regrade.gif](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seattle_Marion_Street_during_1907_regrade.gif)>

Image in Public Domain

hemisphere of the brain, originated in Germany during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century before passing “like a fever” (Black, 2002, p. 1) to England and beyond in the early nineteenth century. It was “the first philosophical tradition, to engage capitalism, to take up culture as a problem for analysis, and to question rationality and how it is implicated in our major political, economic, and social phenomena” (Black, 2002, p. 1). Romanticism also engaged with and questioned the notion of animal-as-machine.

Kwint notes that the cultural historian, Martin Meisel, “attributes the circus firmly to an emerging Gothic and Romantic sensibility that captured the imaginations of elite intellectuals and popular pleasure-seekers alike” (Kwint, 2002, p. 48). Meisel claims that the image of the horse in the 19<sup>th</sup> century “apparently spoke to this age with a special eloquence” (Meisel, 1983, p. 216) and points to the “intensely charged appearance” of the horse in French Romantic painting, for example in the paintings of Rosa Bonheur and Eugene Delacroix. He suggests that the fascination with the horse seems to have been connected with, “both the mastery of embodied passion and energy, and the pure passion and energy itself, ready to shake off or run away with the presumptuous human will” (Meisel, 1983, p. 216).

A contemporary commentator, recalling Shakespeare’s description of a horse in *Henry V*, observed that “one of [Ducrow’s] horses - a short tailed bay, is a beautiful creature [...] a beast for Perseus; he is pure air and fire; and the dull elements of earth and water never appear in him” (Anonymous, as cited in Kwint, 2002, p. 52). Kwint proposes that the fascination with the Romantic image of the horse seems to have stemmed from “the transfigured quality of the horses which escaped their typical roles as beasts of burden and labour, becoming ethereal and ... appearing almost to fly along with their riders in acts of gleeful freedom and transcendence” (Kwint, 2002, p. 52). Such admiration of horse and rider joined in an act of “gleeful freedom and transcendence” (Kwint, 2002, p. 52) can also be seen in contemporary comments published in *The Theatrical Journal of 1849*, describing Ducrow’s riding:

The mingled grace and gusto of his movements, ... the lightening speed ... the

miraculous skill with which he took advantage of the centrifugal and centripetal forces that were counteracting each other, to give ... the semblance of a flight through the air, by merely touching the horse with the tip of one foot ... it was one of those cases ... in which 'seeing is not believing.' (cited in Stoddart, 2000, p. 168)

Meisel proposes that the development of circus into longer narrative sections seems to have been directly connected with this fascination with the Romantic intensity of feeling inspired by the horse (Meisel, 1983, p. 124). In the same way that the body of space in circus in the previous section was revealed to have physical and metaphorical resonances that reflected social narratives, social and cultural stances can also be discovered in the performance relationships between human and the horse. A romantic fascination with the horse was the driving force behind the new conjunction of ring and stage that Astley developed enabling a form of narrative circus to be staged, as it effectively allowed for simultaneity of action on different levels, enabling performers who were delivering lines to stand above the bodies of horse and rider. This new form of narrative and dramatic circus was known as the hippodrama (Meisel, 1983, p. 124).

### **The Hippodramas: Plays of Blood, Thunder and Love**

In one of the cuttings that Astley snipped from the newspapers, which are now housed in a collection at the British Library, is a description of hippodramas as those "thrilling plays of blood, thunder and love" (Astley, 1817, cited in Stoddard, 2000, p. 166). These mighty spectacles of the nineteenth century were focused around the horse,



even the name literally means ‘horse drama’ as the Attic Greek word for ‘horse’ is *hippos*. Hippodramas often presented battle scenes depicting campaigns that had recently taken place thus, delivering current affairs vividly in a pre-television era.

In 1793, on the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars, Astley, aged fifty, re-enlisted in his old cavalry regiment as a horse master and, whilst overseas, sent regular dispatches back to his son, John, who had taken over as manager of Astley’s Amphitheatre. John Astley immediately dramatized these dispatches into productions for the stage and in the ring. In September 1793, London audiences were presented with a dramatized version of the siege of Valenciennes, only just over a month after the town fell. In this way, Astley and his competitors, in circuses, such as The Royal Circus, and in theatres, for example Sadler’s Wells, became the main suppliers of information on recent conflicts. This way of representing current affairs as staged spectacles in circus and theatre lasted for much of the nineteenth century (Kwint, 2003).

Astley continued to experiment with staging, so that between 1804 and 1841, multilevel constructions, with different floors above each other reached right across the entire width of the stage. These levels enhanced the trick riding as the platforms could accommodate “galloping or skirmishing horsemen, and be masked to represent battlements, heights, bridges, and mountains” (Meisel, 1983, p. 214). The movement of action between stage and ring, allowed for smaller scenes of a more intimate nature to be interspersed between immense battle scenes. These smaller scenes included “a great deal of private domestic drama among soldiers and sweethearts, invaders and native patriots, and anecdotal vignettes of the great historical figures” and were interspersed with “leaps, perils, explosions, centaur feats and climactic mass battles carried out in

intelligible manoeuvres” (Meisel, 1983, p. 214). The most popular and widely played hippodrama of them all was Astley’s famous *Mazeppa* of 1833, based on Byron’s poem in which a young lowborn hero falls in love with the daughter of the king. His punishment for his presumptuousness is to be lashed naked to the back of a wild horse and sent galloping off across the Steppes.

There was widespread, contemporary interest in this poem of Byron’s, which



10. *Mazeppa and the wolves*, Horace Vernet, 1826  
Oil on canvas, Calvet Museum, Avignon France.  
Image in Public Domain.

had previously been realized in other dramatized versions, in both England and France, before Astley created his own version in 1833. The poem had also been explored in paintings by Romantic painters including Géricault, Delacroix, Boulanger and Vernet. As Meisel points out, the image of Mazeppa lashed to the back of a runaway horse may have had different personal and psychological resonances for each of its viewers, but in its political and historical implications it stood firmly against the image of the mounted figure of the man in charge of his own destiny (Meisel, 1983, p. 216). The true

Romantic potency of the image lay in reading “the steed [as] a metaphor for the restless forces of history that had been unleashed by revolution, and [as] a true embodiment of the sublime” (Kwint, 2002, p. 49).

This representation of the horse stood in sharp contrast to the understanding of horses outside circus, the notion of horse-as-machine.



11. *Horse Frightened by Storm*, Eugène Delacroix, 1824  
*Watercolour in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.*  
*Image in Public domain.*

### **The Day of the Horse**

By the end of the 19th century, the horse was an ubiquitous and important presence in society, and people flocked to see the circus, the genre that had the horse as its hub. However, when in 1895, Macy’s Department Store in New York City used an imported Benz automobile to deliver some of its goods, *Expressmen’s Monthly* reported

on it, noting with prescience, “The day of the horse is doomed” (cited in McShane and Tarr, 2008, p. 174). As the effects of the technological revolution or the “second industrial revolution” began to be felt at the end of the nineteenth century, with the development of electricity, the internal combustion engine, the gasoline engine, and the patenting and building of the first mass-produced cars, the usefulness of the horse-as-machine began to be called into question. Soon the steady increase in motorized road traffic meant that horses started to be seen as traffic hazards on the road, and began to be portrayed in newspapers as wild brutes endangering both pedestrians and passengers alike: “scarcely a day passes that someone is not killed or maimed by a wild outbreak of this untamable beast ... These frightful accidents can be prevented. The motor vehicle will do it” (as cited in Greene, 2008, p. 262).

As scholars, McShane and Tarr point out, in America, the changeover from horse drawn streetcars to electric streetcars happened in little over ten years from 1888 to 1902 and the speed of this changeover was astonishing. In many ways, “horse cars seemed too old fashioned for cities that prided themselves on their modernity” (McShane and Tarr, 2007, p. 172).

The notion of the horse as a powerful, lethal and vital weapon, and one essential to any military campaign, which was an idea stretching back nearly 6000 years, was also soon destroyed. At the point when World War 1 broke out, in August 1914, the cavalry was held in esteem as the elite of the fighting troops. Both Britain and Germany each had a cavalry force that numbered around 100,000 men and an equivalent number of horses. In the first month, in the battle near Mons in Belgium, in August 1914, the first engagement between British and German cavalry forces occurred. For the first

time the cavalry faced machine guns and mazes of trenches and barbed wire. Trench warfare made cavalry attacks impossible, as horses could not survive the terrain especially under fire from machine guns.



*12. Battle of Pilckem Ridge 31 July-2 August. A Packhorse with a gasmask being loaded up with wiring staples and other equipment near Pilckem, 31 July 1917.*

*Retrieved from:*

*:<[wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Q\\_005717HorsesInGasMaskPilckemRidge42October.October\\_1917.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Q_005717HorsesInGasMaskPilckemRidge42October.October_1917.jpg)>*

*Photograph from the collection of the Imperial War Museum*

*Image in Public Domain*

However, as mechanized military transport was still rare and also inclined to break down, horses continued to be used to transport materials to the front. In his autobiography, novelist Dennis Wheatley describes his experiences on the Western Front in 1915. “There were dead [horses] lying all over the place and scores of others

were floundering and screaming with broken legs, terrible neck wounds or their entrails hanging out” (cited in Simkin, 2012). *War Horse*, the 1982 novel by Michael Morpurgo, is the story of a horse that is auctioned off to be a war-horse for World War I.

Morpurgo claims that his inspiration came from seeing an oil painting of a horse trapped in barbed wire on a battlefield. The story follows Joey as he travels across the battlefields of France in search of his much loved horse that had been sold off to the army. *War Horse* was turned into a play, performed by the National Theatre and Handspring Puppet Theatre and eventually made into a movie directed by Stephen Spielberg. In her review of the stage play, Lynda Birke notes that *War Horse* serves to remind people of the fate of horses in World War I which is often overlooked.

“Countless numbers of horses were killed, one estimate for the number of horses killed in the Great War of 1914-1918 is eight million, approximately a million from Britain alone ... They have no graves, and few memorials” (Birke, 2010).

The military might of the horse, the horse as lethal weapon, was finished. The horse had lost its centrality in people’s lives. The image of the horse no longer spoke to people with particular potency. As the horse became increasingly irrelevant both on the battlefield and in urban life and industry, the relevance and popularity of the circus began to decline.

As the circus started to cast around for new ways to attract audiences, in the face of increasing competition from new media such as cinema and radio, star lion tamers such as Mabel Stark and Clyde Beatty managed to draw in crowds for a few decades, but in parallel with the publication of the book *Born Free* (1960) which detailed the affectionate relationship between the Adamson family and Elsa the lion cub

the family adopted, the whip-cracking acts of the lion tamers came to seem outmoded and increasingly lacking in appeal to audiences.

The naissance of new circus in the 1970s came on the back of intense and heated controversy about Animal Rights, and new circus banished animal performers from the ring and focused on the exploration of the potential of human performers, and also the introduction of new ideas and skills from different disciplines including theatre and dance.

Circuses that continued presenting more traditional shows with animals, started to be banned in many towns, largely because of fears of animal cruelty and mounting pressure from animal welfare groups. Traditional modern circuses, such as Circus Knie in Switzerland and Billy Smarts in England, which continued the tradition of performing with horses and wild animals, came to be widely seen as nostalgic remnants of another era, maintaining a tradition rather than engaging with forms of circus more responsive to contemporary ideas.

The big commercial, popular and critical successes within circus came from the new circuses, in particular Cirque du Soleil in Quebec, Circus Oz in Australia, Cirque Invisible in France plus, after the year 2000, the contemporary circuses such as Montreal's 7 Fingers and Cirque Eloize, and also Circa from Australia, all of which feature a strong 'human-animal only' policy.

### **The Horse in Contemporary Circus**

Into this politically charged landscape, bravely stepped three new horse circuses, all formed in Quebec, Luna Caballera, a new horse circus directed by Marie-Claude

Bouillon, founded in Quebec City in 1999, followed by two new horse circuses, both directed by men who were original founders of Cirque du Soleil, *Cavalia* directed by Normand Latourelle and *Saka* by Gilles Ste. Croix.

Given the background of new circus, with what can be read as its repudiation of the exploitation of animals in the ring, plus the financial and critical success of the human only policy of most contemporary circus, this could perhaps be seen as a puzzling move, especially as the horse has now almost completely disappeared from the urban environment, except for the occasional ceremonial appearance in parades.

This vanishing of the horse from most people's lives is accompanied by a more general disappearance of animals. Berger in his landmark essay, 'Looking at Animals,' notes that this disappearance of animals is foreshadowed in Romantic paintings: "The treatment of animals in 19<sup>th</sup> century Romantic painting was already an acknowledgement of their impending disappearance. The images are of animals receding into a wildness that existed only in the imagination" (Berger, 1980, p. 17). Scholar, Akira Mazuta Lippit, takes Berger's point about the disappearance of animals one step further, pointing out that now "everywhere one looks one is surrounded by the absence of animals ... Modernity sustains ... the disappearance of animals as a constant state. That is ... animals ... exist in a state of perpetual vanishing" (Lippit, 2008, p. 1). Lippit suggests that nowadays most of our notions of animals come through the technological media and the cinema, and that the presence of animals can be described as *spectral*. "In supernatural terms, modernity finds animals lingering in the world *undead*" (Lippit, 2008, p. 1). In *Cavalia*, we are presented with dream-like spectral images of white horses projected large-scale onto long falls of water. The images shift



and shimmer and, stunningly beautiful, they present an undead image of the horse which is magical, dreamlike and ethereal, staying in the mind long after the show has finished.

Slightly more problematic is the introduction and presence of the living, breathing bodies of real horses into these circuses. Berger points out that the cultural marginalization of animals is a much more complex process than their mere physical marginalization. “The animals of the mind cannot be so easily dispersed ... sayings, dreams, games, stories, superstitions, the language itself recall them” (Berger, 1980, p.15). Furthermore, Berger observes that these “animals of the mind, instead of being dispersed, have been co-opted into other categories so that the category *animal* has lost its central importance” (Berger, 1980, p. 15). The categories into which these animals of the mind have been co-opted are the ‘family’ and the ‘spectacle.’ *Cavalia* certainly draws on these categories. The horses are presented in a way that fits the category of ‘spectacle,’ with forty-two horses presented throughout the show, with acts often incorporating large numbers of horses and riders. The horse is also presented through the show as a close companion, a member of the circus ‘family.’ A narrative that runs throughout the show traces the age-old friendship between humans and horses, with an initial Liberty Act showing a woman walking around a pool of water in close harmony with her horse. As the *Cavalia* website itself states, “horse and human ... as friends, partners and inseparable performers, ... will lead you on a journey to another world - a world of dreams” (Cavalia, 2012).

Berger states that animals in zoos “constitute a living monument to their own disappearance” (Berger, 1980, p. 26), and the horses in *Cavalia* seem to take on the

same role. The actual animals in *Cavalia* are in danger of disappearing, either becoming spectral through cinematic images or being co-opted into the categories of ‘animals of the mind,’ that is as either ‘family’ or ‘spectacle.’ The body of the horse in *Cavalia* is now assembled from fragments of imagery to form a simulacrum, a nostalgic remnant of itself. As Jean Baudrillard writes: “When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity” (Baudrillard, 1983, p. 12). Not only the body of the horse itself but also the performance relationship between horses and riders in *Cavalia* becomes a simulacrum, a “resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared” (Baudrillard, 1983, p. 12).

Meanwhile, contemporary thinking about the horse has become confused and complex. *Wild animal*, *livestock*, and *companion animal* are the delineated categories that Western society commonly uses to group, and to ethically justify, differing treatment of animals. The horse is one of the few animals, if not the only one, which straddles all these groupings. There are still substantial wild horse populations in North America and Australia, at the same time in both countries the horse is also legally classified as livestock, whilst actually being considered by many as a companion animal. The confusion that arises with this crossing over of the boundaries between these categories is becoming increasingly controversial. In June 2013, at exactly the same moment as *Cavalia* was performing its circus shows, in Sydney, Australia, *The Australian* reported ten thousand wild horses culled, or to use a less euphemistic term, killed, on Tempe Downs Station, in the Northern Territory in Australia (AAP, 2013). There are also currently plans in discussion in North America to cull fifty thousand

wild horses at the moment corralled by the government.

In June 2013, this high level of uncertainty about the classification of horses led to a confrontational situation near Reno, Nevada. Twenty-three wild horses removed from public rangeland outside Reno by state officials were placed in a pen ready for auction to the public. An article in the *Los Angeles Times* reported: “The gate swings open and the wild mustang rushes into the auction pen. Yearling by its side, the big mare paces the muddy floor, neck craning, nostrils flaring” (Glionna, 2013). The article points out that these horses, which have never been tamed, have now become commodities for sale. “In the crowd are so called kill buyers scouting product to ship to a foreign slaughterhouse. Also on hand are animal activists who, check book in hand, plan to outbid the kill buyers. The mood is prison-yard tense, with armed state Department of Agriculture officers looking on” (Glionna, 2013).

Currently the law in America and Australia recognizes horses as livestock but many people wish horses to be re-categorized as companion animals. The American Association of Equine Practitioners argues that horses should remain classified as livestock because the government is better able to regulate the horse industry, and thus the welfare and overall treatment of horses (American Association of Equine Practitioners, 2001). A lot of money is at stake. Horses categorized as livestock can be taken to slaughterhouses and their carcasses sold for animal food or exported over the border to Canada or Mexico where human consumption of horseflesh is legal, whereas if they were to be classified as companion animals and needed to be put down, they would have to be euthanized, which is expensive. Tax breaks, and federal funding in times of emergencies, are available for livestock but not companion animals. The

ethical confusion about the classification of horses is spelt out in vivid terms in a blog by Equinezen: “Horse meat is very lean and protein rich ... perfect for people in third world countries. I don’t think I myself could ever eat horse meat because my love and connection to these wonderful creatures is so deep that it would be like eating a family member!” (Equinezen, 2010)

In *Cavalía*, considerable effort is expended in public relations in order to present the horses as companion animals. Despite this disclaimer, these horses are enclosed in small stalls and only allowed outside for one hour a day and all forty-seven of these horses are male, conditions that are uncomfortably reminiscent of a high security men’s prison. The majority of *Cavalía*’s horses have also been gelded, or castrated, to make them more docile.

Discussing circuses, Derrida paints a picture of “an animal trainer having his sad subjects, bent low, file past” (Derrida, 2004, p. 422), and indeed the horses in *Cavalía*, in a Sydney performance, did appear curiously dispirited, walking with their heads down, their subservient status to their trainers constantly on display. The horses are continually brought into submission and required to kneel to the human trainers and to roll over on their backs into a submissive position. The audience is presented with a succession of tricks demonstrating the mastery of one species over another, the mastery of humans over horses.



13. *Odysseo* by Cavalia at Laval in Quebec, 12 March 2012.  
Retrieved from: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cavalia\\_Odysseo\\_-\\_Miroir.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cavalia_Odysseo_-_Miroir.jpg)  
Image in Public Domain

We see once more the demonstration of the ‘natural’ dominion of humankind over other animals, just as in Astley’s day. The difference now, more than two hundred and fifty years later, is surely that humankind’s relations to the natural world and to other animals has fundamentally changed.

Nature is now under threat, polluted, exploited and dominated, and wild animals are losing their habitat. We all know, even if on one level we can’t comprehend the full implications, that around 65 billion animals are slaughtered every year in the industrial food complex, that many wild animals are becoming extinct, and companion animals are being pushed into being extended members of the human family, neutered or ‘spayed’ and isolated from their own species. It would seem clear that human beings, as a species, no longer have any need to demonstrate mastery of nature or dominion over other animals. In this context the constant demand for submission from the horse performers in *Cavalia* seems curiously antiquated and outmoded.

The examination of the performance relationship between human and the horse in this writing has shown that circus has, at times, acted as a political force to challenge the norm in industrial society in regard to the way horses are perceived and also to the way they are treated. In Astley's time, the circus acted as a means to disseminate new and evolving ways of representing ways of treating with more kindness and with more empathy. The Romantic representation of horses in the circus in Astley's day, and later on throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, continually challenged the rationalist exploitation of horses as machines, often instead presenting them as creatures of passion, linked to imagery of the sublime. The question remains whether the potential exists for these contemporary Quebec horse circuses to act as a political force, and go beyond merely presenting many of the acts that Astley developed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and instead choose to fight to better the lot of these magnificent creatures, in the same way that Astley chose to do. Does the potential exist for these new Quebec horse circuses to research and develop substantively new approaches and to explore the changing complexities of the current relationship between human and horse? Is there the possibility for these circuses to develop something altogether new and innovative that draws on some of the exciting new thinking emerging in animal studies? In today's political and ecological climate, the lack of renegotiation of the representation of the interaction between human and horse in *Cavalia* seems a missed opportunity, and leads to the show appearing intellectually timid, and nostalgic, a simulacrum of simpler times.

## Chapter 6: The Wild Body: Big Cats

*till Max said "BE STILL!"*

*and tamed them with the magic trick*

*of staring into all their yellow eyes without blinking once*

*and they were frightened and called him the most wild thing of all.*

Maurice Sendak (1963)

### Introduction

Berger considers that other animals have always faced us across “a narrow abyss of non-comprehension” (Berger, 1980). Una Chaudhuri elaborates on this point, claiming that the great gift that other animals have always offered to the human species is “the gift of their radical otherness, their ultimate unknowability” (Chaudhuri, 2014, p.8). She lists the various ways that people have ignored this gift, seeking to reject the enigma that the other animals present with the full force of “Enlightenment inquiry - in the form of collections, dissections, taxonomies, illustrations, definitions, classifications, natural history museums, zoos” (Chaudhuri, 2014, p. 8) and, it should be added, circuses. Circus was one of the *interspecies* performances by which people attempted to comprehend other animals, in particular wild animals through the big cats acts. On April 18, 1932, *Time* magazine published a feature on circus that included a now famous, vivid description heavily laden with sensory detail that invokes the environment of circus just before the show begins. The sounds are described, a dozen languages as they blur into a hum and mix with the cries of vendors selling popcorn, and “pink lemonade gone modern in bottles” (Circus, 1932), peanuts, and frankfurters,

balloons, and colored parasols. Over the top of the vendors cries can be heard the neighing of horses, bellowing of elephants, laughing of hyenas and the screeching of monkeys. The air, blue with tobacco smoke, moves through a maze of ropes and wires, and filling the air is the *immemorial smell of circus*, a pungent, complex odor a mix of “acid wild animal mixed with sawdust, hemp, tar, leather and gunpowder” (Circus, 1932).

This curious, complex combination of sounds and smells, created largely by the presence of wild animals, still seems, for many people, to be the intrinsic essence of circus. However, modern circus did not originally include wild animal acts. From its beginnings in 1768, modern circus consisted of trick riding acts, interspersed with clowning, juggling and acrobatics. It was not until nearly seventy-five years later, in 1832, that Ducrow decided to include a wild cat act in his circus.

### **The Introduction of Tamers to Circus**

Since 1825, menageries had been presenting “human handlers known as ‘tamers’ who dared to enter a small cage with the lions” (Tait, 2011, p. 13). Large paying crowds were attracted to watch these events, and in 1832, Ducrow, an astute businessman, invited the most famous of the tamers, a flamboyant American named Isaac Van Ambrugh, to perform at Astley’s Amphitheatre with lions from Wombwell’s Menagerie. Van Amburgh was popularly known as ‘Van Amburgh, the brute tamer’ and had built a name for himself largely because of his ferocious approach to the wild animals he handled, mostly big cats. Van Amburgh performed his big cat acts in London at both Astley’s Amphitheatre and Drury Lane Theatre, and, wherever he



performed, he attracted huge crowds. Dressed as a Roman gladiator and wearing a toga, he would enter a cage with a group of big cats, which usually included lions, tigers and leopards.

For many people in the audience of these Van Amburgh shows, this was the first time that they had ever seen wild cats. *The Mirror*, writing of the big cats in 1838, described them as “half horse, half alligator” (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 54). This vivid description was designed to bring home the size, the ferocity and the physicality of the big cats to people who had not seen them in this age before photography. Tait suggests that the big cats represented the embodiment of the ‘wild’ within the cultural imagination, and “an imagined geography of wildness” (Tait, 2011, ebook: Intro paragraph 7). If the cats could be excited into spitting and hissing or sometimes striking out, they seemed wilder and more exciting for the spectators and, as a result, made Van Amburgh appear more daring.

It could be argued that Van Amburgh goaded the big cats in his act into giving a performance of ferocity, wildness and danger with *The Mirror* noting, “He will provoke them severally until their glaring eyes, roars, and whirling paws threaten instant destruction (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 54). Van Amburgh was ferocious with the wild cats and if they disobeyed him or threatened him, “[he...] beat his charges into submission with a crowbar” (Jackson, 2010, p.58). One performance when a tiger became aggressive towards him, Van Ambrugh took his crowbar and hit the cat on the head using great force and saying in a threatening voice, “You big scoundrel, if you show me any more of your pranks, I’ll knock your brains out” (Van Ambrugh quoted in *The Times*, Sept 19<sup>th</sup>, 1838 cited in Joys, 2011, p.41).

When Van Amburgh went to perform in Paris, and Ducrow hired a replacement trainer to perform at Astley's Amphitheatre named John Carter, critics pronounced Carter's animals too tame compared to the savageness of Van Amburgh's big cats which infused spectators with "the satisfactory feeling that the life of a fellow creature was in danger and thus gave zest to the scene" (Disher, 1971, cited in Joys, 2011, p. 79).

The nineteen-year-old Queen Victoria found Van Amburgh's performances fascinating and, in 1839 when he was in London, went to see him perform six times in a month, writing in her journal that "one can never see it too often" (Jackson, 2010, p. 58). Queen Victoria's attendance at so many of Van Amburgh's performances was detailed in the press in both London and New York and this assured Van Ambrugh's immediate success when he arrived in America. With an extensive collection of wild animals intended to form the basis of the new collection at the new Zoological Institute, he made a spectacular entry to New York in a huge procession that included an enormous Roman Chariot, accompanied by one hundred and fifty horses and fifty carriages, with the procession ending up at the exhibition site for the show.

### **Scriptural Dominion**

The greatest difficulty facing circus shows of Van Amburgh's time in America was "the puritanical hostility to most all forms of amusement so characteristic of Americans of the first half of the nineteenth century" (Hallock, 1905, cited in Smith, 2012, p. 90). Circus in particular was viewed as morally dubious and likely to be a corrupting influence on the young. Robert Lewis observes that

evangelical Christians condemned the circus as an insidious and pernicious amusement that sapped the virtue of the republic's citizens. Insidious, because what appeared to be a novel display of skill, enticed, excited and deluded the innocent; pernicious, because it ensnared the young, the most vulnerable, into a thoughtless love of pleasure that led to vice. (Lewis, 2003, p. 110)

In the nineteenth century it was thus in the interest of circus promoters to attempt to make their entertainment appear educational and of sound moral standing. The introduction of wild animal acts offered this opportunity as the Victorians considered Van Amburgh's act to be at once entertaining, educational and edifying. The big cat acts at the circus epitomized the "scriptural sanction of dominion" (Jackson, 2013, p. 59). The image of a man surrounded by lions recalled the Bible story of Daniel in the lions' den. Van Amburgh's manager emphasized that the original inspiration for Van Amburgh's lion-taming act was the Bible.

It was that remarkable and wonderful episode in Biblical history, found in the sixth chapter of Daniel, that induced Mr. Van Amburgh to contemplate the possibility of subduing the whole animal kingdom; and, while pondering over the escape of Daniel from the Lion's Den, he conceived that the age of miracles had not expired. (Frost, cited in Graham-Dixon, 2002)

Although Van Amburgh was renowned for goading the lions into hissing and spitting and striking out, an essential part of the act was his ability to subdue them immediately.

*The Mirror* describes this skill as, “a look and almost imperceptible gesture from this lord of creation are sufficient to still them to the most prostrate submission” (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 54). This ability to still the cats at will enabled Van Ambrugh to demonstrate his complete mastery or dominion over the wild cats. Although it is difficult to say with certainty, it is likely that Van Amburgh was the first person to put his head inside a lion’s mouth. In another part of his act, having thoroughly provoked the wild cats, Van Ambrugh would lie down in the middle of them to demonstrate his complete control over them. As well as depicting Daniel in the Lions’ Den, Van Amburgh also portrayed other images from different parts of the Bible, for example when he lay down in the cage among the big cats with the little lamb beside him. Art Historian Andrew Graham-Dixon writes that “this appears to have been his way of re-enacting Isaiah 11:6 (‘The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid’)” (Graham-Dixon, 2002). Deirdre Jackson points out that Van Amburgh also occasionally took a small child in the cage with him: “he would bring a lamb or a child into the cage with him to emphasize his authority over the animals and to allude to the biblical prophecy of a Peaceable Kingdom” (Jackson, 2010, p. 59).

The young Queen Victoria commissioned Edwin Henry Landseer, the painter, to create a painting of Van Amburgh’s lion taming act, which was to depict this particular moment when the lion-tamer lay among the big cats with a lamb at his side.



14. *Portrait of Mr Van Amburgh, as He appeared at the London Theatres* by Sir Edwin Henry Landseer (1847)

*Yale Center for British Art.*

*Image in Public Domain*

When Queen Victoria was shown Landseer's work in progress in February 1839, she wrote in her journal,

A most beautiful picture Landseer is doing of the lions; it is perfection; Van Amburgh on the ground holding the tiger by the head who is roaring - and one could fancy one heard it, the large lion lying behind him, the other lion growling at him, the panther reclining his head in his lap, and another beast looking at the lamb leaning against the man's breast, it is quite beautiful, like nature, and you are supposed to be inside the cage. (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 56)

The Duke of Wellington also commissioned a painting of Van Amburgh from Landseer.

As Wellington bought relatively few paintings from contemporary artists, it seems apparent that, rather than wanting to buy a work of art, Wellington was looking for a work-of-record to document “the wonder he had seen unfolding in an Amburgh’s cage” (Graham-Dixon, 2002). In this painting there is no lamb. The focus is on Van Amburgh’s “steely authority over the cringing beasts around him” (Graham-Dixon, 2002). The Duke admired Van Ambrugh’s act as he saw it as an affirmation of a hierarchy created by God in which man possessed absolute authority over every other animal. The painting is still in the original frame on which are inscribed lines from the first chapter of Genesis, “which proclaim Man’s ‘dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth’ ” (Graham-Dixon, 2002).

### **Imperial Conquest**

In London, in 1858, Landseer was commissioned to create the four sculptures of lions that can be seen at the base of Nelson’s column in Trafalgar Square. Nelson’s Column commemorates Horatio Nelson’s naval victory over the French at the battle of Trafalgar. The enormous bronze lions at the foot of the column were originally designed by architect William Railton, and then realized by Landseer. The lions lie submissive at the base of the column upon which the victorious naval hero, Nelson, stands triumphant. The sculpture again depicts man standing in dominion over nature, and the triumph of imperial conquest.

The triumph of imperial conquest was also celebrated in the wild cat acts in circuses. Berger writes that, “the capturing of the animals was a symbolic

representation of the conquest of all distant and exotic lands” (Berger, 1980, p. 21). Animal studies scholar, John Sorenson, speaking in relation to zoos although it is equally applicable to the circus big cat acts, claims that the animals were “used as specimens that demonstrate the imperial power to control and penetrate the world” (Sorenson, 2008, p. 198). Geographer Gail Davies further points out that the “animals stood in metonymically for the regions from which they were derived, providing a visual display of imperial reach” (Davies, 2000, p. 248). She also observes that the bars and cages [in menageries and equally wild animal acts in circuses] were a physical and visual representation of “the human power over the domain of nature” (Davies, 2000, p. 248). As the number of animals on display in zoos, menageries and also in circuses proliferated, their display was supported by massive trading networks dealing in captured wild animals that spanned from imperial territories through to Western Europe, and the United States. Huge numbers of live, wild animals were collected by, “individuals or organizations such as the Dutch East India Company, public donation, royal gifts from colonial territories, and more informal mechanisms” (Davies, 2000, p. 248). Davies points out that these displays of animals valorized particular approaches to knowing about nature which emphasized adventure and exploration of new territory and “the development of knowledge by way of moving through space” (Davies, 2000, p. 248). Vast fortunes stood to be made not only in capturing animals for exhibition in zoos menageries and circuses, but also in skins, horn, ivory and animal trophies. The explorers were followed by sportsmen and adventurers who went to exploit the huge new territories opening up in both India and Africa.

As Europe, and in particular England, sought to expand its empire in Africa, India and Southeast Asia, army officers and civil servants combined sport and duty in India and especially in Africa with its uncharted territories and incomparable fauna. This new 'wild' required that a Victorian be resourceful and brave, seeking to expand scientific and geographic knowledge through descriptions, drawings, and specimens, throwing the 'light of reason on what was novel and unexplained.' (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 13)

Contemporary accounts of animal capture described and detailed the methods used, often outlining the bloody nature of the hunt:

To capture a baby elephant for a zoo or circus, 'a professional hunter would round up an entire herd and then kill the adults.' One hunter Hans Domenik, wrote, 'As if from a fountain, the red blood sprayed up from the thick arteries onto our clothes as we stood beside the animals examining our guns and discussed how we should precede [*sic*] with the hunt.' (Rothfels, 2002a, p. 68)

The 'heroic' figure of the explorer and later of the adventurer or the big game hunter captured the attention of the public. Explorers' journals told the tales of their adventures with big game, their meetings with tribal chiefs, and their travels through exotic landscapes and these journals were often turned into popular travel books and also sometimes serialized in newspapers. As the newspapers discovered that the stories could appeal to a mass market of readers and that explorers' tales usually lifted their



circulation, they started claiming exclusive rights to different adventurers' tales.

Stanley's search for Livingstone was actually funded by the *New York Herald* (Joys, 2011, p. 15).

This image of the 'heroic adventurer' facing the terrors and perils of the wild, was represented in the animal taming acts and, in the 1880s, a style of big cat act known as the big untamable started. Trainers added excitement to their acts by goading the animals to roar, leap, and strike out. Each trainer tried to make his act as exciting as possible:

[In] the big untamable act ... the tamer seems to be in no wise content with the natural ferocity of his animals ... conclud[ing] his exhibition by deliberately and as it were, suicidally goading his beasts to the limit of animal endurance. They turn (or ought to turn upon him) every shuddery moment. And in the very eye blink, when he whips through the spring bar door, SMASH, it is (or ought to be) covered four feet deep with big cats raring to get at him. (McFarlane, 1909, cited in Joys, 2011, p. 294)

The 1847 Landseer painting shows that cages of the early lion tamers, such as that of Van Ambrugh, were small. The tamer usually stood on one spot just in front of a sliding door, with an attendant standing outside the door ready to open it in case of emergencies. However, by the 1880s, American circus was undergoing a transformation into a modern business. This was largely brought about by the entrepreneurial brilliance of P.T. Barnum. Circuses gradually adopted the three-ring

format and new huge tents able to accommodate audiences of up to 15,000 people. The three ring circuses demanded larger, more spectacular acts and this extended to the big cat acts. Modern circus adopted the ‘big cage’ form in the 1890s. This new big cage, the large steel arena, which is believed to have premiered at the Adam Forepaugh Show in 1891 (Smith, 2012, p. 94), was “a quintessentially modern performance space, part of a turn of the twentieth-century entertainment environment that included world’s fairs and amusement parks” (Smith, 2012, p. 93). The new performance space allowed for a greater number of animals and demanded larger and greater visual spectacles. These new steel arenas, or big cages, fundamentally changed the performance relationship between the animals and the trainer.

Edward Deyerling, chief trainer at Frank Bostock’s animal show at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, is quoted as saying, “These animals, feeling themselves in a larger space, are more likely to feel their power” and he continued that if they were “so inclined, could make a rush at a trainer that it would be next to impossible for him to withstand” (cited in Smith, 2012, p. 92).

### **The Age of Evolution**

A profound change in the performance relationship between trainer and big cats emerged at around this same time. As opposed to the style used by trainers with big cats known as *en férocité*, which was “a combative approach, dominating the animals with a series of aggressive postures” (Jackson, 2010, p. 61), a new method evolved known as *en douceur* which emphasized trainers expressing familiarity with their animals and using “quiet commands to demonstrate their mastery over animals” (Jackson, 2010, p.

61). This was a big shift in the way the performance relationship between trainers and big cats was represented.

The background to this change in approach to the performance relationship can perhaps be traced to the necessity of negotiating the new big cages or steel arenas, and the changed power dynamics in the cage with the larger numbers of big cats involved in the acts, but it can also be traced to huge upheavals in scientific thinking. In 1859, Charles Darwin's work *On the Origin of the Species* was first published. Darwin argued that with the new discoveries being made by geologists about the age of the earth, new ways of understanding the living creatures on the planet were needed. The creation story from the Bible was no longer credible as the age of the planet could be shown to be much "older than any arithmetical analysis of the Scriptures could propose and what Darwin put forward instead of the Christian creation myth was the theory of evolution" (Fudge, 2009, p. 18). This theory proposed a world that was never static, with animals (and in this he included humans) not being born in their final state but evolving to become what they now were. This was a profoundly shocking challenge to the Victorian worldview. In one stroke the naturalized notion of man holding rightful dominion over all other animals was undermined.

What Darwin's theory proposed ... was an end to human distinction, an end to the separation of man from beasts. It was impossible following his scheme that humans should have existed as a breed apart. Instead humans were animals, just the most evolved species. The Christian narrative of superiority and dominion was seemingly destroyed. (Fudge, 2009, p. 19)

The effect of the discourse surrounding *On the Origin of the Species* began to be felt, and it set in place new thinking about animals, and the ways in which humans should interact with the other animals. The controversy and discussion about the human/animal relationship that Darwin had initiated must have contributed to the change in the representation of the performance relationship between big cats and their trainers as the epistemological gap between humans and the other animals became narrower.

As well as these shifts in scientific and philosophical thinking, Harriet Ritvo argues that the spread of urbanization also brought about a fundamental shift in attitudes to nature. She writes that “once nature ceased to be a constant antagonist, it could be viewed with affection and even, as the scales tipped to the human side, with nostalgia” (Ritvo, 1987, p. 3.) Ritvo points out that it was in this same period that the Victorians began to develop a “sentimental attachment to both individual pets and lower creation in general ... Wildness became attractive rather than ugly, wild animals ... might evoke sympathy rather than scorn” (Ritvo, 1987, p. 3).

In 1892, Henry Salt published his groundbreaking book *On Animals Rights*. Kevin Tester argues that, with this book, Salt caused an epistemological break. Tester puts forward the idea that Salt offered a “comprehensive principle which had never been imagined before” which had the effect of creating “an apparently inevitable moral orbit around animals” (Tester, 1991, p. 171). One common nineteenth-century position on the human/animal relationship argued for the fair treatment of animals by humans, within a “moral universe that expected them to demonstrate benevolence towards the lower orders with humans having to behave decently to animals in order to uphold this

moral order” (Tait, 2011, p. 33). However, Salt’s position is fundamentally different in that he argued “on behalf of all animals, and against zoo-like displays that condemn even elephants to ‘useless and deadening imbecility, as if animals were devoid of moral purpose and individuality’” (Tait, 2011, p. 33). Tait considers that, as an indirect response to Salt’s writings, the rhetoric accompanying the training of wild animals began to change dramatically and, from the 1890s, the rhetoric displayed “ideals of patience and affection and downplayed any elements of force” (Tait, 2011, p. 35). Tait’s perspective holds that it was necessary for the tamer to give an “impression of trainer kindness, or at least neutrality. If a trainer professed love and behaved calmly, then training appeared humane” (Tait, 2011, p. 35).

The most prominent and influential of the tamers of this period was Carl Hagenbeck. Hagenbeck is credited with introducing two important new developments into big cat acts; training the animals without excessive use of force, and also “allowing them to perform in larger arenas with a wider variety of props instead of in cramped cages” (Jackson, 2011, p. 61). Whether these big cages were, in fact, a response to the demands of the three-ring circus, or in fact introduced by Hagenbeck to better show off the big cats he had trained, or whether adopted to improve the conditions of the animals, these big cages, or steel arenas, soon became the norm. Hagenbeck set up his own circus in Hamburg in 1887.

Hagenbeck created a new method of training animals that he had developed through working with domestic dogs and cats. He then encountered an unemployed lion tamer, who agreed to try the method out on wild cats. A two-year experiment ensued where the tamer worked with twenty-one lions chosen because of their calm

temperament and ability to focus. The twenty-one lions were eventually pared down to just four lions that had proved suitable for the different training approach. These lions were able to perform many new kinds of tricks or 'behaviors' including pulling a chariot around the cage. A European tour in 1889 proved very popular and, thus, lucrative. Hagenbeck had succeeded in developing a new system of animal training that would revolutionize wild animal acts. "Brutes," he proposed, "after all are beings akin to ourselves. They repay cruelty with hatred and kindness with trust" (Hagenbeck 1909, cited in Joys, 2011, p. 282).

The relationship between lion and lion tamer was no longer represented as that of taskmaster and slave but rather as being between teacher and pupil. The training method relied on many long hours of preparation and very careful selection of the animals. "The trainer had to be vigilant and courageous, quick to exclude the big cats when they were in season, and alert for any changes in behavior, because even Hagenbeck admitted that deep down 'a remnant of their primitive ferocity' could suddenly erupt" (Joys, 2011, p. 290).

In 1893, after great success in Europe, Hagenbeck took his big cats to Chicago where they, with a large number of other wild animals, performed at the Chicago World Fair to at least a million people. The Hagenbeck lions

rode horses, rode tricycles, played on a seesaw, and served as hurdles for dogs. They also took their place in 'The Great Zoological Pyramid' alongside tigers, panthers, leopards, bears and dogs. The grand finale consisted of a crowned lion driving a 'chariot' drawn by two tigers, with a pair of Great Danes on the

running board serving as footmen. (Jackson, 2010, p. 61-62)

Hagenbeck's brother, Wilhelm, had great success with the training system, training a lion to ride horseback and do equestrian tricks, and amassing a group of 70 polar bears. He put together in one act the unlikely combination of "two tigers, two lions, two black panthers, two leopards, three Angora goats, two Somali sheep, an Indian dwarf zebu, a Shetland pony, and two poodles" (Joys, 2011, p. 292). Jacob Smith puts forward the idea that the symmetrical arrangements of animals into pyramids, that were very popular at this time in circuses, were seen as serving "to create an illusion of cognitive control over a colonial experience that might otherwise have been disturbingly chaotic" (Smith, 2012, p. 107). The creation of "orderly geometric arrangements of exotic animals can be seen as a ... reassurance of the 'orderliness of empire'" (Smith, 2012, p. 107).

Responding to the widespread demand for wild animals, Hagenbeck began to systematize his new training method so that all the Hagenbeck-trained wild animals would respond to the same signals. This meant that any trained wild animals obtained from Hagenbeck should be able to be used by any Hagenbeck-trained trainers. These Hagenbeck trainers presented a totally new performance relationship between trainer and animals. As Nigel Rothfels observes, "Hagenbeck performances represent a very new way of imagining animal-animal and animal-human interaction" (Rothfels, 2002a, p. 161). Rothfels depicts one of these trainers as "a former Hamburg businessman, Heinrich Mehrmann, [standing] respectfully in eveningwear beside his clan, far from roaring charges" (Rothfels, 2002a, p. 161). Hagenbeck's acts created the illusion of a

happy family at play together and these acts, instead of reinforcing the dominion of mankind over animals, instead presented the “Edenic brotherhood of creation” (Smith 2012, p. 96).

The “Edenic brotherhood of creation” may have been represented in these acts but, at the same time, it is important to keep in mind that behind the Hagenbeck trainers’ display of affection with the big cats in the acts, lurked the shadow of the wild animal trade in which the Hagenbeck family was heavily involved as one of the major suppliers (Rothfels, 2002a, p. 161). The wild animal trade was a profitable and bloody business. The projection of displays of familiarity or even affection with their animals veiled the actuality that the majority of Hagenbeck’s income came from the capture and resultant sale of wild animals, including lion cubs whose mothers had been killed. Hagenbeck’s biographer, Heinrich Leuterman, argues that there was no other way to catch the big cats: “Without exception, lions are captured as cubs after the mother has been killed, the same happens with tigers, because these animals when caught as adults in such things as traps and pits, are too powerful and untamable, and usually die while resisting” (cited in Jackson, 2010, p. 92).

The treatment of the captured animals also left a lot to be desired. In 1875 in a fictional adventure story entitled *Lion Jack* which was published in Frank Leslie’s *Boys’ and Girls’ Magazine*, Barnum, having been dealing in circuses for four years and for many more in the exhibition of animals, describes the animals returning from a long tour in the menagerie as being, “used up and half dead ... that kind of property thrives better in its native jungles than it does in a cage on wheels, and there was nothing but their skins to show now, for some of the most rare and costly animals in the outfit ...



the only chance was to import a fresh lot from foreign parts” (cited in Joys 2011, p. 292). In reality, Barnum himself had displayed and then needed to replace many wild animals in a similar manner to the way he had described in *Lion Jack*. One example is a pair of beluga whales which he had transported by train from Quebec to his American Museum in New York, and then had displayed in a small tank of fresh water in the basement for three days, at which point they died, whereupon he replaced them with another pair delivered in the same manner which he tried to keep alive by pumping in water from New York’s bay. This pair soon died as well. Barnum undeterred captured a third pair using their imminent demise as a marketing strategy. “As it is very doubtful that these wonderful creatures can be kept alive more than a few days, the public will want to see the importance of seizing the first moment to see them (Sorenson, 2008, 196).

During the last part of the nineteenth century the Hagenbeck family had consolidated the live, wild animal trade. Originally the trade had depended on indigenous catchers and middlemen, with purchasing in the hands of Europeans. The next stage of the trade was dominated by people whose main occupation was collecting animals for zoos and circuses, and these people “consisted of commercial hunters, naturalists, explorers, and later even some photographers, who collected some live specimens” (Joys, 2011, p. 15). The number of animals collected by Hagenbeck’s animal collecting business was enormous. In the twenty years between 1866 and 1886, for example, Hagenbeck’s animal collectors captured

1000 lions, 400 tigers, at least 700 leopards, 1000 bears, 800 hyenas, 300

elephants, 17 Indian Javan and Sumatran rhinos, 9 African rhinos, at least 100,000 birds and tens of thousands of monkeys. Even if the animals survived the journey, and hundreds did not, they suffered considerable distress when uprooted from their homes and deposited in zoos and circuses. (Jackson, 2010, p. 92)

With an increasing awareness of the distress experienced by captured animals in zoos and circuses, a shift occurred in the attitude of spectators. Around this time, several female lion tamers started to become celebrities. Jackson makes the point that in order to appease a general public who bore fixed ideas about what constituted acceptable roles for women, journalists and publicists accentuated the feminine natures or wiles of these female lion tamers. Female lion tamers became celebrated for their ability to control lions with their “gentle words and subtle gestures” (Jackson, 2011, p. 65). Clara Pleßke was a German trainer who toured the USA under the name of Claire Heliot. In spite of actually being strong enough to carry a lion weighing 150 kilos (350lbs) on her back, it was her delicacy, her “maternal instincts” and her ability to control the animals with pats and caresses that were emphasized in newspaper reports at the time. Heliot became renowned for wearing a white evening dress while presiding over dinner parties with her big cats, who sat at the table with her while she fed them tasty morsels (Jackson, 2011, p. 65).

An undercurrent of eroticism began to be represented in the relationship between these female trainers and their big cats. Madame Adgie was a racy female



15. *Woman Lion Tamer Adgie in Cage with Male Lion, 1897.*

Retrieved from: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lady\\_Lion\\_Tamer\\_Caged\\_with\\_Lion.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lady_Lion_Tamer_Caged_with_Lion.jpg)  
Image in Public Domain

trainer who was said to sometimes strip to her undergarments and tango with a lion in her act. In 1914, a large male lion called *Teddy*, attacked and killed Emmerson D. Dietrich, Madame Adgie's young assistant and also her lover. At the coroner's inquest into Dietrich's death, the coroner's jury ruled it an accident, but rumors abounded that *Teddy* had killed Dietrich from "jealousy." Madame Adgie encouraged this view stating that, "lions are just like dogs or cats, they know when someone shares the affection of their owner" (cited in Jackson, 2010, p. 66). Adgie claimed that the week before, when Dietrich had put his hand 'caressingly' on her shoulder in Salt Lake City, "I looked

over at Teddy ... his eyes glittered and he snarled” (cited in Jackson, 2010, p. 66).

After that incident, Madame Adgie’s wild cat act gained an extra edge with audiences. A New York Times’ advertisement for her show at the Palace Theatre read, “Adgie’s lions, including the man-eating Teddy, will be the new headliners. There are ten lions in the act which is the most thrilling animal exhibition ever given on stage” (Jackson, 2010, p. 66). In subsequent decades, female lion trainers with whips, “dressed in tight white breeches, low-cut blouses and knee-high boots ... cast in the role of glamorous dominatrices” (Jackson, 2010, p. 67) appeared on the scene. This erotic energy provided a frisson that contributed towards the success of the female lion tamers like Mabel Stark, who began her career as a big cat trainer in 1913.

Many spectators however, began to express increasing empathy with the animals rather than identifying with the dominant, and dominating, human figure of the trainer. The poet, Rainer Maria Rilke, who visited the menagerie at the *Jardin des Plantes* in Paris in 1902, wrote of the panther he saw there:

***The Panther***

***Jardin des Plantes, Paris***

The bars which pass and strike across his gaze  
have stunned his sight; the eyes have lost their hold.  
To him it seems there are a thousand bars,  
a thousand bars and nothing else, no world.

And pacing out that mean constricted ground  
so quiet, supple, powerful his stride  
is like a ritual dance performed around  
the centre where his baffled will survives.

The silent shutter of his eye sometimes  
slides open to admit something outside;  
an image runs through each expectant limb  
and penetrates his heart and dies.

Rainer Marie Rilke (1902), translated by Stephen Cohn

In 1912, an article called ‘The Gentle Art of Training Wild Beasts’ appeared in *Everybody’s Magazine*, in which Maurice Brown Kirby attacked the hypocrisy of the rhetoric surrounding animal training. He argued that trainers only used the word *kindness* when being interviewed, and that the only *bond* between the trainer and the wild animals was a stick, and the bigger the animal, the bigger the stick. He attacked the metaphor that was in currency of the trainer as *teacher* and said that the wild animals were not *taught*, rather they were “pushed and shoved and mauled and whipped and dragged and choked and tortured in tricks” (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 285).

When Jack London, the novelist, socialist and animal lover, read this article by Kirby he became completely incensed. His book, *Michael Brother of Jerry* (1917), describes the miseries endured by a range of animals undergoing training for shows. In the introduction, London wrote, “what turns my head and makes my gorge rise is the cold-blooded, conscious, deliberate cruelty and torment that is manifest behind 99 of

every 100 trained animal turns. Cruelty as a fine art had attained its perfect flower in the trained animal world” (London, 2004, p. 2). Written as London was dying, the book stated that he hoped that his readers would “weep red tears and sweat bloody sweats” as they came to understand “what real cruelty and brutality were” (London, 2004, p. 2). He recommended that all men, women, and children become familiar with animal training methods and that they join, or, if necessary form, humane societies to stand against the cruelty of wild animal training (London, 2004, p. 3).

What became known as *Jack London Clubs* started to spring up all over the United States. Members of these clubs would get up and silently leave any performance where animal acts appeared. When the animal act was finished they would come back in and take their seats again. Membership of the Jack London Clubs kept growing by as many as 4000 per month to a total of 206,000 in the USA by the end of 1921. The movement also began to grow in Canada and England (Joys, 2011, p. 285).

However, during the 1920s, at the same time as the Jack London Clubs were growing steadily, crowds were pouring in to see a new trainer working with tigers, a daring, beautiful blonde. Bringing a new dynamic to her shows, “with her trademark white body suit and a dangerous sexualized act, Mabel Stark became famous as the world’s greatest female tiger trainer” (Hough, 2003).

Mabel Stark was working at the Al G. Barnes Circus as a trainer with a team of performing goats when another animal trainer, a woman called Marguerite Haupt, was killed by her tigers. Author Robert Hough describing the method by which tigers kill their prey, writes: “Tigers kill their prey by seizing it by the shoulders and pulling it down until it is lying on top of them. Then, with a single sweep of its hind leg claws,

the tiger removes the victim's stomach, the animal dying as it watches the tiger feed on its viscera. It was in this manner that Al G. Barnes' first tiger trainer Marguerite Haupt died" (Hough, 2003).

In spite of this, Mabel Stark convinced the head big cat trainer at the circus, a Hungarian called Louis Roth whom she later married, to hire her as a replacement trainer. Roth was the premier trainer of his day and he was famous for a technique he had developed called 'gentling' (Hough, 2003). Roth had worked out that the big cats became much more obliging and responsive if given a piece of meat whenever they did as they were asked. Roth taught this method of gentling to Stark with a big old lion called Humpy. Lions were believed to "broadcast their intentions more obviously than tigers and for this reason it was widely held that lions were easier and safer to train and yet Stark preferred tigers" (Hough, 2003). Stark progressed from learning with the lion, Humpy, and then, fearlessly went on to train the same three tigers that had killed Haupt. Stark's relationship with her tigers was one of admiration. In her autobiography *Hold that Tiger* (1938), she declares that "there is a rhythmic grace in their stealthy stride and the long curving arc of their supple bodies as they spring. I even love their snarling hiss as they bare their powerful fangs to strike" (Stark and Orr, 1938, p. 15). Stark debuted a ten-tiger act in 1913, the biggest at the time in America. "For me there is no greater thrill than stepping into a cageful of these glorious beasts and matching wits with them" (Stark and Orr, 1938, p. 13). Soon after, she increased the number of tigers in her act to twelve.

Al G. Barnes, the circus owner, gave Stark a Bengal cub that she named Rajah. She took him for walks in every town where the circus stopped, and in winter "when

the circus hunkered down in Venice, California she would take him for long walks on the beach” (Morris, 1991). Stark decided to create a new act in the form of a wrestling match between herself and Rajah, an act that had never been performed before.

Stark debuted her new act wrestling with Rajah in the summer of 1918. The wrestling act was created to convince the spectators that she was being attacked and in the process of being killed by the tiger. “It is said that brave hearts would leave their seats and come rushing towards the steel cage to try and help her. Women screamed, children cried and reporters came rushing to see the new act. Mainstream magazines such as Collier’s and Harper’s ran articles about her as did a legion of newspapers” (Hough, 2003). By 1920, she was the centre ring star of the Ringling Bros Barnum and Bailey Circus and performed in Madison Square Gardens with tigers and a black panther. She was famous, ate in the best restaurants, wore furs, and, “on the vast Ringling train, her private car was situated near the front, with the likes of John and Charles Ringling and the famous aerialist Lillian Leitzel” (Hough, 2003).

In 1928, Stark received a mauling that nearly killed her. It had been raining, and Stark’s animals had spent the day on wet bedding, and had been left unfed before the performance (Hough, 2003). In her autobiography, Stark describes that mauling from two cats named Sheik and Zoo, “Sheik was right behind me, and caught me in the left thigh, tearing a two inch gash that cut through to the bone and almost severed my left leg just above the knee ... I could feel blood pouring into both my boots, but I was determined to go through with the act” (Stark and Orr, 1938, p. 233). A lion-tamer and an attendant entered the cage and succeeded in driving the animals off. “Her wound record read: 378 stitches, a muscle removed from her back, 2 from her thigh, left hip



ripped, right leg stripped of flesh from knee to ankle and partial scalping” (Okon, 1950). In her autobiography Stark reflected on the injuries she had received in her career, “For more than twenty-five years I have been breaking, working and training tigers. I have been clawed and slashed and chewed until there was hardly an inch of my body unscarred by tooth or nail” (cited in Rense, 2005).

It could be said that audiences, however, were becoming increasingly jaded with big cat acts in circus. As far back as 1882, a journalist in the New York Times, writing of the highlight of many of the big cat acts during which the trainer stuck his head into a lion’s mouth, observed that “people have become accustomed to the sight and do not marvel as much as they did” (cited in Jackson, 2010, p. 60). Another reporter writing in the New York Times, (1909) refers to the trick as “ancient and hoary” (cited in Jackson, 2010, p.60) and in 1931 a report of a young boy talking to his mother at the circus captures this perception: “‘When,’ inquired a seven-year-old male, as the trainer thrust his nose into a lion’s mouth, ‘when will the lion bite the man’s head off, mother?’” (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 320).

In general big cat acts were dropping out of favour. Earl Chaplin May (1934) noted that as circuses stopped using the railroads there were fewer big cat acts and, because they were so unwieldy to transport, there were only about a dozen acts left on tour. Many trainers had gone on to work in Hollywood training wild animals for roles in movies or else they were working in amusement parks. In this climate of disillusionment, the acts had to become bigger and more sensational to attract audience attention. The trainer Clyde Beatty had re-ignited public interest in big cat acts by creating some of the most sensational wild cat acts ever seen. His huge successes as a

big cat trainer were largely due to his constant introduction of new elements into his act, mixing up different species of cat and changing the ratio of different species. He increased the number of cats in the ring, introducing tigers, tigresses, lions and lionesses in the ring at the same time, with sometimes up to thirty-nine animals in the cage.

In contrast to Mabel Stark, Beatty was one of the most ferocious of the animal trainers. Contemporary descriptions of his act reveal how he advanced into the ring holding a chair in his left hand, and in his right hand, a heavy whip with a long lash that he cracked incessantly. When Beatty's assistant turned to the tunnel and shouted,

‘Let ‘em in’ the cats ran in and a veritable river of hate boiled into the arena - tigers, Royal Bengals and Sumatras nearly a dozen of them rolling over, snarling, clawing, in their midst was the young trainer, the whip cracking continually, the revolver speaking almost as rapidly. (cited Joys 2011, p. 306)

In the 1933 film, *The Big Cage*, we see Beatty entering the cage firing a pistol loaded with blank cartridges. The lions and tigers are agitated which gives the impression of “savage violence precariously held in check by the man's kitchen chair and whip” (Smith, 2012, p. 81).

At one of Beatty's shows (1951), 3,000 children watched as a lion ripped a tiger to death. “Prince leapt off its pedestal into the back of Sheba, the star of the act, after which Sheba dragged her shredded body to her cage and dropped dead from loss of blood” (cited in Joys 2011, p. 400). The incident drew letters to the editor, against the

use of wild animals in circus. One reader claimed that “any circus that contains no wild animals is richer, finer and more enjoyable and certainly more humane in its consideration of wild animals” (cited in Joys 2011, p. 402).

However, following this attack at least 6,000 people had to be turned away from Beatty’s show because all the tickets in the arena were already sold. In the same year, Collie Small described Beatty’s wild cat act observing, “Clyde Beatty in person is the most dangerous, suicidal, blood curdling wild animal display ever conceived and performed by man” (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 400). Small suggested that a great number of people found the prospect of seeing someone eaten alive irresistible and so nearly one million would crowd in over the summer to see Beatty’s show (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 400).

In terms of the performance relationship between humans and big cats, a comparison between the 1954 Hollywood film *Ring of Fear* featuring Beatty and his wild cats, and the 1966 movie *Born Free* bears dividends. Although there was a period of only twelve years between the two movies they mark a completely different performance relationship between humans and wild cats.

*Ring of Fear* featured Beatty and his wild cats and also starred Mickey Spillane, the best-selling author of the novels featuring the fictional private eye, Mike Hammer. Spillane described his experiences with Beatty while making the movie:

Now there’s a man. He’s a guy you don’t describe. You have to see him. You have to watch a cageful of jungle wild animals hating each other and all hoping for the same thing ... that the guy in there with them comes a little too close or

makes one little mistake ... Yeah, this you have to see. This you have to sweat out for yourself ... because for those minutes that Clyde Beatty stands inches away from ripping tearing death, he becomes you ... and those shaggy manes and starkly white teeth are looking into your face ... and all you can think of is that you have to be good. You have to be real good. He is great! (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 400)

*Born Free*, as discussed in Chapter 3, tells the story of how George Adamson, a game warden in Northern Kenya, together with his wife Joy, adopted an orphaned lion cub called Elsa, rearing her until she reached maturity when they returned her to the wild. This apparently straightforward account of the relationship between a game warden, his wife and a lioness is, however, riddled with contradictions, the first being that George Adamson's had killed Elsa's mother as part of his culling operations. "After destroying the lioness, George preserved her offspring: within days of her birth Elsa was sucking from a bottle and being coddled by the Adamsons" (Jackson, 2010, p. 55-57). Elsa "sucked Joy's thumbs when it was nervous and followed George round like a dog" (Jackson, 2010, p. 55-57) and became an animal who occupied "an equivocal position. Fully habituated to humans, [although] she nevertheless retained her natural instincts (Jackson, 2010, p. 55-57).

A photo album containing hundreds of photographs documenting Elsa's time with the Adamsons that projected an image of a domestic idyll, formed the central theme of both the book and the film based. The domestic idyll, however, was more complex than it appeared. Every so often the lion cub acted aggressively but these

moments are never referred to in the book, which presented a constantly loving and affectionate animal. *Born Free* captured the public's imagination and earned half a million pounds in its first ten years in print, and the Hollywood film, starring Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers, was likewise a huge success. Joy Adamson used some of the proceeds from the book and the film to set up her Wild Life Conservation Trust in 1963. Wild life conservation suddenly became an issue on the public's radar with people who had never really thought about lions before, rushing to join.

Both films, *Ring of Fear* and *Born Free*, required a huge number of animal actors. Enormous numbers of retakes were required to get the representation of animal behavior that each film required, ferocious in order to make the interaction between the tamer Clyde Beatty and the wild cats more exciting and dangerous, or affectionate to bring out George and Joy Adamson's relationship with the lioness Elsa. Neither film offers a real vision of either the animals themselves or of the real relationships between humans and the animals. Both films offer edited representations that suit the purposes of the film-makers. In much the same way, the representation of the animals in circus acts was as fictional in the circus ring as it was in the films, with a performance persona and the performance relationship created by the trainer for the purposes of the performance.

The major difference between films and circuses was the immediacy or the liveness of the event, which in the case of things going really wrong or the animals rebelling against the conditions in which they were kept, allowed for little in the way of editing. In these situations the real body of the big cat could be occasionally be glimpsed through the surface representations, but, because of the context of incitement

and goading, the real body of the big cat could only be glimpsed by the audience in moments of extremis.

### **The Age of Protest**

Sparked largely by the public reaction to the book *Born Free* (1960), there was a big upsurge in public opinion against big cat acts in circus. Ruth Harrison's, *Animal Machines* (1964), and Brigid Brophy's, *The Rights of Animals* (1965), both deeply critical of the human treatment of animals followed in its wake. Brophy kicked off her first page with a vivid and provocative image:

Were it announced tomorrow that anyone who fancied it might, without risk of reprisals or recriminations, stand at a fourth storey window, dangle out of it a length of string with a meal (labeled 'Free') on the end, wait till a chance passer-by took a bite and then, having entangled his cheek or gullet on a hook hidden in the food, haul him up to the fourth floor and there batter him to death with a knobkerrie, I do not think there would be many takers. Most sane adults would, I imagine, sicken at the mere thought. Yet sane adults do the equivalent to fish everyday. (Brophy, 2012, p. 156)

Brophy regarded the relationship between humans and non-human animals as one of unrelenting exploitation:

We employ their work; we eat and wear them. We exploit them to serve our superstitions: whereas we used to sacrifice them to our gods and tear out their entrails in order to foresee the future, we now sacrifice them to Science and experiment on their entrails in the hope - or on the mere off chance that we may see a little more clearly into the present. (Brophy, 2012, p.156)

The book, and Brophy's follow-up article, featured on the front page of *The Times* in the same year, triggering heated discussion.

In this climate, new circus abandoned the use of wild animals in the ring. This could be read as a profoundly political act in tune with the contemporary thinking and writing about Animal Rights. However, traditional modern circuses, often still run by circus families, continued to display and show big cat acts.

Berger's influential essay, 'Why look at Animals?' (1980) passionately condemned the exhibition of wild animals in zoos. His writing called for a total re-think of the way in which humans interact with other animals. Cynthia Chris notes that it was at about the same time that wild animals, which had long been a subject in visual arts, began to appear in performance in new ways such as in Joseph Beuys' action in May 1974, where he lived for three days in a small room with a wild coyote (Chris, 2006 p. xvi). Although only seen by a few people, this action generated a great deal of interest from a wide range of people who heard about it afterwards (Strauss, 1999).

Beuys reflected that *I like America and America Likes Me presented an opportunity for* "a reckoning ... to be made with the coyote and only then can this trauma be lifted" (Beuys, 1974, as cited in Tisdall, 1980, p. 24), pointing to the treatment meted out to

wild coyotes by the US Government. Millions of dollars had been spent on coyote eradication efforts "[u]sing poisons such as strychnine and thallium sulfate, leg hold traps, cyanide 'coyote-getters' designed to explode into the coyote's mouth, snares, den-hunting to destroy pups, aerial hunting from planes and helicopters" (Strauss, 1999). Between 1937 and 1981, 3,612,220 coyotes were scalped. The ears with a connecting strip of skin were sent to a central tallying point as proof of the body count" (Cadieux, 1983, p. 51). Beuys' performance consisted of an "orchestrated sequence of actions to be repeated over and over in the next three days" (Strauss, 1999), a ritual designed to make amends and to start to heal the relationship between human and coyote. Strauss considers that Beuys' action called attention to an ecological crisis brought about by Western materialistic ways of thinking and that both Beuys' performance and his political work in the German Greens Party were hugely influential in the development of the Animal Rights movement (Strauss, 1999).

In the context of this kind of dialogue about the possible way forward in the relationship between humans and other animals by artists, philosophers, novelists and performers, big cat circus acts became increasingly untenable. With big cat populations coming under pressure from loss of habitat and poaching, Davis described the big cat act as surviving "precariously with protests [threatening] to relegate the icon of the lion-tamer to the once under-erasure status of blackface minstrelsy" (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 449). Emerging public concern about the treatment of wild cats in circuses led circus owners to develop various responses and stratagems. One response was for circus families to create drive-through safari parks. In these safari parks, animals could roam through relatively large areas of land instead of being shut inside cages. The Lions of



Longleat was a drive-through park set up in England in 1966 by Jimmy Chipperfield from Chipperfield's Circus in part of the estate belonging to the Marquis of Bath in England. In Australia, Tait notes that, "in 1968, to the strains of a cover version of the song, *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*, the Bullen Family, a well-known Australian circus family, opened Bullen's African Lion Safari Park in Warrangamba in New South Wales" (Tait, 2011, E-book, Chapter 5, para. 1).

Within the circuses themselves, the acts that featured an aggressive, dominating trainer, wielding a lashing whip which were known as 'hurrah fighting,' were gradually phased out in Europe, and the major American circuses followed suit by the late 1960s. The figure of the big cat trainer changed from being aggressive and domineering into being represented as an animal-lover thus appeasing public concern and enabling the continuation of big cat acts in circus into the late twentieth century. Tait observes that one image that was adopted by many lion trainers was the figure of Tarzan, a man abandoned in the jungle as a child and brought up by wild animals, who became an archetype of an animal-lover through the early and mid-twentieth century. The figure of Tarzan became popularized through the 1930s film featuring Johnny Weismuller, with circus trainer Bert Nelson standing in as his double in the animal scenes. Circus shows appropriated this image of Tarzan in the figure of Swedish trainer Gilbert Houcke in leopard skin briefs and, later in 1951, Charly Beauman adopted the same persona and costume. Gunther Gebel-Williams in the 1980s was described as the blond Tarzan in circus publicity when he presented the lead acts at Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey Circus, *The Greatest Show on Earth* (Tait, 2011, p.147). In this representation of the lion tamer as Tarzan, the trainer is positioned as able to communicate with the animals

as an adoptive family.

The collective change in attitudes in the public provoked a major change in the way circuses described their big cat acts. One image that began to emerge in circus rhetoric was the image of ‘the family.’ This rhetoric, referring to big cats as family, becomes generally adopted by circuses from the 1970s onwards. Gunther Gebel-Williams, in his autobiography *Untamed* (1991), wrote, “I have never been stricken with the man-against-beast syndrome, rather, I built a world around the animals with whom I worked, and in it. I was their father and they were my children” Gebel-Williams, 1991, p.19). This image went on to gain traction and currency in circuses.

Tait underscores the point that not only did the rhetoric change but trainers actually adapted to public attitudes towards big cats acts by demonstrating these family relations in the ring in their acts, appeasing the spectators’ anxiety and driving the emergence of new performance relationships in the ring. The notion of the cross-species family became a global sensation in 2007, when an extract from a 1972 film, *Christian the Lion*, became the most watched Youtube video of the year. In this video, Christian, a zoo-born lion, “and his care-givers joyously embrace reunited one year after his placement in the Kenyan reserve run by George Adamson of *Born Free*” (Tait, 2011, Ebook, Chapter 5, paragraph. 2).

Berger considers that this categorizing of animals as family succeeds in shifting the thinking about the animal concerned, away from the category of ‘animal’ and thus, operates as an effective way of marginalizing needs which differs from our own (Berger, 1980).

Tanja Schwalm, in her essay *No-one’s Ark*, notes that circuses have now

adopted a stratagem to counter public disapproval by developing a rhetoric of conservation in which they often refer to their operations as ‘Arks’ that protect and preserve the animals. Her essay is in fact a strong rebuttal of attendance at the circus as supporting conservation, pointing out the often impossible living conditions of the animals and noting analyses which have been undertaken of the movements of animals in circuses, which indicate high stress levels are present (Schwalm, 2009).

### **Contemporary Big Cat Acts in Circus**

In spite of the strong shift in public opinion towards condemnation, including bans on wild cat acts in several countries such as Austria, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, India, Israel and Sweden (Singer, 2010), and the proliferation of wild animal documentaries on television and in the cinema which show big cats up close in a way that is not possible in circus, there is still something about the real contact between humans and the wild cats in circus that continues to fascinate many people. Why is it that people are still attracted to performing with big cats?

Big cat trainers still face death and injury in the ring. Three tigers attacked their trainer during Pagel’s Dinner Circus in Germany in 2009. “Christian Walliser, 28, was attacked by the big cats as 170 horrified diners looked on ... Within seconds the animals had shredded his left hand and inflicted serious injuries to his head and upper body” (Hall, 2009). In 2003, the tiger trainer Roy, part of the entertainment duo, Seigfried and Roy, performing in Las Vegas, was attacked and mauled by a white tiger which lunged at him, grabbed him by the throat and dragged him offstage. The lion attack, which took place on a trainer at MGM in Las Vegas in September 2010, is

available for online viewing. In fact, many of the recent big cat attacks on trainers now end up on youtube as spectators often film them and then post them online. So why do people still risk injury or death to work as wild cat trainers? Stark, in the last pages of her autobiography, confesses: “It’s a matchless thrill, and life without it is not worthwhile to me” (Stark, 1938, as cited by Rense, 2005). Another big cat trainer, Roman Proske expresses similar sentiments:

It could be lack of sense, vanity or exhibitionism, or a chemical need in some people for the drug we call danger, the sensation of fear ... I know in my own case that after moments of the greatest danger - when moments seemed hours and fear possessed me utterly, I have always felt delightfully refreshed. On the other hand, when I retired from the steel arena after 40 years ... and the shock of fear and danger was removed, I suffered as cruelly, physically and mentally as any confirmed drug addict deprived of his narcotic. (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 416)

These observations make it clear that the adrenalin and the element of danger involved are addictive for the trainers.

What still draws spectators to want to watch the big cat acts in circus? Ernest Hemingway proposes that bullfight spectators can be actively involved in a bullfight through experiencing a shared moment of immortality. The bullfighter “is playing with death, bringing it closer, closer, closer to himself ... he gives the feeling of his immortality, and, as you watch it, it becomes yours” (Hemingway, 1932, p. 170). This

same feeling could be said to apply to spectators watching a trainer with big cats in a steel arena.

Beatty was very aware of the possibility that he faced death every time he entered the ring, having been mauled and nearly killed in 1932. When Beatty was on the same bill as the Wallendas in 1962, at Shrine Circus at the Detroit State Fair, they fell during a performance and two of the family members were killed and one was paralyzed from the waist down. After that incident and the subsequent rush on seats so that not even standing room was left in an arena that housed 15,000 people, Beatty reflected:

I want them to see me up close. I want them to see the cats right up to me; to be close enough to smell the cats. I don't think about the people when I'm in there. I don't know if there are a hundred or a thousand in the audience. I really don't. It doesn't matter how many. I'll give them anything. I'll give them everything - But not that one thing. (cited in Joys, 2011, p. 409)

It becomes apparent that the continuing fascinations of the big cat acts could be said to lie in the performance relationships, and the tensions that exist between the trainer's desire to present a controlled representation of facing death to the audience and the crowd's atavistic urge to see a trainer actually face death.

In terms of the reasons why wild cats enter the ring and take part in these acts in circus acts, the answer is not so salutary. As Erica Fudge, in her essay 'A Left-handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals,' writes:

we must write a history which refuses a separation of the species; refuses that which is the silent assumption of humanist history. By re-thinking our past - reading it for the animals as well as the human - we can begin a process that will only come to fruition when the meaning of 'human' is no longer understood in *opposition* to 'animal.' (Fudge, 2002b, p. 16)

As part of the re-thinking process proposed by Fudge it is important to pose a question about agency, to ask whether a *performance relationship* can be said to exist between spectators and those involved in a performance, if, as is the case of these wild animals, they have little real agency over the performance situation in which they are unconsenting participants. Wild animals, in all probability have no knowledge or understanding of the context of the show.

Susan Nance makes an interesting point on this subject. Although her focus is on elephants in circus, she could equally be referring to big cats, when she distinguishes between personal agency, and human social and political power in animal acts. She proposes that the animals in circus acts *did* have agency, that is, "as sentient beings acting on their environments as they perceive them, the elephants had agency" (Nance, 2013, p. 9). However, Nance at this juncture distinguishes between individual agency, which the animals might have, and *human* social and political power, which they did not. Nance resolutely refuses to contemplate "any notion that [the animals] understood, endorsed, or resisted the world of human, cultural or business practice" (Nance, 2013, p. 10).

In re-thinking the big cat acts and focusing on the animals that lived and sometimes died in the circus ring, it could, perhaps, be said that the big cats contributed to profound changes in the human thinking towards other animals. Following on from Brophy and Berger, stimulating writings in the field of animal studies and zoeosis have arisen from inspiring scholars including Erica Fudge, Nigel Rothfels, Una Chaudhuri, John Sorenson and Peta Tait.

At the heart of much of this new writing lies the question: What is an animal? When anthropologist Tim Ingold put this question to a range of scholars from diverse disciplines such as social and cultural anthropology, archaeology, biology, psychology, philosophy and semiotics, strong disagreements became apparent on many fundamental points, however two important points of agreement emerged:

First, that there is a strong emotional undercurrent to our ideas about animality; and second, that to subject these ideas to critical scrutiny is to expose highly sensitive and largely unexplored aspects of our own humanity. (Ingold, 1994, p. 1)

Jonathan Safran Foer, makes the same point in his extraordinary book, *Eating Animals*, that the human definition of an animal is intimately bound up in how we define ourselves as human. Foer comments that “to read a child a story about a dog or to support animal rights - is inevitably to touch upon how we understand what it means to be us and not them. It is to ask, ‘What is a human?’” (Foer, 2009, p. 46).

Animal Studies repositions considerations of animality in terms of history and

of traditional ethical models in order to show a new way forward in relation to non-human others. Cary Wolfe puts forward the case for a new form of ethics. Ethics not based on

ability, agency and empowerment but rather on compassion or the ‘non-power at the heart of power’ as Derrida puts it ... ‘In this light, the ethical force of our relation to the disabled and to the nonhuman others is precisely that it foregrounds the necessity of thinking ethics *outside* a model of reciprocity between ‘moral agents.’ He continues, ‘Indeed, as thinkers from Levinas and Lyotard to, more recently, Zygmunt Bauman have argued, the ethical act might instead be construed as one that is freely extended without hope of reciprocation from the other.’ (Wolfe, 2009, p. 214)

These boundaries between human and non-human others are still in the process of intense social and cultural negotiation.

Returning to the tiger/clown cover image used for the program for Hilary Westlake’s new circus performance, *Son of Circus Lumiere*, (1981), the image is revealing in terms of emergent thinking about the relationship between humans and non-human animals. The eyes in the image that look out at us present a curious amalgam of both human and tiger. It is a strong image that remains profoundly unsettling in the questions it raises not only about the use of wild cats in circus but also the relationship of humans to other animals.



This image, of course, can be read in a number of ways - firstly it can be read purely as a metaphorical comment on the nature of clowning, in that a joke may often have a dangerous, dark edge and bite to it. The image can also be read as a comment on how animals in circus are often pushed into wildly unsuitable comedic roles. It can also be read as a comment on how the human animals in new circus shows have now become the only animal performers in the show.

However, additionally, the image could be said to point to a re-thinking of the human/non-human animal relationship, in that the image can be read as a comment on their classificatory closeness, posing questions as to where the distinction between humans and other animals sits. Humans can no longer be construed in *opposition* to animals: rather we are part of the same face and body and must consider extending ethical treatment without hope of reciprocity, in the same way we would wish it extended to ourselves if we found ourselves in a situation in which we were without political or social power.

Wild cats in traditional modern circus were/are often isolated from their own species, kept in small cages, allowed out only into larger steel arenas to be stared at by spectators, prevented from being part of family groups with their own species, and constantly stared at, whipped, poked and prodded. Wild cats were/are forced into being involved as unwilling/unknowing participants in *performance relationships* with humans and also with other species of big cats with which they would have had little or no contact in the wild.

Interspecies power dynamics and the issues of political and social control lie at

the very heart of the history of big cat acts and raise important issues in relation to



16. *Son of Circus Lumiere* Program Cover, 1981.  
Directed by Hilary Westlake. Image Designed and Photographed by Paul Derrick  
Image reproduced with kind permission of Hilary Westlake

performance relationships in general. One of these questions is the fundamental issue as to whether it can ever be considered ethical to impose any form of *performance*

*relationship* on either human or non-human animals in performance contexts in which they may have some degree of immediate agency over their immediate responses and environment but as Nance points out (2013) they have no real political or social control.

As Schwalm observes zoo-born [or circus-born] animals cannot be returned to their natural habitats, and sanctuaries now exist to look after and protect these animals, especially big cats. “Organizations such as Peta and SAFE recognize that circus animals can never be released back into the wild, their ‘natural state,’ but, instead, should at least be allowed to live the rest of their lives in natural sanctuaries” (Schwalm, 2009). The Shambala Preserve is one such sanctuary set up by Tippi Hedren in California as a sanctuary for endangered exotic big cats that have mostly been born in captivity in circuses or zoos and are no longer wanted. Shambala Preserve provides sanctuary to over fifty big cats; lions, tigers, cougars, black and spotted leopards, servals, bobcats and Asian leopards (Roar Foundation, 2012).

One question that remains is whether sanctuaries like this can resist the financial pressure of putting these animals on show, and protect the big cats from being unwilling or unwitting participants in any further *performance relationships*, guarding them as much as possible from further human intrusion or spectatorship.

## SECTION 3: THE HEGEMONIC BODY

This sections consists of:

Chapter 7: The Extraordinary Body in Circus

Chapter 8: The Exceptional Body in Circus

Chapter 9: The Unmarked Body in Circus

### Chapter 7: The Extraordinary Body

*[The circus] is a kind of mirror in which the culture is reflected, condensed and at the same time transcended, perhaps the circus seems to stand outside the culture only because it is at its very center*

(Bouissac, 1985, p. 9).

#### Introduction

When Barnum entered circus in 1871, at the age of sixty-one, he brought with him the diverse range of exhibits he had previously shown in his American Museum in New York City which had burnt down for the second time, and finally closed, in 1868. These exhibits not only included dioramas, waxworks and extensive menageries, but also his famous, notorious, freak shows, which, under his management had become a new, commercialized form of mass entertainment. Barnum presented some of the most renowned human curiosities of his time, including “the conjoined twins Chang and Eng, the diminutive Tom Thumb; Lavinia Warren and Commodore Nutt; William Henry Johnson, the “What is it?”; the giants Anna Swan and Colonel Routh Goshen; Maximo

and Bartola, the Aztec children; and Charles Tripp, the no-armed boy” (Adams, 2012, p.5).



17. Barnum and Commodore Nut (n.d.).

Photographer: Charles DeForest Fredricks, 1823-1894

Source: NYPL Digital Library

Retrieved from: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Barnum\\_and\\_Commodore\\_Nutt.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Barnum_and_Commodore_Nutt.jpg)

Image in Public Domain

Because of the scale of Barnum’s operations, people coming to late Victorian circus were exposed to an enormous range of human and animal bodies that they could not have seen anywhere else at the time. Barnum’s *freak* shows included a diverse range of bodies that were out of the ordinary, that is, they were *extraordinary* bodies: hermaphrodites, fakirs, bearded ladies, living skeletons, wild men of Borneo, cannibals, the armless wonders, albinos, fat ladies, Siamese twins, cannibals, midget triplets and snake charmers. Janet Davis observes that the railroad circus was a form of mass entertainment:

a cultural artifact of ... incorporation. Its immensity, pervasiveness and live immediacy transformed diversity, indeed history into spectacle ... The railroad circus represented 'a human menagerie' (a term popularized by P.T. Barnum) of racial diversity, gender difference, bodily variety, animalized humans and humanized animals that audiences were unlikely to see anywhere else. (Davis, 2002, p. 10)

Barnum originally had displayed the freak show in the big top as part of the main show, but soon moved it into the tents set up on either side of the passageway up to the entrance to the main tent. This passageway became known as the midway. The midway added an instant excitement to the new circus, with vendors selling lemonade, sausages and roasted peanuts, and the men on the midway beckoning passers-by to play games of chance (Davis, 2002, p. 3).

The relocation of the freak show out of the big top into the midway tents was no doubt largely due to the fact that as an inspired entrepreneur, Barnum was then able to charge separate entrance fees to each tent in addition to the ticket price to the main show, but it also reflected the interest in boundaries and parameters that were starting to develop in relation to these *extraordinary* bodies.

Schechner, as noted previously, argues that performance in historical contexts can provide a map of the major characteristics of the culture in question (Schechner, 2004, p. 179) When Barnum moved the freak show out of the big top into separate closed-off tents, it could be said that his decision mapped the increasing

institutionalization and segregation of people with extraordinary bodies that was emerging at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reflecting the fact that ‘freak’ bodies “had become increasingly unacceptable to emerging middle-class sensibilities” (Stoddart, 2000, p. 24). This repositioning of the performers with extraordinary bodies meant that spectators likely to be offended by the freak shows could go straight into the big top without entering the midway tents.

Robert Bogdan argues that the notion of *freak* was created very much by the performance context rather than by the inherent qualities of the people on display. “Freak,” writes Bogdan, “is not a quality that belongs to the person on display. It is something that we created: a perspective, a set of practices - a social construction” (Bogdan, 1988, p. xi).

Likewise, Rachel Adams conceives of the freak show as a form of performance, arguing that *freak* is not an essence but an identity realized through gesture, costume and staging. She puts forward the idea that, to characterize *freak* as a performance,

restores agency to the actors in the sideshow, who participate, albeit not always voluntarily in a dramatic fantasy that the division between freak and normal is obvious, visible and quantifiable ... To use the rubric of performance is not to dismiss the fact that some bodies are so visibly different from the norm that their deviance cannot be concealed and ignored. (Adams, 2001, p. 6)

Adams pursues this notion of the performers in freak shows, describing them as lurking “in the unsteady seams where corporeal matter meets with fantasy drama and

promotional hype” (Adams, 2001, p. 6).

Barnum could be described as having charged people for the opportunity to look at other people. With the freak shows, this looking assumed a particularity that has been described as ‘staring.’ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson defines ‘staring’ as “indiscreet looking [which] invades another’s space. People just simply don’t like to be stared at. As with other bodily impulses such as eating and sex, staring elicits social regulation. So staring is often a furtive guilty pleasure” (Garland-Thomson, 2009, p. 5).

Why were audiences so interested in staring at the extraordinary bodies on display in the freak shows at that moment in time? Ways of relating to extraordinary bodies at that point were in a state of upheaval, with traditional modes of understanding the extraordinary body coming into collision with new ways of thinking. Up to the early nineteenth century, the extraordinary body had been seen, and could still be read in Barnum’s time, as a site of wonder, as a connection to the uncanny and sometimes an omen or a portent of things to come.

Freak aficionado Mark Twain ... in the *Extraordinary Twins* ... describes how Rowena and Patsy Cooper are stunned by their initial meeting with the conjoined brothers Luigi and Angelo: ‘conscious of nothing but that prodigy, that uncanny apparition [which] had shaken them up like an earthquake with the shock of its gruesome aspect.’ (Adams, 2001, p. 7)

The theory of teratology, that Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire put forward in 1832, changed the accepted way of looking at the extraordinary body, transforming the freak



body from a site of the uncanny and the portentous, into a pathological specimen.

“Enlightenment logic [which] Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno have termed ‘the disenchantment of the world’ produced teratology, the science of monstrosity that eventually tames and rationalizes, the wondrous freak” (Garland-Thomson, 1996, p. 4).

Other new approaches to thinking about the body were also emerging. Evolution was changing the way the body was conceptualized. The new science of statistics turned the body into something quantifiable and “eugenics and teratology policed its boundaries; prosthetics normalized it; and asylums cordoned off deviance. Additionally, allopathic, professionalized medicine consolidated its dominance, casting as pathological all departures from the standard body” (Garland-Thomson, 1996, p. 4). As Leslie Fiedler observes the Victorian institution of the freak show was intended to be, ultimately, “therapeutic, cathartic ... no matter what initial terror and insecurity it evokes. ‘*We* are the freaks,’ the human oddities are supposed to reassure us, from their lofty perches. ‘Not you. Not *you!*’” (Fiedler, 1978, p. 31).

Attitudes to people with extraordinary bodies started changing, as Rachel Adams notes, and freak shows, which had never been completely respectable, began to fall out of favour with the public. “It was no longer tolerable for people with disabilities to exhibit themselves for paying customers to gawk at. Rather it was believed they should receive treatment and the incurable should be concealed from view in hospitals and institutions (Adams, 2012, p. 8).

Although the circus freak shows declined in popularity, strangely, the popular identification of the *extraordinary* body with circus continued on past Barnum’s lifetime, as can be seen with Todd Browning’s film *Freaks* (1932). The film was based

on a short fiction story, interspersed with sections featuring real life portrayals with a cast of actual sideshow performers. This identification can again be seen through the 1950s up to the 1970s, for example in Federico Fellini's cinema with Oswaldo, the child with the oversized head, in *La Strada* (1954) or the array of characters in *The Clowns* (1970), in which all the circus acts are parodied by the circus midget, who mimics the masked strongman enduring a crushing weight, apes the knife-throwing routines that threaten the clowns, and rushes ringside to parody the crowd's horror at the events taking place (Ritter, 1989, p. 304).

Fiedler argues that there was a resurgence of popular interest in freaks in the 1960s that coincided with the re-release of Browning's film. Popular culture of the late 60s and early 70s embraced 'freakery,' but largely as a metaphor for the 'hippy' or countercultural choice to stand outside restrictive societal norms. The photographer, Dianne Arbus, was fascinated by freaks and her images of "Dwarves and Giants and transvestites remain fixed forever in melancholy black and white on the walls of galleries and in the catalog made of a retrospective show organized in 1972 after her death by suicide" (Fiedler, 1978, p. 318).

### **Contemporary Circus**

In a bid to get rid of this embarrassing whiff of political incorrectness that still clung to modern circus, most new circus sought to disassociate itself from animal acts and also from freak shows. In terms of the *extraordinary* body, which is now most usually referred to as the 'disabled body' or 'differently abled body,' most contemporary circus now mirrors a world of exclusion.

Instead of the inclusion of disabled performers, much contemporary performance is now marked by abled bodied performers adopting the characteristics of the differently abled. This cultural meme, according to Bree Hadley, is one in which “the performer adopts the signs and symbols and somatic idiosyncracies of disability [and] is currently referred to as *cripface* or sometimes *cripdrag*” (Hadley, 2011, p. 3). Such signs and symbols of disability are inserted into contemporary performance, often standing for everybody’s experience of difference (Hadley, 2011, p. 3). This happens in cinema for example in *Rainman* (1988), *My Left Foot* (1989), *Philadelphia* (1993), *Forest Gump* (1994), and in TV for example in *Glee*, as well as in contemporary dance, performance art and circus.

In Quebec, Canada, the controversial contemporary choreographer, Marie Chouinard, began as a performance artist who gained notoriety for confronting taboos, in works such *Petite Danse sans Nom* (1980), which contained urination in public, and *Marie Chien Noir* (1982) with masturbation. In a performance in 1981, *Danseuse–performeuse cherche amoureux ou amoureuse pour la nuit du 1er Juin (Dancer–performer seeks male or female lover for the night of June 1)*, she auctioned herself off for the night. Later with her dance company, Chouinard adopts the use of the equipment of disability by the able-bodied in her work *bODY\_rEMIX /gOLDBERG\_vARIATIONS* (2005). This work displays honed contemporary ballet bodies performing with crutches, walking frames and prostheses. “A wheelchair, a crutch, a white stick, a stutter, are all signholders of disability that can be, and are, referenced by non-disabled people when they ‘act’ disabled” (Kuppers, 2007, p. 80). However as Petra Kuppers, as a long term user of a cane and a wheelchair herself,

observes: “To many disabled people, these ‘performances of disability’ are offensive, they often poke fun at a disability or show underlying aggression or fear” (Kuppers, 2007, p. 80). In Guillermo Gomez-Pena’s work, *In the Museum of Fetishized Identities* (2000), a non-disabled performer uses “disability as one of many textual elements to complicate complex issues surrounding race and fantasy” (Kuppers, 2007, p. 84). Kuppers describes the work as creating a dense web of meaning in which the “wheelchair’s cultural history of suffering collides with Gomez-Pena’s unsuffering, live presence” (p. 84).

Another example of this complex terrain could be seen in *La Verita* (2013), the Daniel Finzi Pasca circus show, which I saw in Montreal in 2012 when it opened, that was based on the life and work of artist Salvador Dali. In the show, some extended physical interludes were choreographed, in which a man, moving around on crutches, dodges a practice bull-on-wheels, a training tool for bullfighters that is being pushed at him. These interludes, referencing Dali’s Spanish nationality, and building on the frequent painting of crutches in Dali’s work, somehow, at least for this spectator, remained emotionally uninvolved. It could be said that the very physical agility of the artist executing the movement on crutches undercut an action that should have required the whole mental focus and physical capacity of the performer to achieve. Effortless and with little invention or familiarity with the equipment itself, the resulting movement could be seen as facile.

This adoption by the abled athlete of the meme of using the signs and signals of disability could also be seen in the work, *La Vie*, by 7 Fingers, which I saw in Montreal in 2011. In *La Vie*, the circus performer Samuel Tétreault performs an extended,

demanding hand-balance sequence in, and on, a wheelchair. Tétreault then gets out of the wheelchair to perform a dazzling display of dance in which he partners three different women in three different dance styles all at the same time. A superb athlete and accomplished dancer, Tétreault gave a stunning display of athleticism and artistry, however, the issue of the wheelchair's cultural history of suffering sat uneasily with the virtuosic physical presence of Tétreault.

A powerful performance showing the actual potential of a disabled or 'differently abled,' performer, working and dancing on his equipment of disability, that is his crutches, can be seen in the YouTube video *Crutch* which shows Bill Shannon, a New York multi-disciplinary artist also known as 'Crutch Master.' Shannon has bilateral hip deformity and works to explore his own creativity through pushing the limits of his physical ability in dancing with his crutches. His artistry is no less remarkable than that of the physically perfect artists in mainstream contemporary circus, it is just *different*. This is a person working at the full extent of his physical powers to create and explore the movement potential of the equipment he is using. If expertise and a high level of technical skill with equipment are the criteria for selecting artists, the question remains why a performance company should not choose an artist such as Bill Shannon, instead of using virtuosic performers with less expertise and knowledge in how to use the equipment of the disabled?

A spate of dance and movement works can be seen incorporating what Kéline Gotman terms 'alterkinetic' movement, that is movement sourced from the disabled with virtuosic dancers imitating movement disorders, as can be seen in Wayne MacGregor's work *AtaXia* for Random Dance Company (2004), and Alain Platel's

work *Out of Context: for Pina (2010)* for Company C B. Gotman argues that this alterkinetic movement expands in an important way the movement language and aesthetics of contemporary dance.

Indeed what I am calling the alterkinetic turn emphasizes movement and all its discontents: abled, disabled, virtuosic, technically proficient, amateurish and expansive. It seeks to operate at the limits of movement and so to refigure, while ostensible disfiguring, human bodies in motion ... It explores the density of locomotion. By recuperating segregated worlds of motion and gesture, the choreic, the epileptic, the ataxic and the myoclonic ... these choreographic gestures perform an act of reparation that is at once politically and ethically charged as well as potentially aesthetic. (Gotman, 2012 p.179)

It is undoubtedly potent work to extend the aesthetics of movement language beyond the normative to include the range of movements associated with the differently abled, movement languages that are usually hidden from public view. It may indeed be a form of “reparation that is politically and ethically charged.” This is a complex issue but the question that remains concerns the vital issues of access to political power, and also of social and cultural access to performance platforms. Until there is equality of access for disabled and abled performers in terms of representing this “alterkinetic movement,” the vital issue remains one of exclusion.

There has been some interesting work that has emerged through the work of integrated performance companies, that is performance work bringing together abled

and disabled performers, in dance, for example the work of Amici and Candoco. DV8 is another dance and physical theatre company that has created some memorable work combining abled and disabled performers. *Can we afford this?* was a show created for the Sydney Festival prior to the 2000 Olympics. The show was adapted for film as *The Cost of Living* in 2004. The film, conceived and directed by Lloyd Newson, the founder of DV8, features a stunning performance by disabled performer David Toole, who came into dance through an extended period performing with Candoco (1993-1999).

*The Cost of Living* features a dance duo between David O'Toole, a strong muscular performer with no legs, and a female dancer. The duo is set in a ballet studio in which a ballet class is taking place. The film clip features David O'Toole walking in on his arms through a forest of legs as the people in the ballet class perform exercises at the barre. He moves across to a female dancer sitting on the floor and a duo begins featuring a series of rolling, flowing contact moves on the floor. The movement was co-created by Lloyd Newson working with the dancers and derives from the performers' bodies themselves. David O'Toole challenges and pushes the limits of his particular body and he "dances on equal terms with his partner" (Whatley, 2010, p. 47). Whatley claims that because this duo has been filmed and has been downloaded many times from Youtube, the dance work has made a permanent difference to understandings of normative embodiment (Whatley, 2010, p. 47).

Another circus/ physical theatre piece that marks a challenge to the normative embodiment usually seen in a male/female duet was presented at *Cabaret Carmagnole* 2013, in Montreal. Choreographed by Jonathan Fortin, a graduate from the National Circus School in Montreal, and an ex-performer with Cirque du Soleil, Fortin

performed a partnering duo with Katia Levesque. Levesque, a striking performer with a compelling stage presence, has previously performed in dance works by Dave St. Pierre, a Canadian choreographer who often tackles issues concerning performers' bodies in his works. Levesque is between two and three times the body mass of Fortin and her participation enabled the creation of a duo that explored the unusual dynamics of interplay between their two bodies. Fortin, at times, climbed her in a way that resembled scaling a mountain and, at other times, was cradled by her. The duo was physically demanding and emotionally draining and brought many audience members to tears.

It is perhaps surprising that so little contemporary circus work has moved into this territory of integrating disabled or differently embodied performers. As Peta Tait notes: "The thing about circus is that it's intended to amaze, so spectators are meant to admire what performers can do bodily and physically, and ... the achievement of someone with a visible disability can ... be as amazing or admirable" (cited in Watts, 2013). There seems to be a degree of hesitancy to engage with the area other than within the context of circus workshops for the disabled. Perhaps this hesitancy reflects a concern about re-awakening images of the history of the freak show as part of circus, and perhaps another concern is the perception of the risk involved in bringing differently abled performers into the potentially physically dangerous field of circus.

One initiative that emerged out of the Paralympics in London has led to the setting up of a new circus company that has emerged from the 2013 collaboration between Cirque Bijou and the community theatre company Diverse City. Extraordinary Bodies, as the new circus company is called, brings together abled and disabled



performers. The company gave its first show *Weighting* in 2013, which also featured the performer David O'Toole.

In Australia the social circus group, Warehouse Circus (2013) collaborated with Women with Disabilities, ACT in a performance as part of the Centenary of Canberra program. This initial project has led to the foundation of a new circus company the Strong Women, Circus Sisters Troupe. The company's first project was documented by photographer Art Groothuis and led to an exhibition *Strong Women, Circus Sisters – an Exhibition* which featured images of the performers in training and portrait shots (Watts, 2013). Warehouse Circus's director, Max Delves suggests that "Circus can encourage people to see people with a disability in a different light, particularly when they're trying things that able-bodied people are often very reluctant to try themselves" (cited in Watts, 2013).

Integrated companies sometimes succeed in changing spectator's perceptions about the capabilities of disabled performers and as Whatley says can make a permanent difference to understandings of normative embodiment (Whatley, 2010, p.47). Working in integrated companies can also offer talented, differently abled, performers a launch pad into careers in performance on their own terms which has been the case with David Toole who after performing with Candoco and DV8 has gone on to perform with the Royal Shakespeare Company (2007), the National Theatre of Wales (2012) and Cape Town's Remix Dance Company (2012).

However, one issue that Whatley notes in her discussion of dance and disability on screen is that "disabled dancers tend to be performers but less often choreographers or dance directors. Disability tends to be in front of the camera rather than behind it"

(Whatley, 2010, p. 43). There is, as Whatley notes, the same issue in the integrated dance and performance companies where the directors are almost always able bodied. This leads to an issue with the problem of agency, and also of social and cultural control over both the performance content, and the context in which the performance is seen. There is also a perceived problem, which Whatley discusses, of disability being presented as a spectacle of difference which can be created by the juxtaposition of the normative bodies and the extraordinary bodies of the differently abled. When the work is presented and made by the able bodied this juxtaposition can sometimes, in spite of the best intentions, be occasionally read as the exoticism of the other, with the disabled presented, yet again, as a spectacle for consumption. The issue of agency lies at the very heart of this complex problematic.

Some challenges to the way the bodies of the differently abled can be perceived started to emerge in the mid 1990s, in the hybrid field between performance, athletics, fashion and visual arts. This is of particular interest because the central drive comes from disabled activists who are performers and athletes. Aimee Mullins, who describes herself as a model and disabled activist, is a former paralympian who had both her legs amputated below the knee at the age of one. In 1996 at the Paralympics she grabbed international attention with her prosthetic legs. These limbs marked a new approach to prosthetic limbs. Instead of the attempt to simulate the missing limbs, the new limbs declared their difference. Made of black carbon-fibre, the shape of these legs had been designed by studying the legs of a cheetah.

Images of the blonde athlete and her cheetah legs started appearing on the front covers of magazines, and eventually Alexander McQueen, the fashion designer,

contacted her suggesting that he design some special legs for her. He created wooden legs that were made out of solid ash and hand-carved, and Mullins wore them on the catwalk for McQueen's 1999 runway show. The intricately carved wooden legs, together with the brown leather corset and cream lace skirt that she wore were included in the 2011 retrospective show, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty*, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Aimee Mullins then invited other artists and designers to work with her to create innovative visions for a re-imagining of prosthetic limbs.

One of the most astonishing was a pair of legs created with Matthew Barney for the *Cremaster Cycle*. These limbs were created for *Cremaster 3* in 2002, and looked as though they were made out of glass. Completely transparent with plants growing inside them, these surreal legs extend an invitation to read the body itself as ecosystem, or cosmos. (Lavers, 2013)

Working in collaboration with disabled performers and athletes, Sophie de Oliveira Barata, the visual artist, is now building on this foundational work of Mullins with McQueen and Barney. In collaboration with Jo-Jo Cranfield, the paralympian, Oliveira Barrata has created a new prosthetic silicon forearm with a large, sinuous, bright green snake winding and out of the realistic looking flesh. Jo-Jo Cranfield who was born without an arm below the elbow, says, "I wanted people to have to look at me twice with amazement. I'd rather people just asked me outright how I lost my arm. This is so out there ... that it makes people feel OK to ask questions."

She says that the limb makes her feel powerful and sexy (cited Lavers, 2013).

Olivera has also worked with Viktoria Modesta, the Latvian-born singer who performed as the “Snow Queen” for the 2012 closing ceremony for the Paralympic games. Modesta performed with one leg that was visibly hollow, and looked as though it was sculpted out of snow and ice. This was a new cyber vision of the Snow Queen



*18. Jo-Jo Cranfield wears Snake Arm made by Sophie de Oliveira Barrata  
Photography by  
Photo by kind permission of alternative limbs.*

and her extraordinary leg, fashioned out of thousands of Swarovski crystals, made headlines and captured the public’s attention. The duo of Oliveira and Modesta has also created a black and silver, steampunk leg for Modesta with inbuilt stereo speakers. This leg is a celebration of a camp, hybrid aesthetic, a new cyber-burlesque.

Modesta speaking of her experience of wearing these new kinds of prosthetic limbs says, “The first time I wore a limb that was so obviously BIONIC, it gave me a total

sense of uniqueness, [a] feeling of [being a] mutant human in the best way possible. It was fascinating” (cited Lavers, 2013).

These limbs bring to mind the extraordinary images generated by the Surrealists in their drawing game ‘exquisite corpse.’

In the creation of these prosthetics, Sophie de Oliveira Barata and her collaborators are taking the questions posed by the Surrealists about the nature of the body and its limits and boundaries, and moving beyond the realm of pure imaginative drawing into the realm of the actual, by transposing these issues into the real world. They are posing questions challenging our preconceptions about the nature of disability, and presenting us with playful but challenging conundrums about the boundaries of a body that is modifiable, malleable and permeable. (Lavers, 2013)

These surreal interventions into normative modes of embodiment challenge preconceptions. What is exciting is that athletes and performers who are differently abled are propelling these interventions themselves and now are starting to engage with the stares of spectators on their own terms. Surreal body enhancements and prosthetics designed by the differently abled in collaboration with artists and technicians which challenge spectators’ preconceptions whilst increasing performance capabilities point to an exciting way forward for potential new circus research and development.

## **Chapter 8: The Familial and the Exceptional Body**

### **Introduction**

Before Barnum's introduction of the specially designed railroad car to facilitate the touring of circus, and the resultant increase in the size of the touring big top, the most common form of circus was the small family circus. Family circus by default promoted a generous inclusive approach to the body with often the whole family included in the performance. The young children performed the tumbling, the younger adults performed the more difficult and demanding physical acts, and the older adults performed as clowns or as the ringmaster, bringing their comedic and theatrical skills into the ring, and also acting to 'spot' the more dangerous acts as a safety check for the younger ones. Although the circus performers were athletes, and so looked athletic and fit, the family circus traditionally promoted the familial body, or an inclusive and generous approach to the body, both in terms of the wide variety of shapes and sizes commonly found within a family, and in terms of the range of ages of the performers.

With the huge new scale of circuses with sometimes over 15,000 people coming to see his shows, Barnum changed the parameters of circus. Circuses became efficient, highly organized, money making spectacles on a grand scale. In the process, the inclusive familial body of traditional circus effectively became marginalized, except for some highly skilled family circus acts that were bought in as part of the spectacle. The crowd of spectators going into Barnum's three ring big top were exposed to a new kind of body, the body of the professional circus performer, hired acrobats acquired as part of Barnum's 'greatest show on earth.' The number of performers and acrobats required

for the three-ring, two-stage circus was immense, and included professional performers of the highest calibre who came from 22 countries, including Persia, Japan and Italy. “An international constellation of players worked simultaneously on three rings and two stages ... The athletic prowess of these sleek muscular bodies was startling” (Davis, 2002, p. 5). This introduced the kind of body into circuses that people had rarely seen before this moment: the professional body, athlete/performer for hire. This body, I have termed, the *exceptional* body.

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (1996) argues that spectators coming to Barnum’s circus were also experiencing a new heightened self-consciousness and awareness of their own external physical appearance, and were starting to judge their own bodies in relation to the freaks they saw on the midway and also in relation to the members of the large crowd of up to 15,000 anonymous spectators coming to see the circus.

In the social upheavals of industrialization, people were moving out of villages where they had been surrounded by family and friends into the strange new world of the urban centres where a new emphasis was placed on the external appearance of the body. Often, with no-one to vouch for them, the ability to find work depended on looking right for the job. Garland-Thomson asserts that, in this new anonymous urban environment, making friends, finding a partner and opportunities for employment suddenly all depended on the impression that the physical appearance made on other people. Garland-Thomson also points to increasing anxiety about the physical appearance as being related to the newly emerging conventions of portrait photography, which located a person’s identity in their physical image, and also to increasing secularization which “de-emphasized the condition of one’s soul, while an intensifying

market system spawned the anxious display of status” (Garland-Thomson, 1996, p. 12).

Garland-Thomson proposes that these spectators at Barnum’s circus were undergoing a defining experience, an experience which played a major role in defining and shaping the modern body, “the self governed, *iterable* body of democracy - the cultural self” (Garland-Thomson, 1996, p. 12). This collective experience went on to be internalized as the conforming body of democracy.

There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising his surveillance over and against himself. (Foucault, 1980, p.155)

### **The Exceptional Body in Contemporary Circus**

*“the stark majesty of the acrobats subdued us into silent worship”*

(Hamlin Garland, 2007, p.111)

After languishing in the doldrums for a while with the rise of television and cinema, in the late 1950s, circus began to attract popular attention again when the Moscow Circus emerged from behind the iron curtain for the first time. In Russia, the first state-run circus schools had been set up in 1929, and these schools brought together circus and gymnastics skills, and trained people from outside traditional circus families, to create skilled circus performers with *exceptional* bodies. The tours of the Moscow Circus in the late fifties were the first time that the circus artists, trained in these new circus schools, had performed in Europe.



This re-awakened sense of the possibilities inherent in circus led to the development of new circus (as discussed in greater detail in *The Political Body*, Chapter 3 of this thesis). *The Political Body* dealt with new circus from a political perspective, however in this chapter, new circus is examined from the point of view of the aesthetics of the socially constructed circus body.

Cirque du Soleil, the new circus company in Quebec could be seen to have built directly on Barnum's legacy in continuing to employ enormous numbers of sleek professional athletes with *exceptional* bodies from all over the world. As Louis Patrick Leroux observes, "Cirque du Soleil has become synonymous with performative exceptionalism both acrobatic and commercial" (Leroux, 2012). The performers are often rendered anonymous through the costuming and the make-up.

The star of a Cirque du Soleil show can only be the show itself, or more often, the Cirque trademark. The name of the director is duly marked and those of the designers, including the Director of Creation, are likewise acknowledged in the pages of the programs and media packs. The performers, however, are relegated to the back of the program. They are interchangeable and do not merit biographical notices. They are the prodigious physical outlets who do not speak and whose biographies would not contribute to an appreciation of their perilous leaps or tricks. (Leroux, 2012)

The Cirque du Soleil performers, in many of Cirque du Soleil's shows, present the anonymous, professional, *exceptional* body.

However many other new companies carried political messages about the body brought into circus from political theatre. To signal this democratization, new circus founders often positioned themselves as originating from the street. Pierrot Bidon, the founder of French new circus company Archaos, proclaimed, “No one here was born in a circus, but we all grew up in the street” (cited by Borkowski, 2010). This mythologizing of the street origins of new circus was part of the process of the representation of democratization in which, initially, a wide range of bodies was seen in new circus.

The Wimmin’s Circus, that operated in Australia between 1980-1981, “used the gender confusion generated around the image of the strong woman in the circus to present images of women that challenged stereotypes” (Mullett 2005, p. 163). In one fire-eating act, for example, the Wimmin’s Circus commented on the pressure on women to shave their legs by running firebrands up and down the performers’ arms and legs to an accompanying comedic commentary (Mullett, 2005, p. 164). Contemporary circus companies with strong political agendas still continue, for example, Vulcana, a women’s circus in Brisbane, Australia, who take their name from a British strong woman who performed feats of strength at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Vulcana Facebook page states that the company “embraces diversity” (Vulcan Women’s Circus, 2014) and presents images of performers of different ages, shapes, sizes and races together with the image of a pregnant woman performing a hula-hoop act. Circus Oz still has both the rhetoric, and also the practice, of encouraging the inclusion of different body types in their circus.

The founders of the circus company the 7 Fingers, who had prior to forming the

company all been performers with Cirque du Soleil, and who are all *exceptional* athletes and performers themselves, originally displayed a fairly diverse range of exceptional bodies. Their first show *Loft* established their aesthetic and their anti-Cirque stance of representing individuation, showing the performers wearing everyday makeup and simple costumes, doing extraordinary things in an ordinary situation. Shana Carroll, a founding member, remarked, “When you’ve been at Cirque so long, and you’re hidden in costumes and make-up, there was this desire to break all that down” (Carroll, as cited in Batson, 2012). Cirque Eloize also exposed the faces and hair of the performers, showing them as individuals. The early shows, *Nomade*, *Rain* and *Nebbia*, directed by virtuoso commedia dell’arte performer, Swiss-Italian Daniele Finzi Pasca, combined circus with commedia dell’arte, physical theatre and social dance. This mixture of circus and physical theatre included performers with a wide range of different exceptional bodies, in line with the aesthetic dictates of physical theatre.

However the move towards the inclusion of contemporary dance in some of the more recent productions by contemporary circus companies, such as 7 Fingers and more recently Cirque Eloize, and also Circa in Australia, brings into circus considerations of the bodies of the performers which have long been a source of contention in dance. In contemporary ballet, the parameters governing the body shape have been become increasingly exacting as can be seen in the following account of a controversy in San Francisco. In December 2000, a robust debate occurred in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in relation to the selection of students for the San Francisco Ballet School, which acts as a feeder or ‘talent incubator’ for the San Francisco Ballet. It began when arts reporter, Jon Carroll, the father of 7 Fingers’ director Shana Carroll,

wrote an article called *Just like a Ballerina*. He documented how Krissy Keefer was in the process of suing the San Francisco Ballet School for rejecting her eight-year-old daughter as a student because she did not have the right body type. At that time, the San Francisco Ballet School website announced that the company was looking for girls with “[a] straight and supple spine, legs turned out from the hip joint, joint flexibility, slender legs and torso” (Carroll, 2000). Carroll argued that San Francisco had recently passed an ordinance banning discrimination against people based on height and weight and, as the ballet school received over half a million dollars annually from the city, they should not be allowed to reject a potential student on the grounds of physical build alone. He acknowledges that “the aesthetic perfected by George Balanchine, the formal ideal of the ethereal woman” has its acolytes and has permeated women’s ice-skating and gymnastics, but he emphasizes that these criteria have led to numbers of problems with anorexia. He points to Mark Morris as one of the contemporary choreographers offering an alternative body aesthetic, as he puts it, “Chunky dancers, fat dancers, dancers with odd spines and thick legs and stubby hands; they too can interpret music with their bodies. And be beautiful” (Carroll, 2000).

A battle royal broke out with the dance critic from the *Chronicle*, Allan Ulrich, weighing in with his point of view that, “‘ballet depends on the uniformity of body type, on rules, and protocol.’ After all, the art of ballet, is ‘predicated on physical architecture’” (cited in Thomas, 2003, p. 163). However many other people including both professional dance people and lay people, spoke up and presented opposing arguments, ranging from the cultural elitism inherent in the selection process to the potential increase of anorexia and bulimia due to students attempting to conform to the

body-type ideals.

One comment on Balanchine's perceived body aesthetic pointed out that actually Suzanne Farrell, Balanchine's "most favored ballerina, 'had wide hips, ample thighs, and a foot that had been broken and healed in an odd way'" (Thomas, 2003, p. 163). It is ironic to contemplate the fact that this iconic dancer, if she were to audition for the San Francisco Ballet School nowadays, might not be accepted as her physique would not match the school's stated selection criteria.

In the realm of post-modern dance, the choreographer, Merce Cunningham, was one of the primary instigators in the move in the early sixties to reject a stringent, contemporary balletic body aesthetic and to include a greater range of bodies amongst his dancers. Cunningham put forward the idea "that any *body* could be viewed as 'an aesthetic conveyor'" (Novak, 1990, p. 53). This notion that any *body* can be viewed as 'an aesthetic conveyor' was a defining idea for the seminal group of dancers who developed postmodern dance from Cunningham's initiatives, and formed the Judson Dance Theatre (1962-1964), which included the innovators Steve Paxton, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, Deborah Hay and David Gordon, all of whom were interested in diverse body types and different sorts of dancers.

This thinking has led to the desire to include a wider range of bodies in much post-modern dance, and reflects an interest in both differently embodied stories, and the different kinesthetic experiences that a wider range of bodies can bring to an audience in the performance space. Post-modern choreographers and dancers, in principle at least, generally reject the strict demands for idealized exceptional bodies now required by ballet and to a lesser extent previously required by modern dance.

Some of the more recent works of the circus company, the 7 Fingers, e.g., *Traces* (2006), *Psy* (2010), and *Sequence 8* (2012), have adopted many of the conventions of post-modern dance including firstly, the use of post-dramatic narrative, secondly, a democratization of the art form through the adopting of the costuming convention of representing street clothes, and thirdly, the collaborative creation of work by the members of the company working with the director.

The post-dramatic narrative in contemporary circus allows for cutting between circus acts and dance segments and, in some shows such as *Traces*, the introduction of snippets of information about the performers wherein “intimacies are shared ... explicitly with their audiences through spoken words -- autobiographical, or, at least, autofictional texts uttered by the performers” (Batson, 2012, p. 4).

Secondly in terms of the democratization of the art form through costuming, the 7 Fingers have adopted a certain style of anonymous costuming wherein the performers wear singlets, tee-shirts, track pants or jeans, from which all the logos, designs and slogans have been removed, and which often have a reduced designer palette of grays, whites and beiges. This convention in costuming has been adopted from postmodern dance and, in much contemporary circus, has come to represent street clothes.

Thirdly the guiding idea behind collaboratively devised work was to recognize the dancer as a contributing artist involved in the creative development of new work:

By the final decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the dancer [in postmodern dance] had broken the barriers of ‘thingification,’ of being a mere performer and

reproducer of movements created by a choreographer, to become a creator and interpreter, with the dancer's own body considered an element essential to the creation process. (Malos, 2008, p. 79)

While many contemporary circus companies incorporating contemporary dance have, to a great extent adopted, the post-dramatic narrative along with the costuming conventions of 'everyman' from postmodern dance, and the idea of the collaborative creation of performance work, they have not adopted the inclusive attitude to the body that forms an intrinsic part of the philosophy of postmodern dance. Increasingly, if we look at contemporary circus combining circus and contemporary dance, such as *7 Fingers*, recent productions of Cirque Eloize incorporating dance, and *Circa* in Australia, diversity in the range of *exceptional* bodies can be seen to be decreasing. What is presented is an increasingly narrow range of the *exceptional* body that can not only perform circus acts at the highest possible level but which also conform to an aesthetic template that I have termed the *idealized exceptional* body. This parallels the increasingly rigid aesthetic governing those wishing to enter the field of contemporary ballet which is leading to, not just demands for the *exceptional* body, but rather to a body that can, not only perform athletic or balletic feats to a professional standard, but also to one that conforms to an increasingly rigid aesthetic of physical beauty which determines body proportions, age and facial appearance, and is considered both photogenic and telegenic.

This aesthetic in circus could be one of the, probably unintended, results of the new circus schools. Set up to break the stranglehold that the traditional circus

families had on the dissemination of circus skills, the top circus schools, in many cases, now increasingly determine the prevailing body aesthetic in circus. The National Circus School in Montreal, for example, receives huge numbers of applicants and, consequently, is able to choose young students with bodies that are perceived as having the most acrobatic potential and the least likelihood of injury. This pre-selection at a young age could be argued to effectively reduce the range of body types at intake and this together with the focus on developing high performance athletes throughout the courses produces the *exceptional* body. In also selecting students with the probability of employment within the industry, especially for the yearly crop of graduates bound for 7 Fingers, Cirque Eloize and Cirque du Soleil, plus a number of German cabarets who also regularly cast from graduates, the National Circus School must also to a certain extent be affected by the aesthetic dictated by industry selection.

The 7 Fingers and Cirque Eloize, having removed heavy theatrical make-up in a desire for individuation, and as a result leaving the actual faces and the hair of the performers revealed, have moved towards placing a premium on youth. John Ellingsworth, editor of *Sideshow Magazine*, a website focusing solely on circus, whilst on a research trip to study circus in Montreal in 2011, spoke to the directors of 7 Fingers, and the director of Cirque Eloize, Jeannot Painchaud, and remarked on both companies' emphasis on youth. Ellingsworth concludes that "If you've seen the new 7 Doigts show *Traces* you can see what they are trading off: an idea of beauty that is clean and young and twenty-something and academically exceptional (where the academic measure is circus)" (Ellingsworth, 2011). The sales pitch for each new show is to "pull a fresh bunch of performers from the Ecole, photogenic, cute, saleable"



(Ellingsworth, 2011). This twenty-something photogenic, cute, saleable, exceptional athlete, or as I have termed it, the *idealized exceptional* body, can be seen to be replacing all other forms of body in these new dance circuses. The ethos and rhetoric of individuation present in the bodies of the *exceptional* performers is becoming increasingly removed from the actuality of the ever-narrowing range of body types visible in the performers. Whatever the causes, and they are no doubt numerous, the bodies of the performers in the forms of mainstream contemporary circus that combine circus with dance are becoming ultra-regulated.

It could be argued, perhaps, that this presentation of the *idealized exceptional* body costumed in their ‘street’ clothes reflects a development of late capitalism, that is, an idealized, iterable body of ever reducing and increasingly strict parameters. The now infamous remark made by Elizabeth Hurley in reference to Monroe comes to mind: “I’ve always thought Marilyn Monroe looked fabulous, but I’d kill myself if I was that fat” (cited by Jordan, 2009). With the narrowing of the aesthetics for the iterable body into the *idealized iterable* body, the spectators’ surveillance as well as coming to bear on themselves, is increasingly coming to bear on the bodies of performers, including circus performers, who when presented as individuals with their faces showing and costumed as “everyman” are increasingly judged in relation to the telegenic, idealized iterable body.

As contemporary circus companies increasingly combine circus with contemporary dance and, simultaneously, expose the faces of the circus athletes as individual performers, and, as the circuses have become, or are increasingly becoming, big businesses, the sociocultural hegemony of the body, often driven from within circus

by circus companies' branding and marketing imperatives, shapes the acceptable aesthetic parameters of the performers' bodies, through a process of pre-selection with the resultant erasure of bodies that are not marketable in a conventional sense. This situation constitutes a loss for circus as an art form. It seems the debate, that Jon Carroll instigated about the narrowing aesthetic parameters in ballet training, is a debate that we now need to have in relation to the narrowing of body aesthetics within much contemporary circus arts.

## Chapter 9: The Unmarked Body

*In the theatrical world, as in the aesthetic world more generally, ideology is always in essence the site of a competition and a struggle in which the sound and fury of humanity's political and social struggles are faintly or sharply echoed.*

(Althusser, 1965, 2010, p.149)

*The invisibility of whiteness as a racial position in white (which is to say dominant) discourse is of a piece with its ubiquity ... In fact for most of the time white people speak about nothing but white people, it's just that we couch it in terms of 'people' in general. Research – into books, museums, the press, advertising, films, television, software – repeatedly shows that in Western representation whites are overwhelmingly and disproportionately predominant, have the central and elaborated roles, and above all, are placed as the norm, the ordinary, the standard. Whites are everywhere in representation ... At the level of racial representation, in other words, whites are not of a certain race, they're just the human race.*

(Dyer, 1997, p. 3)

## **Introduction**

In the SAGE book of Performance Studies, Lisa Merrill points to the fact that performance historians often search for what is missing as well as what is present.

We often assume a role Michel de Certeau (de Certeau, 1988, p.79) likens to that of a ‘proowler’ in the margins of accepted narratives and disciplinary practices; paying particular attention to the absences and rationalizations in the archive as we attempt to ‘circulat[e] around acquired conventions’ of theatre, literary, cultural and social history, reading the spaces, silences and rationalizations in the archive and ‘deciphering hidden relations held in discourses of other times.’ (Merrill, 2006, p. 65)

In this chapter some of the silences and spaces in the conventional histories of North American circus are investigated in particular the widely ignored history of African American performers and circus producers. This chapter builds on the groundbreaking essay by Australian circus historian Mark St. Leon entitled, ‘Celebrated at first, then implied and finally denied: the erosion of Aboriginal identity in circus 1851-1960,’ which looks at the history of Aboriginals in relation to the Australian circus. This discussion traces a similar trajectory with respect to the erased history of African Americans in North American circus and explores the issue of whiteness in relation to the body in contemporary North American circus.

In a series of interviews conducted for her doctoral thesis, Lindsay Stephens interviewed twenty-six people she identified as “key figures in contemporary Canadian

circus” (Stephens, 2012, p. 37). Reflecting on both the content of her questions, and also on the responses she received, Stephens writes that she posed no questions in her interviews about either gender or race but that every single interviewee (aside from the five male clowns) mentioned gender as an issue, and gender provided a common topic of discussion within the interview responses.

However not one of these key figures mentioned the topic of race. Without questions framed to specifically address this issue, no-one had considered race a topic meriting discussion. Stephens goes on to speculate that perhaps this could have occurred because the interviewer and all the interviewees were white, so racial politics and dynamics “appeared irrelevant as a topic of conversation between white people whose racial identities could pass unremarked and seem unremarkable” (Stephens, 2012, p. 37). This ability for whiteness to pass ‘unremarked,’ and to seem ‘unremarkable,’ is identified by Kobayashi and Peake (2000) as one of the fundamental defining characteristics of whiteness.

Kobayashi and Peake offer a succinct definition of whiteness in their authoritative essay, ‘Racism out of place: Thoughts on Whiteness and an Antiracist Geography in the New Millennium’ (2000). If racism is understood as an active process that is present throughout a very wide range of social activity and interaction, a way of viewing the diffuse processes that influence the wider environment is required. “This wider environment we refer to as one of ‘whiteness’ which occurs as the normative ordinary power to enjoy social privilege by controlling dominant values and institutions and in particular by occupying space within a segregated social landscape” (Kobayashi and Peake, 2000, p. 393). Kobayashi and Peake define whiteness as “a set of cultural

practices and politics based upon ideological norms that are lived but unacknowledged” (Kobayashi and Peake, 2000, p. 394). One of the most essential characteristics of whiteness is its ability to deracialize issues, to ignore and sometimes even deny racist practices, and it is this very denial of the issue of race which often indicates the presence of whiteness, rather than any explicit racism. “Whiteness occupies central ground by deracializing and normalizing common events and beliefs, giving them legitimacy as part of a moral system depicted as natural and universal” (Kobayashi and Peake, 2000, p. 394).

In the same way that the white racial identities of Stephen’s interviewees led to the issue of race passing unremarked and seeming unremarkable, the white body in much contemporary circus, embodies one of the fundamental defining characteristics of ‘whiteness’ in that it possesses the ability to perform a norm, which is then depicted as deracialized and has the power to “pass as an unmarked body” (Stephens, 2012, p.191).

Coco Fusco, the Cuban-American interdisciplinary artist and writer, emphasizes the fact that it is important to acknowledge that whiteness, in itself, is actually a racial identity: “Racial identities are not only black, Latino, Asian, Native American and so on; they are also white. To ignore white ethnicity is to redouble its hegemony by naturalizing it” (Fusco, 1998, p. 72). She argues that it is essential to acknowledge white ethnicity because “without specifically addressing white ethnicity, there can be no critical evaluation of the construction of the other” (Fusco, 1998, p. 72). Catherine Nash, in her writing about cultural geography agrees, pointing out that the essential first step to making ‘whiteness’ more visible involves “the recognition of whiteness as a racial category rather than an unmarked norm against which the racial difference of

others is judged” (Nash, 2003, p. 640). This acknowledgment of whiteness as constituting a racial category begins to expand in an important way the study of the geographies of race. Nash cites the work of David Delaney, who has argued that the historical study of the geography of race has in fact been permeated by the lack of acknowledgement of ‘whiteness’ as a racial category, and that it is now time to expand beyond the “central places of what might be called the conventional geographies of race - ‘the inner city,’ ‘the reservation’ and ‘the border’” (Nash, 2003, p. 640).

With the notion of the expansion of the boundaries of the geography of race, the critical analysis of the issue of whiteness in contemporary performance and, in this instance, contemporary circus becomes an essential part of this process. Ruth Frankenberg points out that writing about whiteness raises a risk that whiteness might be re-centered rather than de-centered and that through discussion whiteness might in fact become more solid, more concrete and more reified. She concludes, however, that the risks of engaging with whiteness on an intellectual level are outweighed by the benefits that might be gained in such an exercise. Not to engage with whiteness would mean that whiteness would continue to give some kind of presence or as she puts it “color” to the “the seeming transparency of white positionings” (Frankenberg, 1997, p. 1). Indeed, “to leave whiteness unexamined is to perpetuate a kind of asymmetry that has marred ... many critical analyses of social formation and cultural practice” (Frankenberg, 1997, p. 1). This could be said to be especially true of studies of contemporary and modern circus that almost without exception, write the history of white circus whilst presenting it as a general history of all circus, which perpetrates an asymmetrical notion of the history of modern and contemporary circus.

Homi K. Bhabha, examining methods by which the exposure of the assumptions of whiteness can best be achieved, notes that “since whiteness naturalizes the claim to social power and epistemological privilege, displacing its position cannot be achieved by raising the ‘gaze of the other,’ or by provoking the ‘return of the repressed or the oppressed’” (Bhabha, 1998, p. 21). In order to change this positioning of whiteness, Bhabha suggests that it is necessary to reveal the “agonistic elements” or the controversial ideas and histories that reside inside the notion of whiteness itself. Bhabha proposes that this is best achieved by revealing “the histories of trauma and terror that [whiteness] must perpetuate and from which it must protect itself; the amnesia it imposes on itself; the violence it inflicts in the process of becoming a transparent and transcendent force of authority” (Bhabha, 1998, p. 21) With this proposal of Bhabha’s in mind, it can be seen that an investigation into the amnesia that whiteness imposes on the history of circus is an essential first step in order to displace the normativity and the unmarked ethnicity of the white body in contemporary circus. In other words, the normal histories of circus need to be extended and developed to show their asymmetry in terms of race.

St. Leon has critically examined the history of amnesia which afflicts accounts of modern and contemporary circus in regards to the presence of performers of colour, particularly Aboriginal performers in circus in Australia (St. Leon, 2008) Another ground-breaking work in Australian circus history is Wendy Holland’s writing tracing her Aboriginal circus heritage (Holland, 1999). These re-tellings of circus history have not yet been widely incorporated into writing about contemporary Australian circus. Likewise, it remains difficult to find information about the presence of performers of



colour in North American modern and even contemporary circus. Historians Lynn Abbott and Doug Seroff write that most histories of North American circus just “politely ignore patterns of racial discrimination that are a skeleton in the closet of American circus” (Abbott and Seroff, 2007, p. 158). This could be said to be true in writings about circus generally, not just North American circus. There are some notable exceptions, for example, in the writing of Janet Davis, Peta Tait, Mark St. Leon, Wendy Holland and Nadja Durbach.

### **African Americans Performers in Modern North American Circus**

Janet Davis, writing about the circus in Victorian North America, describes Circus Day as “an occasion when towns literally shut down to take in the sprawling, massive display of over a thousand performers, hundreds of laborers, exotic animals, gilded wagons, colorful railroad cars and great billowing tents” (Davis, 2011, p. 2). The massive popularity of circus towards the end of the nineteenth century reflected the fact that the circus fulfilled a vital cultural function “articulat[ing] the manifold tensions, jingoism and the ambiguities of a society hurtling towards modernism” (Davis, 2011, p. 2). Some of these tensions can be clearly seen in the way modern circus used race as a structuring principle and also in the way race was represented within modern circus.

Before the increasingly tense, increasingly polarizing period of the 1850s leading up to the American civil war (1861-1865), a few African American individuals performed with travelling circuses. The first African American magician in modern circus was named Richard Potter, the son of a slave woman called Dinah who had been captured in Africa and a white man named George Simpson. After leaving home to

serve as a cabin boy at the age of ten in 1793, Potter was apparently left abandoned in England (Simmons and Cunningham, 2004, p. 106) and then began an apprenticeship with a Scottish magician in England, John Rannie, before returning to America with him to perform with several travelling American circuses (Ganley, 2003, p. 9).

Rannie and Potter undertook a tour of South Carolina and Georgia. “Because Potter was regarded as Rannie’s servant by the southern Whites and because he behaved with modesty, he had no trouble in these areas where free blacks were looked on with suspicion” (Haskin and Benson, 2001). Potter eventually went on to perform in his own shows, one of the earliest being a show in Boston in 1811. His tricks included throwing knives and touching a hot iron with his tongue, walking on flames and dancing on eggs without breaking them. Potter was also a ventriloquist and could throw his voice imitating the sounds of birds with great skill. A Penobscot Indian woman named Sally, trained as his assistant and eventually became his wife. He had a successful performing career of over twenty-five years and bought an estate of one hundred and seventy five acres in New Hampshire, on which he built a mansion known as *Potter Place*. His son followed on in the conjuring tradition (Dyer, 1997).

The African American song and dance man, James Sandford performed with P.T. Barnum’s initial venture in circus with a travelling show consisting of only two wagons and one tent in 1837-1838 (Springhall, 2008, p. 19). In 1884, in a very rare move for the time, *The Great Wallace Show*, (or as it was originally named, *J.P. Anderson and Wallace and Company’s Great World Menagerie, Grand International Mardi Gras, Highway Holiday Hidalgo and Alliance of Novelties*) out of Peru, Indiana, hired the African American minstrel performer Al. G. Field, as Head Clown and

Equestrian Director. Al. G. Field stayed with the circus for two years from 1884-1886. J. C. Smith observes that, “it was rare indeed for an African American to fill two essential positions in the circus” (Smith, 2011, p. 304).

It was, however, contrary to much popular opinion, *not* unusual to find African Americans performers in essential positions in the circus at this time. Many top African American performers were hired and worked in the circus of this period. What was rare was to find an African American working *inside* the big top. When Abbott and Seroff delved into the archives of the *Indianapolis Freeman*, an African American weekly publication reporting on African American arts at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they discovered that there was “a far greater involvement of African American performers in circus than has previously been acknowledged or documented” (Abbott and Seroff, 2007, p. 158). In their history of the development of blues and jazz, *Ragged but Right: Black Travelling Shows, ‘Coon Songs’ and the Dark Pathway to Blues and Jazz*, Abbott and Seroff briefly explore the position of African American performers in early circus, remarking that very little is written about this topic elsewhere. They point out that African American performers appeared in every large touring circus at the end of the nineteenth century. However, it was only circus acts by white performers (or by performers who presented as white) that were presented inside the big top (Abbott and Seroff, 2007, p. 158).

### **The Sideshow Annex Companies**

The African American performers performed in the sideshow annex that housed the sideshows, the menagerie, the freaks, and also the African American performers

who performed collectively in what was known as the sideshow annex company. Abbott and Seroff perceive the positioning of the African American musicians and circus performers beside the exotic animals, the Freak shows, and the sideshow curiosities to have been an “overt expression of disrespect [that] permitted white spectators to enjoy black performers while maintaining a ‘certain ironic distance’” (Abbott and Seroff, 2007, p. 158). The sideshow annex companies became increasingly popular and by the start of the new century were providing work for an increasing number of African American musicians and circus performers (Abbott and Seroff, 2007, p. 158). Apart from a few select African American musicians occasionally being called into the big top after the main show for an after-hours show, they were excluded from the central main events taking place in the big top show.

The African American sideshow annex company was divided into two parts, the band and the minstrel show. The band played in the sideshow annex tent and provided interval music between the tent acts. The band members also took part in the daily street parade through town, playing their instruments, wearing uniforms and travelling along in brightly colored and decorated bandwagons. These sideshow annex bands grew in popularity and by the early 1900s were providing “a significant pathway for the dissemination of rag-time, blues and jazz” (Abbott and Seroff, 2007, p. 160). The success of these bands was largely due to some extraordinary African American bandleaders who combined great musicianship with an ability to manage and administrate the band. The sideshow company bandleader P.G. Lowery is named by Abbott and Seroff as one of the most remarkable. He headed up the sideshow annex company, both the band and the minstrel company for Forepaugh-Sells Brothers Circus

in 1899, and soon generated popular interest in his African American performers. In 1900, Lowery started another season with Forepaugh-Sells and his bigger more spectacular band featured twenty-two musicians, including a lady quartet and band of 14, uniformed in dark blue trimmed with gold braid. P.G. Lowery was a legendary cornet player, a great teacher and acted as a model of excellence for up and coming African American musicians (Abbott and Seroff, 2007, p. 160).

### **The Minstrel Show**

The other component part of the sideshow annex company was the blackface minstrel show which was accompanied by a small orchestra, usually consisting of less than ten musicians who provided accompaniment for the singers and diverse acts such as slack-wire walking, uni-cycling, juggling or contortion. The sideshow annex minstrel shows employed some of the very best African American musicians, amongst the most notable being the singers, Ma Rainier and Bessie Smith.

Blackface minstrelsy had begun in the 1830s when white men began to black up their faces and blackface proceeded to grow into a permanent feature of the American cultural landscape (Sotiropoulos, 2006, p. 3). W.T. Lhamon Jr's collection of early blackface works, including plays, lyrics and prose, entitled *Jump Jim Crow* (2003), shows that "the key American innovator, T.D. Rice, was a major star in Britain by the 1830s - seven years before the first formalized minstrel show in New York City," and that, "blackface was the United States first major cultural export. By the 1840s and 1850s, dozens of American minstrel troupes were Jumping Jim Crow in leading European theaters and music halls" (Cook, 2008, p. 73).

Eric Lott writes that, “strikingly, many minstrel performers began their career in circus ... a vital arena of minstrel performance” (Lott, 2013, p. 25). He points out, like clowning, which is an uncanny activity often most frightening when it is at its most cheerful, blackface performers played with a similar doubleness. Lott points to the instability in the representation of identity with the white male putting on a mask behind which his freedom is circumscribed by the fear that that which he is intending to symbolize might become actuality, and in the process he will lose the freedom which belonged to the white man alone. Lott indicates that this sense of an unstable identity led to some blackface performers “inspiring terror as well as affection” (Lott, 2013, p. 25). Lott argues that blackface embodies a sense of social and cultural instability that is highly informative about the racial politics of culture before the Civil War (Lott, 2013, p. 26)

With the advent of mass production, imagery of blackface minstrels began to spring up everywhere, printed on packaging for products as diverse as food and song sheets. The consumer market began to be saturated with racist imagery largely derived from minstrel shows printed on packaging, covers and products and this meant that racist imagery began to reach new audiences. As Karen Sotiropoulis writes, blackface imagery has been the source of much distress: “Over the years minstrel imagery has reflected and reinforced white supremacy and has caused black America immeasurable pain” (Sotiropoulis, 2006, p. 3).

However, after the Civil War, African American performers themselves began to take advantage of the huge demand in white America for blackface minstrel shows, and began themselves to perform as blackface minstrels, even sometimes going to the

lengths of applying blackface makeup. Despite the disturbing racial stereotypes that these shows obliged African American performers to present, the demand for minstrel shows did offer black performers a way to make money, and also gave them opportunities to perform, although these opportunities were very “narrowly circumscribed” (Sotiropoulis, 2006, p. 3). Yuval Taylor, in his book, *Darkest America, Black Minstrelsy from Slavery to Hip Hop* (2012), writes that probably the first African American who actually played blackface was William Henry Lane, performing under the name of Master Juba. It was, in all likelihood, P.T. Barnum who first presented William Lane by blacking him up so that no one in the audience realized he was actually of colour.

As writer Thomas L. Nichols, who was writing for the *New York Herald* at the time, explained ‘there was not an audience in America that would not have resented, in a very energetic fashion the insult of being asked to look at the dancing of a real negro [so Barnum] greased the little nigger’s face and rubbed it over with a new blacking of burnt cork, painted his thick lips with vermilion, put on a wooly wig over his tight curled locks, and brought him out as the ‘champion nigger-dancer in the world. Had it suspected that the seeming counterfeit was the genuine article, the New York Vauxhall would have blazed with indignation.’ (Taylor and Austen, 2012, p. 47)

William Lane was one of the best dancers of his day and before his performances as Master Juba, “there were few if any blacks appearing as performers in a white troupe

before white American theatergoers” (Taylor and Austin, 2012, p. 49). Like the other black minstrels who would follow him, Lane was a “black man performing as a white man performing as a black man” (Taylor and Austin, 2012, p. 49).

At first the blackface make-up was a necessity that functioned to allow him to ‘pass’ and to present himself as white, but it went on to allow him to be a

black performer in America who could publicly claim superiority over whites, and it was his blackface mask that enabled him to do so. This established from the very beginning, the two edged sword of blackface for black performers (and audiences) - it was simultaneously demeaning, in that it painted them as figures of ridicule, and liberating in that it enabled them to escape the oppressive structure of racist America while onstage. (Taylor, 2000, p. 49)

As African American performers began playing in minstrel shows, they started to market themselves as “authentic ‘darkies’[some] black vaudevillians male and female blacked up while others played ‘darky’ roles without the use of makeup” (Sotiropoulis, 2006, p. 3).

The *Indianapolis Freeman*, urged black performers to take advantage of the opportunities offered in the sideshow annex minstrel shows, however distasteful they might find them: “Have you noticed that nearly every circus on the road has a colored aggregation taking care of the sideshow? Dear colored performer please take care of the opportunity given you and don’t squabble yourself out of a job,” (*Indianapolis Freeman* 1910, cited in Abbott and Seroff, 2007, p. 157).



Some performers of colour started to work to try and subvert the ‘darky act,’ and to offer their performance more as a “commentary on their lives in a racist society” (Sotiropoulis, 2006, p. 4). These signals, in the form of jokes, could be read and understood by black audiences whilst going over the head of the white spectators. “Black audiences were well aware that the black performers they applauded were acting, and were incorporating stereotypes to negotiate within an extraordinarily tight cultural, social and political space - a point most likely understood even by African Americans ambivalent about the artists’ methods” (Sotiropoulis, 2006, p. 4).

Some of the very best black performers in blackface such as Bert Williams succeeded in transcending the genre. Kevin Young writes that Bert Williams, the extraordinary blackface performer who was part of the comedy team Walker and Williams, and then became the first black performer with the Ziegfield Follies, also succeeded in transforming “blackface from mere buffoonery into a genre not of bathos or pathos – that was familiar – but of real sorrow ... Williams [was] a profound clown who ... temporarily freed blackface from ridiculing his race” (Young, 2012).

Ephraim Williams, the extraordinary African American producer who started as a shoe shine boy and then went on to become the owner and manager of several circuses near Wisconsin, ran into problems, which it has been suggested could have been partly to do with ill feeling caused by the fact that his performers and audiences were white (Amacker, 2002). This ill feeling, in conjunction with financial difficulties, meant that his circuses folded. However several years later, he started up the famous black minstrel show *Silas Green* that toured very successfully.

Several other black troupes were formed which toured around with black

minstrel shows. “Intrepid black tented minstrel show owner-managers such as Pat Chappelle, Eph Williams and Charlie Collier were heroes in their day and deserve to be remembered and their legends retold” (Abbott and Seroff, 2008, p.7-8).

Taylor observes that black audiences supported 19<sup>th</sup> century travelling black minstrel troupes, and quotes a 1908 journalist of the *Dramatic Mirror* who declared that it was an “undisputed fact that the very sinew of support of a colored show comes



19. Thomas Dilward also known by the stage name of Japanese Tommy was an African American dwarf who performed in the blackface minstrel shows.  
Image retrieved from [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thomas\\_Dilward\\_-\\_Brady-Handy.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thomas_Dilward_-_Brady-Handy.jpg)  
Image in Public Domain.

more than one-half from the ranks of their own people” (*Dramatic Mirror*, 1908, as cited in Taylor and Austen, 2012, p. 4). Furthermore:

Nineteenth-century traveling black minstrel troupes and popular “legitimate” theater acts like Williams and Walker usually played to mixed audiences, and twentieth century tent shows often played to predominantly black or all-black

crowds. Black troupes at the turn of the century put on shows for crowds of paying black customers numbering in their thousands. (Taylor and Austen, 2012, p. 4)

Within the large touring circuses, the minstrel show band supplied accompaniment for the acts included in the minstrel shows in the sideshow annex, and these were largely circus acts. As Abbott and Seroff point out, these minstrel shows acted as “havens” for African American circus performers (Abbott and Seroff, 2007, p. 158). The minstrel show performers included superb magicians, ventriloquists, extraordinary opera singers such as Sissieretta Jones, trick skaters, male and female impersonators, acrobats, tightrope walkers, jugglers, acrobats, unicyclists, and “contortionists billed under names like the Human Corkscrew or the Human Frog” (Taylor and Austen, 2012, p. 4).

### **Freak Shows and Ethnographic Displays.**

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, within the North American circuses, people of colour also performed in several other capacities within the sideshow annex at the circus, that is, in both the freak shows and the ethnological displays. Although both types of exhibition had a long history outside circus, it was only when P.T. Barnum re-entered the world of circus in 1871, at the age of sixty-one, that these shows became a regular part of the circus sideshow.

Barnum had made most of his money before coming back into circus through the exhibition of people and exotic animals. Barnum’s attitudes to people of colour are of vital importance to circus as he was such a powerful and influential figure in the

field from the 1880s onwards. Barnum embodies many of complexities, contradictions and tensions surrounding the issue of race in North America at that period. Benjamin Reiss describes what he considers to have been a formative experience in Barnum's life, an experience that Barnum had as a boy, which he later recalled as an old man. In 1817, at the age of seven, Barnum was taken by his mother to see the public hanging of a former slave known as Black Amos, who was sentenced to death for a criminal assault on a white woman. "Barnum recalled the carnival atmosphere surrounding Black Amos's death ... Refreshment booths were set up in the square and so many onlookers climbed into trees to get a better view of the gallows that branches came crashing down" (Reiss, 2001, p. 17). Reiss recounts how Barnum remembered the sharp hiss of breath from his mother at the moment that Black Amos dropped and his neck snapped. Reiss argues that this experience was formative and he proposes that the spectacle of the northern whites gaping, or staring, at a dead black body while "enterprising souls turned a profit at the concessions stands" eerily foreshadows "the spectacle that was to inaugurate Barnum's extraordinary career as an entrepreneur of culture" (Reiss, 2001, p. 17). He notes that historians have proposed that, "as the whipping posts and gallows were withdrawn from the public eye, lurid commercial entertainments filled the void in public taste" (Reiss, 2001, p. 17). One of the 'lurid commercial entertainments,' to which Reiss refers, is the event that kicked off Barnum's fame and subsequent career, the public autopsy of a black slave woman named Joice Heth.

Barnum first made his name when, at the age of 25, he left his job selling groceries, and went on the road, presenting *The Greatest Natural and National Curiosity in the World*. This 'curiosity' was Joice Heth, an old black slave woman

whom he had bought for the sum of \$1,000. Barnum advertised her as being 161 years old and as having been the nurse of the infant George Washington (Reiss, 2001, p. 1).

The negro wench, [Joice Heth] upon which I built my principle hopes of fortune, was a remarkably old looking animal, having been bed-ridden for twelve years, and so wrinkled and shriveled and drawn up by disease, that her appearance indicated great longevity; but I made her look considerably older. I extracted her teeth, which caused her cheeks to sink in, and then I stated that she was the nurse of the immortal George Washington and had for more than a century been a slave in the household of the Washington family. (Barnum, 2005, p. 17)

When Joice Heth died several months after Barnum bought her, Barnum arranged for her body to be dissected publicly, perhaps in response to an outcry from the public urging an autopsy in order to verify the actual age of Joice Heth. The American Social History Project website *The Lost Museum* contextualizes the event.

In the antebellum period, autopsies were an important means of scientific inquiry into the workings of the human body, but many whites objected to the use of the corpses of ‘respectable’ people for such a purpose. Thus, the corpses of paupers, criminals, and African Americans (particularly slaves) were most likely to be used for anatomical study. (American Social History Project, n.d.)

Heth’s autopsy was conducted on a surgical table in a makeshift operating theater in a

New York City Saloon: “on February 25, 1836, 1500 people paid 50 cents apiece to watch Dr. David Rigers dissect Heth’s corpse” (American Social History Project n.d.). This event made Barnum, who had lost his only source of income at the time, which had been the exhibition of Joice Heth, a tidy sum. The event also made his name, because “tens of thousands ... followed the story as it was covered in clinical detail and debated in local papers” (Reiss, 2001, p. 3).

Barnum’s position towards people of colour changed over the course of his lifetime. Barnum was initially an outspoken opponent of abolitionism in the 1830s and 1840s, but in the lead-up to the civil war, he became more sympathetic to the anti-slavery position. In 1865, he even ran for office as a Republican proposing an amendment to the Connecticut Constitution in order to introduce universal manhood suffrage, or voting rights for all adult males regardless of race, religion or income. “Yet this dramatic political transformation seems to have had relatively little effect on Barnum’s market choices. Even at the height of radical Reconstruction, he continued to promote brutally dehumanizing images of people of color on stage” (Cook, 2005, p. 6). These ‘brutally dehumanizing images of people of color,’ through Barnum’s influence, became an integral part of circus.

By 1870, when Barnum introduced the ethnological exhibition of peoples into circus, buying and selling indigenous peoples for display had become big business. From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century on, not only flora and fauna, but also people, were considered collectable commodities to be bought and sold. Agricultural potential drove nationalist interest in the collection of flora, and the desire for entertainment and the display of imperial success drove the acquisition of wild animals. Scholar Sadiah

Qureshi suggests that much of the interest in indigenous people was stimulated by missionaries abroad, with conversion offering the opportunity to “effect reclamation of souls in the interest of both the Christian faith and empire. Converted peoples were also often displayed ... as evidence of missionary beneficence in spreading civilization” (Qureshi, 2004, p. 234).

Qureshi writes that ethnological exhibitions of indigenous peoples often “disturbingly blurred the human/animal boundary” (Qureshi, 2004, p. 238). This blurring of boundaries can be clearly seen in the business of the Hagenbeck company which bought and sold both animals and people. By the 1870s, the Hagenbeck company had become a world leader in the trade in exotic animals, a position that remained unchallenged until the beginning of World War I (Rothfels, 2002b, p.9). However the company did not restrict its business interests to the buying and selling of exotic animals, “in 1874, the company made the decision to begin procuring indigenous people from all over the world for presentation in highly profitable spectacles to European scientific societies and the general public” (Rothfels, 2002b p.9). Carl Hagenbeck also organized exhibitions of people from different ethnic groups in Germany showing “Africans, Indians, Lapps and assorted ‘wildmen’ from various parts of the colonized world” (Sorenson, 2008, p.196), and in the process he became one of Barnum’s major competitors. He also became a key figure in the development of modern zoos, often displaying animals and people together and advertising his exhibitions as “anthropological-zoological exhibitions” (Corbey, 1993, p. 354).

Qureshi points out that exhibited people and animals occupied a similar epistemological position, whether behind bars or on the stage, because “animals were

selected to be examples of their specific kinds just as ethnological exhibitions relied upon the claim that the peoples displayed were representative of a nation or race” (Qureshi, 2004, p. 238). This blurring of the boundaries between human and animals also occurred in 1894 when the Barnum and Bailey Circus incorporated a *Great Ethnological Congress of Savage and Barbarous Tribes*, and the display of ‘primitive’ peoples was actually situated inside the menagerie tent (Bogdan, 1988, p. 50). In a further example of the widespread blurring of boundaries between animals and indigenous peoples, William T. Hornaday, the director of the Bronx zoo, in 1906, displayed Ota Benga, a ‘pygmy’ boy from Congo in one of the zoo’s cages along with a chimpanzee and later an orangutan (Corbey, 1993, p. 350).

Scholar Raymond Corbey proposes that the displaying and *handling* of indigenous peoples in circuses often paralleled the treatment of exotic animals in circuses. “The way exotic animals were - and still are - shown and handled in circus performances elucidates practices of discipline and the concomitant idiom of wildness and taming that were present more implicitly in exhibits involving people” (Corbey, 1993, p. 354). In the exhibitions in the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893, the world’s indigenous peoples were presented and displayed on the Midway Plaisance under the motto, “To see is to know” (Corbey, 1993, p. 338). These kinds of exhibitions gave visitors the impression that “culture could be consumed at a glance” and that western imperial power had the capacity to bring “all the world’s cultures neatly together under one roof for systematic inspection” (Davis, 2002). Scholar, Anne McClintock describes these World exhibitions, such as the *British Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851*, “as imperial commodity spectacles” which delivered to white



audiences the “voyeuristic spectacle of racial ‘superiority’” (McClintock, 1995). Davis argues that circus operated in a similar fashion to these *imperial commodity spectacles* “with exhibits of non-white [people which] presented the idea that the world was available to be known, and comprehended through frozen images both photographic and live” (Davis, 2011).

In the circus, showmen gave the ethnographic shows an ‘educational’ gloss, with their patter, guiding “audiences to see exactly what they had expected to observe, for these shows relied on imperial assumptions about the distance between the evolved ... Anglo-Saxon] body and that of the colonial savage” (Durbach, 2009, p. 167). This belief, shared by almost all middle-class Victorians from the mid-nineteenth century on, was of a racial hierarchy in which Anglo-Saxons represented the ultimate peak of evolution both physically and culturally. They believed that all other races “ranked lower on the monogenetic tree or, otherwise according to the polygenesisists, that they had evolved from entirely different and inferior origins” (Durbach, 2009, p. 167). The history of mankind was presented as the narrative of a heroic journey ascending toward the ultimate evolution that was “the industrial civilization of white, European, middle-class citizens of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Other races followed the same path, it was postulated—especially in evolutionist ethnology, which was a scientific manifestation of the discourse on progress—but lagged behind culturally and physically” (Corbey, 1993, p. 359).

The opening paragraph of Sigmund Freud’s 1912 book *Totem and Taboo* is one of the most famous expressions of this belief:

Prehistoric man, in the various stages of his development, is known to us through the inanimate monuments and implements which he has left behind, through the information about his art, his religion, and his attitude towards life which has come to us either directly or by way of tradition handed down in legends, myths and fairy tales, and through the relics of his modes of thought which survive in our own manners and customs. There are men still living who, as we believe, stand very near to primitive man, far nearer than we do, and whom we therefore regard as his direct heirs and representatives. Such is our view of those whom we describe as savages or half-savages; and their mental life must have a peculiar interest for us if we are right in seeing in it a well-preserved picture of an early stage of our own development. (Freud 1912, 1998, p. 1)

In a similar vein, Charles Rau, the ethnologist and the creator of the ethnological exhibitions for the *1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition*, created on behalf of the Smithsonian Institution, stated: “The extreme lowness of our remote ancestors cannot be a source of humiliation; on the contrary, we should glory in our having advanced so far above them, and recognize the great truth that progress is the law that governs the development of mankind” (cited in Corbey, 1993, p. 341).

Davis proposes that people of colour displayed in circus freak shows were required to perform characters or roles representing themselves “as preindustrial ‘primitives’ and as animals” (Davis, 2011). She gives the example of Krao, a Laotian woman who had been captured at the age of seven by a Norwegian explorer, and brought to London where she became an exhibit for showman G.A. Farini at the Royal

Aquarium, (Krao took the showman's name and kept it all her life). Krao was required to play many different roles, ranging from 'a missing link' to a bearded lady.

Newspapers of the period described her as a specimen of ape-humanity and testimony from scientists verified Krao as a 'missing link between apes and humans.' One 'expert,' ethnologist A.H. Keane, described her in "racially animated primatological language which sharply contradicted her actual appearance" (Davis, 2011, p.15).

[Krao's] whole body is ... overgrown with a ... dense coating of soft, black hair about a quarter of an inch long, but nowhere close enough to conceal the color of the skin, which may be described as of a dark olive-brown shade. ... Like those of the anthropoids her feet are also prehensile, and the hands so flexible that they bend quite back over the wrists. The thumb also doubles completely back, and of the four fingers, all the top joints bend at pleasure independently inwards-the beautiful round black eyes are very large and perfectly horizontal. Hence the expression is on the whole far from unpleasing, and not nearly so ape-like as that of many Negritos. (cited in Davis 2011)

In 1903 at Barnum and Bailey's circus, Krao was displayed next to 'Johanna, the Live Gorilla.' Davis suggests that by "juxtaposing Krao with the chimpanzee, proprietors invented a tradition of evolutionary continuity between the ersatz gorilla and the 'Gorilla Girl'" (Davis, 2011). Krao eventually became a skilled linguist speaking seven languages fluently, who volunteered as a tutor with the local library when the circus wintered in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Davis makes the point that like

her other non-white colleagues, Krao held a complex and ‘contradictory’ position in the circus,

on the one hand she was able to make a good income in a racist society where there were few lucrative employment options for a person of color ... Yet Krao’s job required her to perform ideologies about non-white people of color in all areas of American life. (Davis, 2011)

William Henry Johnson was an African American born in 1842 in New Jersey with a condition known as microcephaly, “a neurological disorder characterized by a smaller than average head” (Pednaud, 2006). Johnson was recruited by Barnum in 1860, who re-named him Zip and shaved Johnson’s head, except for a small tuft on hair which he left on the top, and dressed him in a strange fur suit. Barnum reputedly paid Zip a dollar a day to stay quiet about his transformation and to stay in character. Barnum presented Zip as a missing link and claimed that Zip had been found during a gorilla hunting expedition in West Africa, and that Zip was a member of a naked race of men, travelling around by climbing on tree branches” (Pednaud, 2013). Johnson was variously billed as ‘The Monkey Man,’ ‘the Man-Monkey,’ ‘the Missing Link,’ ‘What is it?’ or ‘Zip the Pinhead.’

One of the other ideologies that the Barnum and Bailey circus presented was that the indigenous peoples on display in the ethnographic exhibitions were representatives of dying races and cultures, which were doomed to eventual extinction. These peoples included “the Australian cannibals, who waged ‘an endless war of

extermination' upon themselves, to the polyandrous Todars and the last Aztecs" (cited by Adams, 1996, p.55). By 1889, the circus projected itself as 'A Stupendous Mirror of Departed Empires.' Moreover, the circus underlined the supposedly degenerate nature of the races displayed by describing the weakness of the individuals shown in the exhibitions: "Many of the rarest savage representatives have reached these shores but to die, and fresh expeditions had to be again started to replace them" (cited in Adams, 1996, p. 55).

This emphasis on the inevitable decline and ultimate extinction of non-Western races, brought the representations of indigenous peoples displayed in circus into line with many of the anthropologists of the time, who embraced Social Darwinism, and also into agreement with those social critics convinced that nonwhite races, including Native and African Americans, would soon become extinct by 'natural' causes' (Adams, 1996, p. 55). Bluford Adams argues that audiences of the time were very familiar with Social Darwinist discourse, familiar enough to potentially extrapolate from the expected extinction of indigenous peoples an expected similar trajectory for Native Americans and African Americans.

The familiarity of US audiences with such discourses would have allowed them to read domestic meanings into the decadence of the circus's exotic nonwhites. Moreover the Barnum show encouraged such readings by comparing its non-Westerners to US minorities (for example the color of the Ethnological Congress's Nubians was said to be 'not unlike [that of] the ebony negroes'). ((Adams, 1996, p. 49)

Adams makes the point that that the parallels created in audiences minds were heightened by the fact that, given the few opportunities in the circus for people of colour, audiences were in fact much more likely to see African Americans performing in the circus as “skin-clad ‘savages’ than as equestrians, acrobats and musicians” (Adams, 1996, p. 49).

As Adams points out, African Americans were often employed to appear as performers in ethnographic shows as, in many ways, an authentic body was relatively unimportant to the ‘savage’ shows. A successful ‘savage’ show relied more on a choreographed performance that was “framed by a familiar narrative and conformed to stereotypes of savage behavior and appearance” than it did on an ‘authentic body’ (Durbach, 2009, p. 170). This meant that if authentic Africans were hard to find, by dressing locals for the part and using “popular assumptions about the nature and behavior of ‘primitive’ and ‘savage’ people and by drawing on a variety of different racial narratives to frame the exhibition ethnographic show, presenters could easily employ local people in place of Africans” (Durbach, 2009, p. 15).

In 1882, D.S. Thomas, the press agent for Barnum and Bailey circus, pointed out that there were financial advantages to ‘ethnological authenticity’: “It pays better to have the genuine article ... for instance, there are those Nubian Arabs. Nobody doubts they are genuine. Of course we could hire darkies in New York to dress, look, and act like them, but they would want \$6 or \$8 every week, while these fellows are satisfied with half that” (cited in Adams, 1996, p. 53).

However despite the financial advantage of ‘ethnological authenticity,’

showmen in the United States did in fact often employ locals to perform the role of savages, wild men, or cannibals, mainly because ersatz ‘natives’ were easier to find and hire and also “usually proved more co-operative than the authentic variety” (cited in Durbach, 2009, p. 150). Robert Bogdan observes that there were so many phoney Africans in the sideshows and fairgrounds that by the turn of the century the term ‘Zulu’ had become “synonymous with artifice and disguise” (cited in Durbach, 2009, p. 150).

Although displays of fake savages reveal absolutely nothing about Africans, scholar Nadja Durbach proposes that in many other ways, on examination they now prove more instructive than the authentic displays, as “they expose the complex ways in which racial, class and ethnic relationships were articulated and crucially staged” (Durbach, 2009, p. 150). Victorian ethnological shows in sideshows constructed and performed shared assumptions about both ethnicity and otherness. Michael Ragussis proposes that British Georgian Theatre operated as a “central cultural arena in which a battle of national identity was waged” (Ragussis, 2010, p. 1). In the same way, Durbach suggests that the sideshows in circus in the nineteenth century, with their ethnographic shows, joined the theatrical stage in acting “as a crucial space not merely for exhibition but for enacting imperial ideologies of otherness” (Durbach, 2009, p.152).

In ethnographic displays in circus even authentic ‘natives’ were costumed in what was considered an appropriate way for their roles, and they also performed routines that had been choreographed for them, in order to exhibit and demonstrate these shared assumptions about primitiveness and savagery. When the showman G.A. Farini displayed a group of Khoisan in 1883, he costumed them “in leopard-skin shorts - certainly not their traditional clothing. The ... show thus relied on certain

performative tropes of otherness that were continuously and necessarily reproduced” (Durbach, 2009, p.152). Durbach points out that, ironically, even the ‘authentic natives’ were “forced to conform to the conceits of sideshow spectacle” and thus put in the position of being obliged to “mimic their own impersonators” (Durbach, 2009, p. 152).

“Showmen presented the exhibit so as to appeal to the people’s interest in the culturally strange, the primitive, the bestial and the exotic” (Bogdan, 1988). The show was usually presented by a showman who presented as a ‘lecturer’ telling the life story of the exhibited person’s origins and giving specific and often intentionally erroneous and distorted information. The person on display would be costumed and would perform in a way that was consistent with the story being presented (Bogdan, 1988 p. 105).

In his Memoirs, an unpublished manuscript, the showman James McKenzie wrote that ‘savage’ shows normally stayed the same so very little training was required for performers. “The Wild Man,’ he recalled, was exhibited behind prison bars, ‘wildly pacing up and down occasionally shaking the bars, almost naked with ornaments of teeth and coins, he would glare at the people with grimaces, showing his teeth” (cited in Durbach, 2009, p.153). These performances of ‘The Wild Man’ relied on “widespread assumptions about the primitive nature of non-Western people” (Durbach, 2009, p. 153).

*The Ubangi Savages*, an act that became a featured exhibit at Barnum and Bailey Circus and Ringling Brothers, were an entirely fake creation. They were actually Ashantis from the Gold Coast of West Africa who were rounded up in New York by a circus agent called Ludwig Bergonnier who had seen the original Ubangi at a fair in



Paris. Bergonnier costumed them in ‘African’ costumes consisting of leopard skin sarongs, ostrich feathers, clubs, zebra skin shields, nose bones and matching accessories which he purchased at Brooks Costume Company in New York. However as they proved rather dull for the spectators, the producers decided to add an element to liven the show up: “For this we hired a tall handsome New York negro by the name of Charles Lucas, who became the leader of the rest of the African population” (Holtman, 1968, as cited in Bogdan, 1988, p. 196). As well as developing a gibberish language, Lucas could “walk on hot embers, eat fire and spout flames, and swallow hot swords” (Bogdan, 1988, p. 196).

As in the case of Krao Farini (Davis, 2011), these performers were able to earn a good living in a time when opportunities for people of colour in circus were few and far between, but these same jobs forced them to present and perform racist ideologies about non-white people.

### **The Opaque Body**

For those lighter-skinned African Americans wanting to perform in the circus but unwilling to perform either as part of the sideshow annex company, or in the sideshow itself as either ‘wild-men,’ ‘missing links’ in the ethnographic side show, or ‘freaks’ in the freak show, another option existed, to try and ‘pass’ for white and thus gain admittance into the big top itself. Shirlee Taylor Haizlip, in her memoir *The Sweeter the Juice*, (1994) writes that *passing* is part of the family story of many African Americans. “In Buffalo there is a man who lives as white but frequently returns to his black high school reunions in Washington DC ... A woman I knew as black when I was

young is now white and no longer speaks to me. Multiply these instances many times over and the footprints of those who have crossed the color line become infinite and untrackable” (Haizlip, 1994, p. 34).

The question of who is considered to be black and who is considered to be white has a very different answer in North America than in most other places in the world. In North America, the answer to the question ‘who is black’ originally emerged from the American South and then became adopted as the nation’s definition, generally accepted by both whites and blacks. As F James Davis observes, “Blacks had no other choice” (Davis, 1991, p.1). “This definition, known widely as the ‘one drop rule’ assigns black status to any person with any known African black ancestry ... some courts have called it the ‘traceable amount rule’ and anthropologists call it the ‘hypo-descent rule’ meaning that racially mixed persons are assigned the status of the subordinate group” (Davis, 1991, p.2).

Sarah Chinn notes that, “to be white is to be everything, anything but black, even dark-skinned or untraceable genealogically. Whiteness can have depth, diversity variety: blackness is singular impermeable, the point of no return” (Chinn, 2000, p. 63). With this definition of ‘who is black’ in North America, the way the body looks does not in fact determine its racial positioning in terms of society and the law, rather it works the other way round, meaning how the body is seen, read and understood is determined by the way the body is positioned legally and culturally. As Chinn writes, “The visibility of the body does not determine its meanings, but is [itself] determined by them ... And what we read is the often inchoate evidence of ‘difference’ a system of valuation in which the dominant is rendered invisible and the subordinate hypervisible

for the purposes of control” (Chinn, 2000, p. 8).

In her book, *Passing and the Fictions of Identity* (1996), Elaine Ginsberg quotes a notice placed in a newspaper in 1836, which reads:

100 DOLLARS REWARD. Will be given for the apprehension of my negro Edmund Kenney. He has straight hair, and complexion so nearly white that it is believed a stranger would suppose that there was no African blood in him. He was with my boy Dick a short time since in Norfolk and offered for sale ... but escaped under the pretense of being a white man. (*Richmond Whig* 6, 1836, as cited by Ginsberg, 1996, p. 1)

Ginsberg highlights the telling phrase ‘my negro,’ which announces “Kenney’s legal status as property, and his legal race as Negro” (Ginsberg, 1996, p. 1). It carried no weight that Kenney’s physical appearance showed that his white predecessors probably outnumbered his African ancestors, and that a stranger would assume from his appearance that he was white, and thus presumably, a free man. In terms of the law and social custom, Kenney was defined as a negro and a slave. Both the law and custom placed more emphasis on his African blood, which was given more standing than “the dominant and visible heritage that would cause a stranger to assume Kenny was both white and free. Kenney’s creation of a new white identity - that is, his ‘passing’ was a transgression not only of legal boundaries (that is from slave to freeman) but of cultural boundaries as well” (Ginsberg, 1996, p.1).

There were strong deterrents to the attempt to pass. Passing was inherently risky,

and people risked not only punishment from the “white supremacist legal system,” but also the anger of black progressives who were determined to create a “unified front against racism” (Brooks, 2006, p. 132). In terms of men and women working to further the cause of their Black race, people attempting to pass were viewed as advancing “their own fiscally and socially self-serving plans” (Brooks, 2006, p. 132) by moving from the peripheries of society to its centre. From the perspective of the dominant race, passing is fraud, an attempt to falsely claim status and privilege (Ginsberg, 1996, p. 8). Furthermore, Ginsberg points out that the very notion of passing raises questions which challenge the notion of identity as a fixed and stable entity: “the essentialism that is often the foundation of identity politics ... discloses the truth that identities are not singularly true or false but rather multiple and contingent” (Ginsberg, 1996, p. 4).

Touring from town to town, circus performers had opportunities to easily create new personas for themselves. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the fashion for the ‘exotic’ offered opportunities for different types of performing bodies. Tait describes how the 20<sup>th</sup> century ushered in a “veiled impression of a mysterious other in circus [which] was frequently oriented to a non- specific Middle Eastern milieu and reflected what Edward Said terms ‘orientalism’ - the imaginative projection of ‘things oriental’” (Tait, 1996, p. 45). These representations led to the performance of a foreign *other* which often blurred the specificity of the particular distinctive body of the performer (Tait, 1996, p. 45).

Tait posits that the languages of circus performance enabled the ‘oriental body’ to act as a parody of a fixed and stable cultural identity, suggesting that through the process of naming, costuming and “symbolically recoding the bodies of performers the

circus presented the notion of identity in circus as unstable, fluid and changing” (Tait, 1996, p. 45). Passing in circus could take the form of a temporary identity assumed for a few performances as with the trapeze artist, Al Wells, who, writing in 1916, noted that when he went to New York City with the first aerial-act of colour to play that city, “I changed the act to a Cuban act and called it Los Cubanos, the three Garcia Bros., we then played that time, also other times that could not see a Negro trapeze act” (cited in Abbott and Seroff, 2007, p. 200).

Two of the most famous examples of more permanent passing in North American circus and hippodrama can be seen in the careers of Adah Isaacs Menken (1835-1868), the actress and equestrienne, and Con Colleano (1899-1973), the tight wire walker. Both these performers share an intriguing tension between what was revealed in performance and what ultimately remained concealed. Scholar Daphne A. Brooks makes the point that Adah Menken had the nickname of ‘Naked Lady’ and performed apparently naked, clad only in a flesh colored body stocking and undergarments, yet in effect, her real identity lay hidden behind carefully constructed layers of falsehoods and artifice. As Brooks writes, “with so much attention paid to what she laid bare on the stage, the facts of Menken’s personal life had largely remained a source of occlusion and contention” (Brooks, 2006, p. 134)

In a similar vein, Tait observes that the audience saw Con Colleano risk apparently everything in his tight wire walks, yet another real danger was totally concealed from them, that is the danger that he might be exposed as passing for Spanish when he was in fact an Australian Aboriginal. As Tate puts it:

as [an] Aboriginal circus ... performer in the early part of the [twentieth] century the risks associated with aerial work and wire-walking included the revelation of a racially specific body. The danger of a slip in the routine which might expose the transparency of a socially defined racial body disguised in a false persona inverted this apparent exposure of bodies in circus (Tait, 1996, p. 49).

### **Adah Isaac Menken**



20. Adah Isaacs Menken standing topless circa 1860

Retrieved from: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adah\\_Isaacs\\_Mencken\\_standing\\_topless.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adah_Isaacs_Mencken_standing_topless.jpg)  
Image in Public Domain

Adah Isaac Menken was a sensationally skilled horse rider and actress who rose to become the highest paid female performer in the world and an international celebrity.

In 1861, she took on the lead role in the hippodrama, *Mazeppa*, an adaptation of Byron's poem for stage under the direction of Astley's prodigy Andrew Ducrow. The production told the tale of a Tartar courtier punished, by being strapped naked to the back of a wild horse, for his affair with a nobleman's wife. The production was hugely successful and had gone on to be remounted many times, sometimes with women in the lead role. Although other women had played the role of the Tartar prince before her, Mecken was the first performer to excite widespread interest in the role. According to Brooks, she was "the first performer to pulsate at the very heart of the production, as a transatlantic body of spectacularly real deception" (Brooks, 2006, p. 167).

"Adah dueled, declaimed, and rode a 'wild stallion' up a four-story stage mountain - while stripped apparently naked. From Albany to the Midwest and Nevada's booming Virginia City, the crowds went wild over this man/woman performance" (Gulotta, 2013). The Victoria and Albert Museum's website displays advertisements for this production of *Mazeppa* which proclaimed that Menken's legs "would have made St. Anthony lift his eyes from his prayer book" (Mazeppa, V&A, 2013). Sailing from San Francisco to London, her popularity boomed, "she thrilled [the] young Arthur Conan Doyle, who would make her the heroine of his first Sherlock Holmes story. La Menken became the toast of Paris, the world's highest paid performer" (Gulotta, 2011). She inventively exploited the new media of the era, newspapers and cameras and the telegraph to become internationally famous. "Celebrated [as] the first universal Love Goddess, the godmother to Harlow, Monroe, and Princess Diana ... She died in a Paris garret, the poet Longfellow at her side, writing a eulogy, while a crowd stormed a nearby theater, demanding to see their Naked Lady" (Gulotta, 2011).

Menken often shared stories about her childhood and her late father with writers and newspapers. It was not until she had been in the public eye for several years that journalists started to notice that important details of her father, for example his name, occupation and ethnicity, changed from one story to another. Sometimes she claimed her father was Jewish, sometimes, Irish, sometimes Spanish. She told tales of being a childhood star in Cuba and of being captured by Indians on the Texas frontier. As Sentilles (2003) observes, these stories played with the tropes of popular fiction and stimulated the public's desire for more information. Sentilles suggests that Menken owed a debt to P.T. Barnum, copying promotional skills from the showman and profiting from the appetite for news from the entertainment world, an appetite that Barnum had created (Sentilles, 2003, p. 11). Barnum was a master of 'artful deception,' or what he himself called 'Humbug;' which Sentille's describes as "a complex style of showmanship dependent on the public's desire to be challenged." Sentille adds, "Barnum's success revealed that Americans wanted to be provoked and that lies could be far more profitable than truth as long as they were more entertaining" (Sentilles, 2003, p. 12).

Scholars are still trying to untangle Menken's actual life from the contradictory fictions that she herself wove in order to obscure her origins. Some scholars conclude that she was Creole from New Orleans, others that she was Jewish and yet others that she was African American. The scholarly debate and research still continues to this day. Menken remains an endlessly fascinating figure in particular for her mastery "of the art of the pass," and for the way she used different layers of artifice to exploit "the opaque as an aesthetic device, as a method of contestation and self-invention, and as a form of



social mobility” (Brooks, 2006, p. 135). Brooks issues a provocation inviting us to engage with La Menken as “a phantasmagoric body of (un)truthfulness” (Brooks, 2006, p. 135), proposing that the very artifice and the tricks used to conceal her identity are, in and of themselves, worthy of investigation. Mecken’s veils of falsehood and invention “open up new ways of understanding the intersectionality of race, gender and class and sexuality in nineteenth-century theater culture” (Brooks, 2006, p. 135).

### **Con Colleano**

Con Colleano was a huge star in North American circus. He presented himself as coming from a Spanish background but he was actually of Australian Aboriginal descent. In Australia, while there has been a greater acceptance of people of Australian Aboriginal descent within circus than in the wider community, this covert tolerance within the circus community did not extend to acknowledging Aboriginal heritage in the circus ring and Mark St Leon writes that “Aboriginal performers had to hide their heritage behind the fabricated but stereotyped racial fantasies found in circus performance” (cited in Tait, 1996, p. 32).

The father of Con Colleano, Cornelius Con Sullivan was a boxer and a showman with a travelling boxing troupe. In 1894 he married Julia Robertson, who was of Aboriginal descent. With their 10 children and some Aboriginal cousins they formed a travelling circus and started touring around Australia in 1910. The Colleano family originally disguised their ethnic identity by billing themselves as The Royal Hawaiians, successfully working and touring around Australia in a period in which the free movement of Aboriginals around Australia was prohibited (Tait, 1996, p. 46). Using

the professional name of Collino, later spelt Colleano, the family started identifying themselves as Spanish. This Latin sounding name “capitalized and camouflaged the swarthy appearance of the Sullivan children” (St. Leon, as cited in Tait, 1996, p. 46). Con Colleano developed his performance persona further along these lines and began using Spanish music and a red bullfighting cape which became a signature part of his act, in the process completely masking his Aboriginal heritage and also hinting at a link to the tradition of Spanish wire walkers (Tait, 1996, p. 46). Colleano was a brilliant daredevil wire walker, with one newspaper in 1917 describing the Colleano family act as “death defying” highlighting Con’s performance of a backward somersault on the wire (Tait, 1996, p. 46).

After the Colleano All Star Circus closed in 1923, the Tivoli vaudeville circuit gave him work and also employed his family, presenting the eight acrobats in Arabian costume as The Akbah Arabs. Con Colleano toured to South Africa and then in 1924 to New York where he was given a job with Ringling Bros and Barnum and Bailey in 1924 (St. Leon, 1993). Although Ringling initially promoted Con Colleano as Australian, by the early 1930s, Ringling publicity proclaimed him “ a caballero ... from a famous Spanish family of circus performers,” and his Aboriginal mother was transformed into a “Spanish dancer whose parents had come from Las Palmas” (St Leon, 2008, p. 79).



21. Con Colleano on a slack wire 1920

Retrieved from: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Con\\_Colleano\\_on\\_a\\_slackwire,\\_circa\\_1920.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Con_Colleano_on_a_slackwire,_circa_1920.jpg)  
Image in Public Domain

His false identity gained him some ironic advantages, for example, Con Colleano was issued a Reichspass which allowed him to freely enter and depart Nazi Germany where he performed for Hitler as the Mexican tight wire wonder, and in 1950 he was able to gain American citizenship by describing himself as ‘white’ on the citizenship application. Mark St. Leon notes that, “Full citizenship rights were not extended to Aborigines at home until the passage of reforming federal and state legislation in the 1960s” (St Leon, 2008, p. 79). Con Colleano, from an Aboriginal circus family in Australia, successfully passed as Spanish and became an international circus star performing in the most prestigious circuses in the world.

### **Whiteness in Traditional Modern and Contemporary Circus**

It was not until 1922 that Hoop Manipulator, Coy Herndon, “was engaged by

the Howe's Great London Circuit, distinguishing himself as the first Negro feature ever with a circus" (Samson, 2012 p. 1398). In a 1923 interview, Herndon spoke about the difficulties of making a breakthrough and developing an outstanding act that would stand up in comparison with all the acts by talented white artists. "Then you have prejudice to fight, which is just as bad as not having an act. It's a fight to get it, and a fight to do it" (cited in Sampson, 2012, p. 1389).

The story behind the King Charles Troupe, a group of African American basketball playing unicyclists, billed as the first all African American troupe in circus, shows one way in which African American performers managed to get circus acts. In 1918, a young boy named Jerry King, sneaked in to see the circus in Tampa Florida. He was particularly excited by the unicyclists and, in 1958, as a father living in the Bronx and worried about his young son growing up in the difficult social conditions, Jerry King started a unicycle group for young people in the area. He taught his son Charles to ride a unicycle, and then started a unicycle club for any other young person in the neighborhood who wanted to learn. He set in place club rules of discipline, direction and Christian principles. Ten years later, in 1968, the group auditioned for Ringling Bros circus on the sidewalk outside Madison Square Gardens. They demonstrated their basketball passing skills and unicycling to Irvin Field, the producer of Ringling Bros, and he signed them. The troupe, which was led by King's son Charles, were billed as "the first all black circus troupe" and debuted with The Greatest Show on Earth, going on to perform with Ringling for 20 years and remaining hugely popular with audiences (Ringling Bros, 2013). The troupe nearly disintegrated when three members including Charles King were killed in a car crash in 1991, but the members regrouped and

managed to continue. It is now under the direction of Floyd Sweets Harrison, one of the group's founding members. They recently started performing with Ringling again in the Ringling Bros and Barnum and Bailey new show *Built to Amaze*, which premiered in July 2013.

This hugely successful group, in effect, learnt their skills through a form of social circus program (run by one of their fathers) that was designed to keep the young people off the streets. A similar kind of social intervention program was instrumental in the development of Jonathan Lee Iverson, billed as the first African American ringmaster in the history of Ringling Bros and Barnum and Bailey. He became Ringling's youngest ringmaster at the age of twenty-two. Iverson, the son of a firefighter and a postal worker living in Harlem, sang with the Harlem Boys Choir for eleven years before attending La Guardia High School for performing arts and going on to graduate college with a degree in voice (Sherman, 2010). Founded in 1968, by African American, Dr. Walter Turnbull, the Harlem Boys Choir drew members from young people in the neighborhood. "It was known internationally for its Grammy Award winning music and its academic and personal support services for underprivileged Harlem children" (Liao, 2012), predominantly of African American and Hispanic descent. It was this astonishing social music program for young people in Harlem that opened doors for Iverson, and eventually allowed him to audition for Ringling Bros.

Universoul Circus, founded by African American Cedric Walker, created new opportunities for African Americans in entertainment. Walker organized Fresh Festivals, a large Rap music tour featuring Run DMC, Salt 'n Peppa, and produced two

gospel plays. Searching for another form of family entertainment to present, Walker says, “We came across a single African American owned circus operating in 1893. I envisioned hip-hop musicals, a return to vaudeville and animal acts. That’s when the decision was made to create a new entertainment - A full blown circus complete with its own big top tent” (Universoul, 2013). Universoul circus finally opened in 1994, with the first show in Atlanta. “The vision was to establish the first nationally touring African American circus in more than 100 years” (Chappell, 1996, p. 69). Walker assembled a cast which included an African-Spanish contortionist, and an aerial act from South Africa but he also assembled what is described as a “Who’s Who of Black American Circus” (Chappell, 1996, p. 70), which included the legendary unicyclists the King Charles Troupe and also Pa-Mela, the first Black female aerialist with Ringling. There was also Danise Payne, the first Black female clown on the Red Unit in Ringling Brothers and who was also a clown with Gerry Cottle’s Circus in England. Payne reflects, “I never thought I would live to see a Black circus, when I heard it was being produced, my heart just jumped and said, ‘I got to get in the show’” (Chappell, 1996, p. 72).

Walker was even determined to have lions, tigers and elephants for the circus, and searched the entire country before realizing that there were only three black tamers in the whole of the USA. He tracked them down but they were unavailable. Then Walker remembered his cousin, Ted McRae, who owned poisonous snakes, and had a nine-foot boa constrictor. “I knew he loved wild animals,” Walker said, “So I called him and said, ‘What are you doing?’ He said, ‘I’m driving a forklift.’ I said, ‘Would you like to go into a lion’s den?’ He said, ‘Yeah.’ The next day McRae was in Florida

meeting with Walker” (Chappell, 1996, p. 72).

Although the circus was originally intended to be only African American, the show eventually expanded and is now a multiracial circus with performers from all over the world. The 2013 show includes performers from Vietnam with a head balancing act, and contortionists from Ethiopia. The rest of the cast is from the United States, Trinidad and Tobago, France, Brazil, Colombia, South Africa, Russia, and West Africa. It is now ranked in Ticketmaster’s top ten family shows in North America.

Tim Perkins performed with the King Charles Troupe for nineteen years before going on to start his own company, Afrika Soul, which is an all black circus currently running in Las Vegas. Perkins claims, “We have developed a true African circus with native costumes, drums and the whole African vibe” (Afrika Soul Circus Come to Las Vegas, 2011). Afrika Soul brings together performers from different parts of Africa including Guinea, Senegal, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya, and Gabon. Perkins describes it as a “cultural fusion of expression” and goes on to say “it is a Lion King Production but fused with Cirque du Soleil” (Afrika Soul Circus Come to Las Vegas, 2011).

It remains very difficult to source any information about African American performers in contemporary circus. Online searches reveal little. Even these two successful black entrepreneurs and producers in contemporary North American circus, that is Walker and Perkins, who both have highly successful shows running in North America have had little profiling. There seems to be an oddly resounding silence, with what little coverage there is being in Black magazines like *Ebony*, or *Black Business News* and mostly over 10 years old. When compared with the surfeit of material online about Guy Laliberté, the founder of Cirque du Soleil, or indeed the founders of 7

Fingers in Montreal, the absence of media coverage on these successful producers is astonishing.

Circus training available for African Americans in the States seems likewise to remain below public visibility. Social circus, that is circus arts used to initiate social change, remains a pathway for young African Americans, although one of the problems with many social circus programs is that of continuity. Social circus programs, including many of those of Cirque du Monde, are only project funded. So they will run for a few weeks at a time, two or three times a year. Although serious attempts are made by Cirque du Monde to set in place junior trainers who can continue the programs in between projects, it can prove a big ask for even the most enthusiastic young people to keep these programs running with little in the way of experience, training, equipment, or back up in difficult and challenging social conditions.

In North America there are a few continuous social circus programs that offer a career pathway to young African Americans. One of the most remarkable is St Louis Arches Youth Circus, a performance company, which is supported by a feeder program called Circus Harmony. Both programs run out of St Louis, Missouri. St Louis Arches was set up in 1989, and is coached and directed by Jessica Hentoff. The troupe performs almost every weekend and has appeared with Cirque du Soleil and Ringling Bros, and Barnum and Bailey. Hentoff, now considered a leader in the field of social circus, was a founding member of the Big Apple Circus in New York and Circus Flora in St Louis (St. Louis Arches, 2013). Warren Bacon, a big proponent of youth circus in St Louis, still coaches for Circus Harmony and St Louis Arches. In the past few years, Bacon has been successful in sourcing funding enabling several African American



students coming out of the St Louis Arches Youth Circus to attend The National Circus School in Montreal, which now, as a result, has a number of African American students in its ranks.

Whether opportunities open up for these African American circus students when they graduate from the National Circus School remains to be seen. Opportunities may be available in Universoul Circus and Afrika Soul, or even in Ringling Bros, which has taken a number of African American circus performers over the years and originally gave the King Charles Troupe their first break. It is still unclear whether the contemporary circuses in North America, some of which have emerged from roots in new circus with its strong political agendas, often with equality of opportunity (especially for women) seen as a central, vital issue, will address the issue of racial inequality of opportunity in circus and offer some real substantive opportunities within the white dominated arena of contemporary North American circus.

One social intervention program, *Kalmunity Vibe Collective* (KVC) was set up in Montreal in 2003 to develop young musicians mainly in jazz and rap and performance poetry (Kalmunity, 2013). *Kalmunity* work with musicians of any race but the vast majority of them are Black Canadians. *Kalmunity* develops young Black Canadian musicians to the highest levels. One of their singers, Canadian Black, Haitian born Malika Tirolien, has gone on to recently record several tracks with the Grammy Award winning, New York based, jazz soul band, Snarky Puppy and is now getting booked for performances in her own right at North American jazz festivals. However, surprisingly, at the time of writing, there are, as far as I am aware, no similar programs to encourage and develop young Black Canadians in circus arts within Montreal, which

is arguably the city with the most circus activity in the world.

This writing points to the unmarked white body in contemporary circus and the amnesia regarding the parallel histories of African American performers in modern and contemporary circus. It is to be hoped that this writing may in some small way prompt contemporary circus, through a process of self-evaluation, to start to recognize the hegemony surrounding the unmarked white body in contemporary circus and to begin to open up the doors of contemporary circus and become more inclusive.

## SECTION 4: THE PROCESSUAL BODY

**This section consists of:**

Chapter 10: The Resilient Body

-----

### **The Resilient Body**

“It’s the excitedly shining bright eyes, the experience of success. Every time they learn something they are smiling from ear to ear. It’s a pleasure to watch. It’s good to see.”

(Outreach Youth Worker talking about social circus, cited in Kinnunen and Lidman 55).

### **Introduction**

Social circus has a radical agenda. It takes the notion of *circus for everybody*, the tenet of new circus, out onto the streets, and uses circus as a tool to promote healing and recovery from trauma often with some of the most deprived and abused people in society. Usually, but not always, social circus is undertaken with young people, primarily youth in perilous situations.

One of the earliest examples of social would seem to be the work of a young Spanish, Jesuit priest in the 1950s named Father Jesus Silva who founded a community for orphans and young people living on the streets called City of Boys. Looking for ways to fund it, he drew on his family heritage, which was circus. A circus school that eventually led to the formation of a circus company, El Circo de Los Muchachos, ultimately proved to be the solution to the City of Boys’ financial problems. Los

Muchachos, performed by the young people living in City of Boys, went on to great success, touring widely.

This idea of circus becoming a means by which young people in perilous situations can lift themselves out of homelessness, poverty and trauma gained momentum when it collided with the radical political agenda of Paris in 1968. This article explores the concept of social circus and how and why it is effective. It brings together the work of two thinkers on trauma and the application of their ideas as a way of explaining how the physicality of learning circus skills assists young people in perilous situations. The ideas of Boris Cyrulnik are referred to in the manual for Cirque du Monde instructors entitled *The Phoenix: Building the Concept of Resilience into Cirque Du Monde Practices*. However in this writing I have brought Cyrulnik's thinking about recovery from trauma together with the ideas of Peter A. Levine to create the notion of *the resilient body* as a principle that can be seen to start to explain the successes of social circus. The paper goes on to outline a number of different examples of social circus as a global movement.

### **Towards a Definition of Social Circus**

In 2002, representatives from 12 different countries, met together in La Seyne-sur-Mer in France, to take part in a round table meeting. The representatives came from very diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds yet all had one thing in common, a shared commitment to the idea that circus is an effective way to help young people in perilous situations. One of their major objectives was to choose a name for the work and practice with which they were involved, that is the bringing together of circus and

social work to assist young people at risk. They initially had some difficulties in coming to agreement, some delegates preferring the name 'community circus' and some 'circus and social work,' but eventually they all agreed on the name "social circus" (Bolton, 2004, p.168). The document they produced, which they entitled "The Charter of the Creation of the United Nations of Social Circus," states:

We, individuals and institutions representing twelve countries (Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Spain, France, Guinea, Ireland, Morocco, Holland) united on the occasion of the 'First International Round Table of Circus and Social Work' held at La Seyne-sur-Mer from 28-31 January 2002, are committed to unanimity and to a confederation of social circus. (cited in Bolton, 2004, Appendix 2, p. xxiv)

The document proclaimed that the members of the group were "dedicated to co-operating to produce social transformations using circus arts as a tool [and as] an educational instrument of emancipation and economic development ... which clearly demonstrates its potential for social change" (cited in Bolton, 2004, Appendix 2, xxiv). The charter was signed by some of the most long-standing and dedicated companies working in social circus, including Belfast Community Circus School, Chile Women's Circus, Circo Baobab, Circo Social del Sur, Cirque du Monde, Cirque Pour Tous, Clowns without Borders, El Circo del Mundo, Elleboog-Holland, La Fabrik, Los Muchachos, Payasos Sin Fronteras, Les Saltimbanques de l'Impossible, Suitcase Circus and Shems'y (Bolton, 2004, Appendix 2, p. xxiv).

There has been little written about social circus to date, and the few articles or sections of books in which it is discussed usually point to Reg Bolton, as the initiator and founder of social circus. For example, Duncan Wall, in his book, *The Ordinary Acrobat* (2013) observes that the “concept [of social circus] dates from the seventies. Reg Bolton, an Australian educator and clown, is largely considered the father of the movement” (Wall, 2013, p. 176).

Bolton created Suitcase Circus in 1975 in Edinburgh to give circus workshops to young people at risk, especially those living in the housing estates. After undertaking workshops at a circus school, Bolton said, “I was not cut out to be a great circus star... my orangutan arms would never straighten into an elegant handstand,” and he decided to teach his own form of circus in which “elegance and perfection would not be the only criteria” (cited in Glover, 2006). When he migrated to Australia with his family, he worked with thousands of young people especially in remote and rural Western Australia, and was a pioneer carrying out groundbreaking social circus work for many years. In 1983, Bolton wrote a book called *Circus in a Suitcase*, a guide to running community circus workshops that is still in use today. However, although Bolton was one of the earliest practitioners in social circus, another lineage can be uncovered dating back two decades earlier, to the 1950s, through one of the signatories of this charter, Los Muchachos or, as it translates in English, The Boys. In fact Bolton in his doctoral thesis on circus (Bolton, 2004, p. 168) himself acknowledges the groundbreaking work of Jesus Silva in setting up Los Muchachos.

### **Father Jesus Silva and Los Muchachos**

Writing about the Spanish civil war (1936-1939), the historian, Paul Preston, observes that,

Behind the lines during the Spanish Civil War, nearly 200,000 men and women were murdered extra-judicially or executed after flimsy legal process [and] perhaps as many as 200,000 men died at the battle fronts. Unknown numbers of men and women and children were killed in bombing attacks and in the exoduses that followed the occupation of territory by Franco's military forces. In all of Spain after the final victory of the rebels at the end of March 1938 approximately 20,000 Republicans were executed. Many more died of disease and malnutrition in overcrowded unhygienic prisons and concentration camps. Others died in the slave-labour conditions of work battalions. More than half a million refugees were forced into exile and many were to die of disease in French concentration camps. Several thousand were worked to death in Nazi camps. (Preston, 2011, p. 1)

As a direct result of this huge loss of life, many orphans and abandoned children continued to live on the streets in Spain for many years after the civil war ended. In 1956, Jesus Cesar Silva Mendez, a young Spanish man of twenty three, who was about to be ordained as a Jesuit priest, was so moved by the plight of the children living on the street in his home town of Orense in Spain, that he offered lodgings in his mother's house to fifteen boys. His bishop disapproved of his actions, and to signify his displeasure, threatened to cut Silva's stipend off. Nevertheless, Silva went on to convert

his mother's house into accommodation for the boys, creating dormitories, classrooms, workshops and even a gym. There they all stayed until his brother Jose Manuel, a lawyer, bought 30 acres of land outside the town and presented it to Silva. It was on this land that Silva created his City of Boys.

Father Silva has said that he was initially inspired to create his City of Boys by a movie, the 1938 Spencer Tracey film, *Boys' Town*, which had been based on the story of Father Edward Flanagan, an Irish priest who founded an orphanage for boys called Boys' Town, in Nebraska in 1917. Silva's obituary in *CathNews* states that he was also inspired by a distinctly Marxist interpretation of the Gospels (*CathNews*). Silva himself, speaking to the newspaper *Diario de Navarra* in 2009, emphasized that his motivation was the idea of "change was the fundamental element of our teaching ... The idea was to change a world that we were dissatisfied with. We said another world is possible" (cited in Grimes, 2011).

Silva established La Ciudad de los Muchachos (The City of Boys) at Benposta, near Orense in Galicia, in 1956. The City of Boys was created in order to give boys from deprived backgrounds, aged from around four to twenty, a home. Silva later set up a second centre in a 16th-century monastery at Celanova, about 20 miles away, and this housed another 300 children.

The City of Boys ran as a republic inside fascist Spain. The boys elected a mayor from amongst themselves. Other boys took on different duties as the city had its own police force, its own public health officials, financial advisers and guardians of public morals. Racial and social distinctions were not recognized and, surprisingly, attendance at Mass was not obligatory. The building materials for the city were



concrete blocks and these were used to build dormitories, classrooms and dining halls. “There was a bakery, petrol station, pottery factory, souvenir shop, supermarket, printing press and shoemaker. The city even had its own currency, into which visitors had to change whatever money they were carrying (even Spanish pesetas) in order to make purchases” (Telegraph, 2011).

The City of Boys received donations to keep it running, however, there was never enough money. Jesus Silva had extended family connections to circus via his great-uncle, Manuel Feijoo, a celebrated circus impresario “who combined with the Castilla family to create Madrid’s Circo Price and the touring Circo Americano” (Telegraph, 2011). Drawing on this heritage, Silva introduced circus classes and eventually created an International Circus School at Benposta in 1963. El Circo de Los Muchachos, the company, first went on tour in 1965, touring Spain and Portugal for more than four years. Then in 1970, the circus went on tour to France, taking more than 100 young people as artists. These tours were billed as “circus for kids performed by kids” (Grimes, 2011). After initial logistical problems, they arrived in Paris and enjoyed a massive success at the Grand Palais.

Los Muchachos later successfully toured to more than eighty countries including America, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, Russia, Mexico and Venezuela, “The highlight of every performance was the Harlequin Tower, a human pyramid with a moral message: the stronger supported the weaker, with a small child elevated to the top position” (Grimes, 2011).

With their performances in Paris over the Christmas period of 1970–71, this pioneering, inspirational work by Father Jesus Silva was seen at a seminal time in a

climate of emerging interest in circus. In the flurry of political activism and excitement emerging from the student protests and widespread political and social unrest of Paris 1968, there was renewed interest in popular forms of performance “typified by the growth of street performance, and particularly the enthusiasm for skills such as juggling, uni-cycling and fire-breathing (Mullett, 2005, p. 9). Artists from different disciplines such as radical theatre and dance started to enter circus and this led to the emergence of what is termed ‘new circus,’ which was a radical upheaval in circus occurring in the 1970s in which “the entire sector was brutally and brusquely shaken” (Jacob, 2008, p.11).

In traditional modern circus, circus skills were (and still are) closely guarded secrets usually only taught to the members of a circus family. Members of a circus family specialized in a particular set of skills and became renowned for their expertise in that field. This strong sense of family tradition became an inherent part of traditional modern circus with particular circus skills handed down through the family and usually restricted to only the family members, with children learning the particular circus skills specific to their family from a very early age.

Jesus Silva’s tours with Los Muchachos offered a different vision of circus as a form of social intervention in which circus skills were freely taught to any young people in perilous situations who wish to learn, offering them the opportunity to perform, work in a team, develop trust in others, and gain self-confidence. The process also pointed towards a new path for potential financial independence for participants.

## **The Resilient Body**

As Morelli and Lafortune point out, social circus programs often engage with young people who have experienced major trauma in their lives, with wide-ranging causes for the trauma which may include war, physical or psychological abuse, the loss of a parent or the effects of divorce within the family (Morelli and Lafortune, 2003, p. 3). Two pre-eminent theorists and practitioners in the field of trauma treatment are the French psychotherapist and author, Boris Cyrulnik, and the American psychoanalyst and writer, Peter A. Levine. I have brought together Cyrulnik and Levine's theories to describe an approach to the treatment of trauma, which I have termed the *resilient body*. This notion of the resilient body begins to provide a cogent theoretical underpinning for some of the remarkable successes achieved in social circus, initially with pioneers such as Silva and Bolton and now in social circus projects that span the globe.

Cyrulnik is responsible for developing and popularizing the theory of resilience through his writings. Although well known in France for many years, Cyrulnik's writings on resilience have only recently been translated into English (2009). Cyrulnik writes that when the term *resilience* began to be used in the social sciences its meaning extended to "the ability to succeed, to live and to develop in a positive and socially acceptable way, despite the stress or adversity that would normally involve the real possibility of a negative outcome" (Dinesen, cited in Cyrulnik, 2009, p. 5).

Cyrulnik's own experiences as a child led to his desire to help young people suffering from trauma. Boris Cyrulnik was only seven years old when both his parents were taken to Auschwitz, where they subsequently died. The family that his mother had asked to take care of him betrayed him to authorities and he was captured. He escaped

by hiding in the ceiling of a toilet block, and then managed to avoid capture by finding work on farms and acting as a runner for the Resistance. This all happened before he was taken into care at the age of 10.

After the war, whenever Cyrulnik talked about his past, his story was received with disbelief:

Nine out of ten Jewish children were killed. You didn't talk about it. It was difficult to say these things - it made me feel like a monster. People didn't believe me. It cut me in half. One part of my personality had friends and played football. The other half was silently suffering. (cited in Groskop, 2009)

Later, studying medicine at the University of Paris, Cyrulnik realized he wanted to use his own experiences, as a survivor of a traumatic childhood, to help others going through similar experiences, and he decided to become a psychoanalyst.

In *Resilience* (2009), Cyrulnik's most important point is that it is essential to challenge the way society characterizes each person who has suffered trauma. As he puts it: "A person should never be reduced to his or her trauma" (cited in Groskop, 2009). He argues that the caring professions and society generally, "have subscribed to a kind of psychological determinism in predicting the outcome for traumatized children: trauma equals suffering equals damage ... The trauma victim's fate is in danger of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy" (Forna, 2009). This is an important issue, and one that can skew the view of social workers or the people in the caring professions as, naturally, their focus tends to be on the percentage of children who

continue to have problems, rather than the ones who manage to adopt, change and integrate back into society. In this way, trauma becomes pathologized.

Cyrulnik notes that the Second World War marked a revolution in terms of child observation: “Anna Freud noticed that some children who were very damaged when she took them into Hampstead Nursery grew up to be adults who appeared to flourish” (Cyrulnik, 2009, p. 8). The idea of resilience which he promulgates, emphasizes each individual’s capacity to recover and that “suffering, however appalling, can be the making of somebody rather than their destruction - and that even children who appear to be beyond help can be saved” (Groskop, 2009). George Fischer elaborates on this point:

any extreme situation, as a life-destroying process, paradoxically contains the potential for life, at the exact point where life had broken ... the invisible spring ... makes it possible to bounce back into the trial, turning the obstacle into a springboard, turning fragility into richness, weakness into strength, and impossibilities into a set of possibilities. (Fischer, as cited Cyrulnik, 2009, p. 273)

Cyrulnik describes the resilience of survivors as paradoxical: “The pain is real, it hurts and it never stops, but it provokes defiance and not groans” (Cyrulnik, 2009 p. 67). Children who have suffered trauma often show extraordinary resilience. It was in the 1990s that the truth emerged about the children in Romania’s orphanages who had often been subjected to terrible neglect. These children were mute and would often

spend hours just rocking themselves on their beds. There was a flood of applications from the UK to adopt them. Then brain scans showed shrinkage of the cortex and ventricles of the brain. “Many of the children were felt to be beyond hope. The applications to adopt all but dried up. But, when placed with the right foster families, the cortex and ventricles of the brain swelled back to normal size” (Forna, 2009).

Cyrulnik’s position is that the greatest hindrance to the children’s recovery is the discourse that condemns them to victimhood. “The narrative or context given for suffering is what determines survival, the feeling of selfhood is shaped by the gaze of others” (Forna, 2009). Cyrulnik insists that it is of paramount importance that we understand that resilience is not a character trait; people are not born more or less resilient. He repeatedly uses the metaphor of knitting to suggest the way in which survivors can heal themselves.

Resilience is a mesh, not a substance. We are forced to knit ourselves, using the people and things we meet in our emotional and social environments. When it is all over and we can look back at our lives from heaven, we say to ourselves: ‘The things I’ve been through. I’ve come one hell of a long way. It wasn’t always an easy journey.’ (Cyrulnik, 2009, p.51)

Cyrulnik has now taken his work on resilience all over the world, and has worked with orphans in Romania, with children traumatized by genocide in Ruanda and with child soldiers in Colombia. As scholars Linda Liebenberg and Michael Unger write, one of the main strengths of resilience as a theory is that it can inform action and

“is a concept that changes our focus from the breakdown and disorder attributed to exposure to stressful environments, to the individual characteristics and social processes associated with either normal or unexpectedly positive psychosocial development” (Liebenberg and Unger, 2008, 21). Interest and research in this area continue to grow with the first international conference on resilience held in Paris in June 2012.

The other figure at the forefront of new thinking about the treatment of trauma whose work gained widespread public attention at the beginning of the 1990s is the American psychologist and therapist, Peter A. Levine. As Levine points out, the study of trauma was a field that had yet to be identified when he first examined stress during his doctorate at Berkley. He has now been writing about stress and the treatment of trauma for nearly 45 years. Levine’s key contribution to theories of trauma is to locate stress and trauma in the body, in the very fibre and tissue of the body itself.

His research is of enormous importance in building an understanding of why social circus has been so effective in helping to build resilience and aid recovery in traumatized young people. By locating trauma in the actual fibre of the body, his research focuses on the problem of embodied stress. His 1976 doctoral dissertation proposes that “the response to stress is defined as occurring sequentially in two phases, charge and discharge: When the charging (sympathetic phase) is followed by a parasympathetic discharge of equal magnitude, then pre-activation homeostasis is reestablished and the stress is said to be resolved” (Levine, 1976, p.1). If the charge phase is blocked, “the stress becomes incorporated within the organism, as a diminished adaptational capacity” (Levine, 1976, p.1). He observes that a wide range of

‘stress diseases’ “with varied symptoms and obscure aetiologies are the final–pathologic–expression of this loss in resiliency” (Levine, 1976, p.1).

In his book *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma: The Innate Capacity to Transform Overwhelming Experiences* (1997), Levine describes how an impala cornered by a cheetah will run until it knows that it cannot escape, and then freeze and drop to the ground immobile waiting for the cheetah to kill it. He says that similar stress reactions occur in humans. Traumatic symptoms are not caused by the triggering event itself. They stem from the frozen residue of energy that has not been resolved and discharged. This frozen residue of energy remains trapped in the body, in the nervous system, where it can damage bodies and cause the alarming and often bizarre symptoms of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) to develop. Describing the effect that this instinctual physiological reaction can have on people, he writes:

Let’s cut to the chase. This energy in our young impala’s nervous system as it flees from a pursuing cheetah is charged at seventy miles an hour. The moment the cheetah takes its final lunge, the impala collapses. From the outside it looks motionless and appears to be dead, but inside, its nervous system is still charged at seventy miles an hour. (Levine, 1997, p. 20)

He likens the effect on the impala’s body to an individual in a car who simultaneously hits the brake and the accelerator: The difference between the inner racing of the nervous system (engine) and the outer immobility (brake) creates a forceful turbulence within the body similar to a tornado. This tornado of energy forms



the symptoms of stress that the threatened human (or impala) must discharge to avoid becoming a victim of trauma (Levine, 1997, p. 20). The residual energy does not simply evaporate. It remains in the body, often causing the formation of a wide variety of symptoms, for example anxiety, depression, and psychosomatic and behavioral problems. “These symptoms are the organism’s way of containing (or corralling) the undischarged residual energy” (Levine, 1997, p. 20).

Levine’s theory firmly locates trauma or stress as a physiological residue left in the fabric of the body and in order for the body to be able to move on, the individual has to move into, through, and out of this trapped residue of energy in the body to return to a state of dynamic equilibrium. In a recent interview for *psychotherapy.net*, Levine takes these ideas further, recounting the story of a patient who was fundamental in helping him develop these ideas. At the time of her trauma, she felt that she could not defend herself and had lost all her power. The energy produced by the traumatic event was locked inside her body and efforts to encourage the patient to talk about her feelings only exacerbated the condition. Levine points to Bessel van der Koll’s work, a researcher into trauma who uses MRI scans. These scans show that when people are in a trauma state the front parts of their brain, in particular the area in the left cortex called Broca’s area which is responsible for speech, shuts down.

When the person is in a traumatic state, these brain regions are literally shut down, they’re literally taken offline. When the therapist encourages the client to talk about their trauma, asking questions such as, ‘Okay, so this is what happened to you. Now let’s talk about it,’ or ‘What are you feeling about that?’

the client tries to talk about it. And if they try to talk about it they become more activated. Their brainstem and limbic area go into a hyper-aroused state, which in turn shuts down Broca's area, so they really can't express in words what's going on and frustration ensues. Sometimes the therapist is pushing them more and more into the frustration. (Levine, as cited in Yalom and Yalom, 2010)

When asked what is the hardest thing for traditional therapists to learn when dealing with trauma patients, Levine replies that the most alien is to be able to work with body sensations, and that the hardest thing to understand is that the trauma needs to be released by working with the body. Levine argues:

the golden route is to be able to help people have experiences in the body that contradict those of overwhelming helplessness ... many therapists for example will recommend that their clients do things like yoga or martial arts ... when therapists are helping patients get mastery of their sensations, of their power in their body, then they are truly helping them to gain an authentic autonomy ... I know of no more direct and effective way of doing this than through the body. (Levine, as cited in Yalom and Yalom, 2010)

Social circus is a field in which Cyrulnik's and Levine's ideas on the treatment of trauma can work together and combine to form an approach to the treatment of trauma that I have termed the *resilient body*. In this approach social circus, as with yoga and martial arts, removes the need for participants to vocalize their histories and

problems. Instead social circus offers participants the opportunity to take part in a period of working with their bodies to release embodied trauma and in the process gain new physical skills and a sense of control and power over their own bodies (Levine, date).

Social circus also offers the opportunity for participants to sidestep a narrative of victimhood and through a process of re-shaping their sense of self present themselves to others in a new light and in this way find a path to resilience. Participants in social circus projects can not only show new circus skills they have learnt but are also often encouraged to have creative input into the development of performances and develop a sense of control over the context in which they present themselves to their communities (Cyrulnik, date). So in social circus, the two approaches to the treatment of trauma, Cyrulnik's and Levine's, combine to create *the resilient body*, the understanding that through working with the body to release embodied stress and sidestepping a narrative of victimhood to knit a new sense of self, a path to recovery can be found.

Moreover, importantly, social circus also starts to offer opportunities to build life-skills and a sense of connectedness with others. In an act such as pyramid-building for example, participants have to physically trust each other for the pyramid to take shape and, when learning triple trapeze, an act that involves three aerialists working together on a single trapeze, participants also have to learn to work effectively as a team. Through the process of working together and building a mutual sense of trust through diverse circus acts such as these a sense of community also begins to develop.

The resilient body and the potential for developing a sense of trust in others, combine with the potential for a new and emerging sense of community to create the core, foundational elements which would appear to underlie the remarkable success that social circus is having worldwide in assisting recovery from trauma.

### **Social circus in action**

Many different forms of social circus projects have now developed. Most of them offer a range of activities from juggling, clowning, uni-cycling and theatre games similar to those developed by Augusto Boal, to tumbling, pyramid building and aerials-working on aerial equipment such as lyra, trapeze and silks.

One early project in Rio de Janeiro (1991) was set up by an NGO, called Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha, which worked with youth who were mainly living on the street. Fosse Minha decided to try introducing the young people to some creative activities, offering workshops in drama, sports, crafts, capoeira, and circus arts but the young people were most interested in the circus troupe, Intrepide, which was invited to organize a performance on the beach.

[The] performance on the beach at Copacabana proved to be the turning point for Se Essa Rua Fosse Minha. The street kids were seen in an entirely different light. As the applause rang out, youngsters experienced the rare delight of approval. That performance validated the hunch that circus workshops could help street kids renew their self-esteem. (Dagenais, Mercier and Rivard, as cited in Bolton, 2004, p. 162)

This social circus project is an example of the power of social circus. The young people “learnt to trust their body in circus skills, and to trust other people, through learning circus skills and working with each other [which started] to change the way people saw them and also ... increase their self esteem” (Bolton, 2004, p.162).

One notable and influential social circus pioneer was Pierrot Bidon, the founder of the nomadic, new circus company Cirque Bidon in 1975, and then later founder of the anarchic, punk circus Archaos in 1985. In 1996, in Brazil, Bidon ran a series of workshops that had been initiated as a cultural exchange between Brazil and France, and these formed part of a social circus program for young people living in the favelas or shantytowns. Out of these workshops, Bidon created Circo da Madrugada, a circus company that gave the participants a platform to perform and to show what they had learnt. Bidon re-united them again in 2001 to create a street circus show called *Tombés du Ciel* based on a 500-year-old Brazilian legend that every 500 years angels descended from the skies to taste earthly pleasures. Bidon was an innovator able to break down barriers who succeeded in bringing his group of French and Brazilian circus performers together to create an unforgettable project that gave them a remarkable experience of performing internationally all over the world. Circo da Madrugada has toured the work to date to France, Belgium, Portugal, Luxembourg, Morocco, Spain, Poland, Greece, Sardinia, Estonia, England, Denmark and Columbia and a performance presented for the closing of the Festival *Bonjour India* organized by the French Cultural Institute in New Delhi in 2013.

In 1998, Bidon was invited to Guinea in Africa for an extended residency working with eight girls and twenty boys. From this project he established Circus Baobab, a touring performance company mixing aerial circus with traditional African dancing acrobatics, juggling and clowning all performed to West African music. The company toured around Guinea in 2000 and then internationally. This led to the formation of the National Acrobatic Arts Troupe of New Guinea (La Troupe Nationale d'Art Acrobatique de Guinée) that had its first European performance tour in 2001.

Felicity Simpson and her Columbian artistic partner Hector Fabio Cobo Plata have shaped another model of social circus. Originally circus performers, they created a sexy tango out of the unusual pairing of a stilt-walking act with a unicycle act. Together they toured around Europe and then to Australia in 1988 with Archaos. They eventually set up Circo para Todos or Circus for All, in Cali, Colombia, which is sometimes referred to as the most dangerous city in the world. They started giving workshops to young people from some of the shantytowns, such as Agua Blanca, with participants chosen for the workshops on the basis of perceived need rather than talent. In an interview in 2010 Simpson said that, “what we do is change the representation of these kids. The circus works as a social tool because when somebody who before maybe sniffed glue or begged on a corner is suddenly doing a double somersault, you’re not looking any more at a poor, illiterate delinquent, but you’re saying, ‘Wow, that’s a double somersault’” (cited in Sooke, 2010). Simpson argues that the circus channels the young people’s initial aggressive energy and builds up “values such as co-operation, solidarity, trust, confidence in yourself, and confidence in

other people. Learning those values, trusting in them, helps build a base for how they go out into life” (cited in Sooke, 2010).

With the help of a government grant for \$400,000, Simpson and Cobo Plata set up a professional circus school, the National Circus School of Circo Para Todos which Simpson describes as the first professional circus school for street kids. By 2010 they had over 83 graduates who had performed with the National Circus School Circus Company, CircoColombia, travelling overseas and eventually performing at the RoundHouse in London in 2010. Of these graduates twenty-four per cent “are in the best circuses in the world. They’re in Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey. They’re on the top cruise ships. Fifteen of the 83 have bought their own houses in Colombia. So the school works” (Simpson cited in Sooke, 2010).

Recently CircoColombia performed a new show *Urban* which was awarded Best Circus Show of Adelaide Fringe, had sell out shows in London, New York, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Sydney, and Buenos Aires and then was performed as part of the Brisbane Festival in September, 2013.

In Australia, the Women’s Circus began in 1991 as a project at the Footscray Arts Centre in Melbourne. It “works to teach circus skills to women who suffered domestic or sexual abuse, empowering them by helping them connect with ... their bodies in a non competitive environment” (Wall, 2013, p.177). The Women’s Circus works with a range of communities in Melbourne and in 2013 worked with refugee children helping them learn English, while they tumbled and juggled. Their work *Soar*, that premiered in December 2013, combined circus and physical performance and featured an all women cast of 20 performers. Their model of practice has been

influential and has been adopted by several other circus companies including Vulcana Women's Circus (founded in Brisbane in 1995) and POW, Performing Older Women's Circus, founded in 1995 in Footscray, Melbourne (Women's Circus).

Zip Zap Circus, a social circus company based in Cape Town South Africa, gives free circus workshops to young people wishing to learn circus skills including young people from the surrounding townships. Founded in 1992 by two trapeze artists, Brent van Rensburg and Laurence Estève, Zip Zap was set up with the vision of building towards peaceful co-existence in South Africa. The founders see social circus as a “powerful tool of social transformation” (Zip Zap Circus). Zip Zap Circus has toured all around South Africa and has undertaken 27 international tours to date.



*Zip Zap Circus, Cape Town, South Africa*

*Photograph by Gregor Rohrig*

*Image by Kind Permission of Gregor Rohrig and Zip Zap Circus*



Another major success story, which in some senses is pivotal to the widespread success of social circus, is Cirque du Monde. In the early 1990s, Cirque du Soleil decided to put one percent of its profits into developing global citizenship activities, and in particular to develop a not-for-profit organization to promote social circus through a partnership between Cirque du Soleil and Jeunesse du Monde, a Quebec based organization working with youth at risk.

In 2000, following on from five years of social circus work with Cirque du Monde, Cirque du Soleil, in association with circus schools and interested partners set up a training program for social circus instructors. The formative idea was to introduce social circus teachers and community workers to their “participative and innovative pedagogical method, to link the learning content to the community’s reality and to encourage and advocate circus arts as a tool of individual development” (Cirque du Soleil, Homepage). This program has trained more than 2000 participants from 25 countries in social circus instructor training programs. (In Cirque du Monde parlance, the *instructors* are teachers, and the *trainers* are teacher trainers) (Burt, 2012). Cirque du Soleil has recently also been actively involved in developing the *Instructor in Circus Arts* training program at the National Circus School in Montreal and this includes a 60 hour course component on the teaching of social circus (Cirque du Soleil, Homepage).

Cirque du Monde has an extensive reach. As well as training social circus instructors and trainers, it currently is involved in social circus projects running in over 80 communities in 25 countries worldwide, from North America, to Africa, to South America, to the Mongolian Steppes (Cirque du Soleil, Homepage).

One of Cirque du Monde's major focuses is attracting partners such as government bodies and NGOs in order to enable social circus to take place as ongoing programs rather than simply one-off projects. One of these programs is in the far north of Quebec, in Nunavik, working with Inuit youth at risk in remote communities. The program called Cirqiniq, is now ongoing and is run by the Katavik Regional Government in partnership with Cirque du Monde. Cirqiniq brings in Cirque du Monde trained instructors and trainers several times a year to work with young people in small, isolated Inuit communities, some of which have a total of only a few hundred inhabitants. In June each year up to 60 of these young people come together for a central summer workshop usually held in the main town, Kuujjuaq. This is a major event for these young people who are flown in by light aircraft from remote communities, many of which are not connected by road and are often cut off completely by ice and snow, to meet young people from other isolated communities across Nunavik. These young people camp and sleep in the local school gym and the atmosphere and the excitement is an important experience for these young people who normally live in such small and isolated communities, giving them the opportunity to form friendships with young people from other communities. They work on circus skills everyday and at the end of the period they put on a show. There is a circus parade through the town, which culminates with a show complete with stage lights and full make-up, with costumes supplied by Cirque du Soleil. The show is usually attended by over 500 local people-roughly twenty percent of the population of Kuujjuaq. These performances offer a chance for the young people to present themselves in a positive light to the community, through working together as a team and achieving

extraordinary things. The aim is to train some of the older Inuit youth to take over the teaching and instructing in the periods when the Cirque du Monde instructors are not present, and this is starting to be realized in a number of communities. The young Inuit instructors have also recently performed together as a small circus company, which has given performances in several local festivals (Burt, 2012).

There is not one perfect model for a social circus project since projects vary enormously in response to the needs of the participants. Courses are also to a large extent shaped by the interests and skills of the instructors running them, with some social circuses now including performance text, parkour, dance, video shooting and editing and the development of sound scores and/or music for the performances. While some projects may result in large and clearly successful performance outcomes, others, that may be low-key and not have such a high profile or such visible outcomes, still demonstrate enormous long term social benefits for participants, in terms of building self-confidence and developing the ability to work in a team and to trust others.

Now, at any one time, there are literally hundreds of social circus projects operating across six continents. An online map developed by Cirque du Soleil has been developed which is starting to chart the scope of all the social circus projects occurring across the world. This map can be accessed online at [apps.cirquedusoleil.com/social-circus-map/](http://apps.cirquedusoleil.com/social-circus-map/).

One of the most startling recent take-ups of social circus has occurred in Ecuador. In 2011, the Vice President of Ecuador attended a Cirque du Soleil performance in Montreal. When he learnt of the Cirque du Monde social circus program he decided to implement “a nation-wide social circus program, organized and

funded through his vice-presidency office. This flagship program is what he dubbed ‘Sonrie Ecuador’ (Smile, Ecuador) (Spiegel et al, 2014, p 1). This government-sponsored program reaches almost 25,000 people annually with the aim of promoting social inclusion. Programs are currently offered to children in marginalized communities, to adults with disabilities and to young people living on the streets. Millions of dollars have been invested on the physical infrastructure and the delivery of the program (Spiegel et al, 2014, p. 5).

Since the program began, the Ecuadorean government has committed to building fully equipped big tents in the Andes (Quito, Cuenca, Loja), along the coast (Guayaquil and Manta) and in the Amazon (Tena), and has already launched programs that have reached tens of thousands of people. The sheer numbers involved – 24,699 participants in a one-year period – 9,700 at day-long “Open Circus” events and over 1000 participants who completed full-scale social circus programs – make this certainly one of the world’s largest social circus programs. (Spiegel et al., 2014, p. 2)

Social circus is also starting to emerge as a burgeoning area of academic research. It forms a strand of the new five-year, multi-university research partnership investigating social arts that is based out of the International Centre for Art for Social Change (ICASC) at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada, which has been supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (ICASC). The social circus strand of this research has the aim of assessing how “social

circus projects with youth at risk propose new ways of working that build self-esteem, material skills and ethical and aesthetic sensibilities” (ICASC Homepage).

The continuing growth of interest in social circus is indicative of its ability to act as a uniquely empowering agent of social intervention and transformation, and is strong testament to the power of the resilient body. It is extraordinary to think that this growing network of social circus activity around the globe can be traced back to the confluence of social conscience and family circus heritage that came together in one person, the remarkable Father Jesus Silva.

## THESIS CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to seek answers to the question: What knowledge of circus phenomena, temporal, spatial and/or perceptual might be uncovered by investigations into a diverse range of circus bodies?

This thesis uncovered a body of new knowledge of different phenomena in circus through exploring the genre through the lens of different bodies.

In the section *The Relational Body*, two important elements in circus performance were investigated. These were the spectator and the performance space.

In Part 1 of the first chapter in this section, *The Political Body*, the performed representations of political convictions presented by new circus performers in both their alternative lifestyle and radical performance were discussed. In Part 2, the phenomenon of the active spectator was sighted as being vital in decoding the resonances of contemporary circus work, especially contemporary circus work that can be read as a hybrid of circus and performance art. A new approach to the reading of contemporary circus works was proposed that draws from the methods used to decipher performance art work. Three key stratagems were proposed:

- The necessity for spectators to become actively engaged in decoding the metaphorical, political and poetic resonances of a circus work even when they exceed what the performer originally intended. This allows multiple resonances to come into play that bring greater complexity and depth to the work.

- A focus on reading the body of the performer in terms of embodied protest. Two histories underlying this idea of performance as embodied process were sighted and their relationship to the ideas of Henry David Thoreau was traced, in particular to his essay “Civil Disobedience” (1849).
- The importance of materiality and an investigation into the materials chosen by the performer and the metaphorical resonances implicit within them in order to bring depth and resonance to the work.

It was posited that the engaged spectator can bring new phenomena in circus performances to light, and can add greater layers of depth and meaning in the work by actively decoding political, metaphorical, and poetic resonances both in the embodied protest of the performer and in the materiality of the materials present in the performance.

In the second chapter of this section, *The Body of Space*, circus was positioned as a dynamic innovator in the development of performance spaces. These circus performance spaces were shown to have fundamentally changed the performance relationships between performers and audience and to have led to the emergence of new performance aesthetics. For example, the innovation of the three-ring circus was indicated as an initiator of the key aesthetic of bricolage, collage and simultaneity that became so dominant in 20<sup>th</sup> century theatre, performance art, and happenings. In terms of immersive circus, the Argentine circus group De La Guarda, and the Catalan circus groups Els Commediants and La Fura dels Baus were positioned as being unacknowledged forerunners of the contemporary wave of immersive theatre and performance. This chapter gave new insights into circus as an important innovator in

the development of new approaches to the performance space and the resultant development of radically new performance aesthetics that have had, and continue to have, a profound influence in the field of both performance and visual arts.

In the section *The Body of Zoosis* two different species of animals and the phenomenon of their history within circus acts were examined: horses and wild cats.

In *The Body of the Horse*, the horse was shown to have been pivotal to the early development of circus and central to the development of much of the iconic imagery of circus including the ring and the ringmaster. The social centrality of the horse, as both a weapon and a source of agricultural and industrial power, was linked to the lasting success of circus.

Modern circus often represented horses as Romantic beings of embodied passion and energy in stark contrast to the contemporaneous Rationalist view of horses as weapons, sources of agricultural and industrial power, and a means of transport. The dramatic decline in popularity of modern circus in the first decades of the twentieth century was shown to parallel the loss of social and cultural centrality of the horse, with the horse losing its potency both as a symbol and source of power and as an important weapon at this point in time. The question is asked whether in this context the contemporary Quebec horse circuses can have any relevance or whether these horse circuses are in fact an anachronism and are simply simulacra of earlier circuses and have now lost all meaning and context.

In *The Wild Body*, a focus on the phenomenon of big cat acts revealed that they were a late addition to modern circus, and that they substantially changed over time in



response to social and cultural conditions. Different representations of the big cats in the ring were traced, as were both the growing opposition to the big cat acts and the developing interest in the rights of animals. The new wild cat acts which developed in response to this public opposition aimed to appease animal rights concerns through the representation of the trainer as a teacher and the big cats as pupils, and new rhetoric developed representing circuses as ‘cross species families’ and ‘conservation arks.’

The section *The Hegemonic Body* focused on sighting and making visible the normally invisible norms constraining the bodies of human performers in contemporary circus arts.

The first chapter in this section, *Extraordinary Bodies*, explored the history of the display of Freaks within Victorian circus. This leads to an engagement with the question of the contemporary absence of differently abled or differently embodied people within contemporary circus within the context of this history. The meme of crip-face or crip-drag, in which the physical mannerisms of the differently abled are adopted by the abled in performance, is identified and discussed in relation to contemporary circus works. The importance of agency in the inclusion of the differently abled in performance is indicated. Examples from different disciplines are explored especially in contemporary dance and also with disabled activists working across the nexus of visual arts, performance and fashion. The emergence of the recent phenomenon of contemporary circus companies working to integrate disabled and abled performers is sighted in England and in Australia.

The next chapter, *The Exceptional Body*, examined the phenomenon of the increasingly reductive aesthetic parameters for circus performers. The changes in the bodies visible in circus are pursued from the familial body of early modern circus, to the exceptional body of the professional athlete in late Victorian circus, through to the current emphasis on what I have termed ‘the idealized exceptional body,’ namely the circus performer who emerges as a professional athlete who is also young and telegenic. The emergence of this kind of body was described and delineated within contemporary circus and then questioned in relation to a parallel discussion happening in contemporary ballet. The unwitting role of circus schools in re-enforcing this narrowing of body aesthetics in contemporary circus was examined. This occurs through the schools’ role in the selection of athletes, which is often consciously or subconsciously affected by the branding and marketing imperatives of circus companies offering employment to graduates.

In the final chapter in this section, *The Unmarked Body*, the phenomenon of the relative absence of African American performers in contemporary North American circus was sighted, as was the absence of African Americans in the grand narratives of circus. In response to this perceived absence, the history of African Americans in North American Circus was researched and pieced together from diverse sources. This led to the re-emergence of a parallel history of circus that had previously been ignored and omitted from the histories of circus. This new narrative is now repositioned as an important strand in the histories of North American circus.

The section entitled *The Processual Body* focused on another overlooked part of the circus grand narrative, namely the social importance of workshops and the practice of circus rather than the actual performance of it.

The chapter in this section, *The Resilient Body*, explored social circus. The beginnings of social circus are usually ascribed to the work of Reg Bolton in Australia in the 1970s, but my research followed its origins back twenty years earlier to Spain after the civil war in the 1950s. The Spanish Jesuit priest Father Jesus Silva would seem to be the original founder of social circus when he began circus classes for orphaned and abandoned boys and went on to found a circus company with them called Los Muchachos. I investigated and brought together two theories on the successful treatment of trauma to create *The Resilient Body*, a theoretical underpinning which provides some context and points of reference to further the critical discourse surrounding the idea of social intervention in the form of circus.

## **Recommendations for Further Research**

### **Cirque du Soleil**

Although not touched on in this thesis, the representation of the body in Cirque du Soleil performances is an important subject for future circus studies research.

### **Social Circus**

There is the need for research to catch up with, and keep pace with, the rapid spread of social circus. Investigations into social circus in action are required as each organization has its own structure and often has developed its own philosophy and objectives.

### **Immersive Circus**

Research work remains to be done analyzing 7 Fingers' New York collaboration *Queen of the Night* that has been undertaken with a number of the same people who brought Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More* to New York. Cirque du Soleil is also in the process of developing a new Mexican permanent show based on immersive space and technologies, and the development of the immersive aesthetic and the emerging performance bodies within these two works would provide interesting scope for further research.

### **Diverse Other Bodies in Circus**

I am looking forward to investigating *The Feral Body in Circus* in relation to festivals and events such as Burning Man that takes place in the deserts in Northern Nevada in the USA, also *The Burlesque Body in Circus*, and *The Magic Body in Circus* amongst others.

## Bibliography

- AAP. (2013). "10,000 wild horses to be culled in NT." *The Australian*. Retrieved September 8, 2013 from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/.../wild-horses.../story-fn3dxiwe-122664854821...>
- Abbott, L. and Seroff, D. (2007). *Ragged but Right: Black Travelling Shows, "Coon Songs," and the Dark Pathway to Blues and Jazz*. Oxford, MS, USA: University Press of Mississippi.
- Acker, K. (1995). "The End of the World of White Men." J. Halberstam and I. Livingston (Eds.). *Posthuman Bodies*. (p. 51-72). Bloomington, Indiana, USA: Indiana University Press.
- Acrobat. (2007). "Smaller, Poorer, Cheaper." Retrieved September 3, 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgNfRWKCPzg>
- Adams, B. (1996). "A Stupendous Mirror of Departed Empires: The Barnum Hippodromes and Circuses 1874-1891." *American Literary History*, 8 (1), (p. 34-56)
- Adams, B. (1997). *E Pluribus Barnum: The Great Showman and the Making of U.S. Popular Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Adams, C. J. (2006). "An Animal Manifesto: Gender, Identity and Vegan-Feminism in the Twenty-First Century." *Parallax*, 38 (Jan-Mar 2006), (p. 120-128).
- Adams, K. H. and Keene, M. L. (2012). *Women of the American Circus, 1880-1940*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company.
- Adams, R. (2001). *Sideshow U.S.A.: Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Adams, R. (2012). "Disability and the Circus." In V. Rosner and G. Pratt (Eds.), *The History of Circus in America* (p. 105-115). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Agnew, J. (2011). *Entertainment in the Old West: Theater, Music, Circuses, Medicine Shows, Prizefighting and Other Popular Amusements*. Jefferson, NC, USA: McFarland and Company.
- Albecht, E. (1995). *The New American Circus*. Florida: University Press of Florida.
- Albrecht, E. (2006). *The Contemporary Circus: Art of the Spectacular*. Maryland: Scarecrow Press Inc.
- Alston, A. (2013). "Audience Participation and Neoliberal Value: Risk, Agency and Responsibility in Immersive Theatre." *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 18(2), (p. 128-138).
- American Association of Equine Practitioners. (2013). "Definition of Horses as Livestock." *The Horse: Your Guide to Equine Health Care*. Retrieved November 10, 2012 from <http://www.thehorse.com/articles/10520/definition-of-horses-as-livestock>
- American Social History Project (2013) *The Lost Museum: The Joice Heth Archive* Retrieved 3 November, 2013, from <http://www.lostmuseum.cuny.edu/home.html>
- Animals Australia. (2012). "Exotic Animal Circuses." Retrieved October 23, 2012, from <http://www.animalsaustralia.org/issues/circuses.php>

- Archaos. (2011). "Archaos, Cirque de Caractère." *Archaos Archive*. Retrieved November 17, 2011 from <http://www.archaos.info/>
- Armesto, F. (2006). *Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration*: WW Norton and Company.
- Armstrong, P. (2002). "The Postcolonial Animal." *Society and Animals*, 10 (4). (p. 413-419).
- Arrighi, Gillian.(2012) "The Circus and Modernity: A Commitment to 'the Newer' and 'the Newest.'" *Early Popular Visual Culture*. Vol 10.2.
- Arnold, P. C., Ruby. (1963). "The Artaud Experiment." *The Tulane Drama Review*, 8 (2), (p. 15-29).
- Arsenault, R. (2011). "Shades of White." *The New York Times*. Retrieved October 10, 2013 from [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/books/review/Arsenault-t.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/books/review/Arsenault-t.html?_r=0)
- Artaud, A. (Writer). (1948). *To Have Done with the Judgement of God*. Retrieved November 11, 2012 from <http://www.surrealism-plays.com/Artaud.html>
- Artaud, A. (1994). *The Theatre and its Double*. New York: Grove Press.
- Assael, B. (1998). *The Circus and Respectable Society in Victorian Britain*. (Doctoral Thesis). University of Toronto, Toronto. Retrieved September 8, 2012 from [http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/tape17/PQDD\\_0026/NQ33892.pdf](http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/tape17/PQDD_0026/NQ33892.pdf)
- Assael, B. (2005). *The Circus and Victorian Society*: University of Virginia Press.
- Auslander, P. (1999). *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Babinski, T. (2004). *Cirque du Soleil: 20 Years under the Sun*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.
- Bailey, P. and Moody, J. (2002). "Illegitimate Theatre in London." 1770-1840. *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 34 (2), (p. 325-326).
- Baker, S. (2002). "What Does Becoming-Animal Look Like?" In N. Rothfels (Ed.), *Representing Animals* (p. 67-98). Bloomington, IN, USA: Indiana University Press.
- Bank, R. K. (1993). "Staging the "Native: Making History in American Theatre Culture." *Theatre Journal*, 45 (4), (p. 461-486).
- Bank, R. K. (2007). "Representing History: Performing the Columbian Exposition". In J. G. Reinelt and J. R. Roach (Eds.), *Critical Theory and Performance* (p. 596). Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.
- Barcelona-Dance-House. (2013). "Cirque Ici - Johann Le Guillerm." Retrieved September 3, 2013, from <http://mercatflors.cat/en/espectacle/secret-3/>
- Barnes, J. E. (2000). "Circus Acts for the Streetwise; Universoul Aims to Inspire Urban Audiences." *New York Times*. Retrieved October 6, 2012 from <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/27/nyregion/circus-acts-for-the-streetwise-universoul-aims-to-inspire-urban-audiences.html>
- Barnum, P. T. (1904). *Lion Jack—A Story of Perilous Adventure among Wild Men*, New York: The Platt and Nourse Company
- Barnum, P. T. (1930). *Struggles and Triumphs*. New York: MacMillan.

- Barnum, P. T. (2005). *The Colossal P.T. Barnum Reader: Nothing Else Like it in the Universe*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Barron, J. (1997). "Annie Fratellini, 64, Clown and Founder of School Dies." *The New York Times*. Retrieved January 20, 2012 from <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/07/04/arts/annie-fratellini-64-clown-and-founder-of-school-dies.html>
- Barry, K. (2010). "This Day in Tech - Events That Shaped the Wired World May 10, 1869: Golden Spike Links Nation by Rail." *WIRED Online*. Retrieved March 3, 2012 from <http://archive.wired.com/thisdayintech/>
- Barthelme, D. (1997). *Not-Knowing: The Essays and Interviews of Donald Barthelme*. New York: Random House.
- Barthes, R. (1973). *Mythologies*. (A. Lavers, Trans.). London: Paladin Grafton.
- Batson, C. (2012). "Multiplying Testimonials, Authenticity, and Individuality in Sept Doigts de la Main's Circuit Shows." Working Group on Circus Archive of Papers, Montreal.
- Baudrillard, J and Beitchman, P. (1983) *Simulations*. USA: Semiotexte.
- Baugh, C. (2007). "Scenography and Technology." In J. Moody and D. O'Quinn (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre 1730-1830*, (p. 43-55). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beissbath, E. and Turner, J. (Ed.). (1997). *Leaping off the Edge*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press.
- Bemel, A. (1977). *Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty*. Bodmin, Cornwall: MPG Books.
- Benjamin, W. (1969). "Theses on the Philosophy of History." *Illuminations 1940* (H. Zohn, Trans.). New York: Schocken Books.
- Berger, J. (1971). Animal World. *New Society*, 18, (p. 1042- 1043).
- Berger, J. (1980). "Why Look at Animals?" *About Looking*, (p. 3-28). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Best, S. (2012). "Zoos and the End of Nature." Retrieved July 3, 2013 from <http://www.drstevebest.org/ZoosAndTheEnd.htm>
- Bhabha, H. K. (1998). "The White Stuff (Political Aspect of Whiteness)." *Artforum International*, 36 (9), (p. 21-23).
- Bhawsar, B. (2011). "Step Up Circus Training Day 9." Retrieved March 12, 2012 from <http://tamashablog.wordpress.com/category/tamasha-developing-artists/step-up-circus-training/>
- Birke, L. (2002). "Intimate Familiarities? Feminism and Human-Animal Studies." *Society and Animals*, 10 (4), (p. 429-436).
- Birke, L. (2010). "War Horse." *Humanalia: A Journal of Human/Animal Interface Studies*, 1(2). Retrieved October 11, 2012 from <http://www.depauw.edu/humanalia/>
- Black, J. D. (2002). *Politics of Enchantment: Romanticism, Media and Cultural Studies*. Waterloo, ON, Canada: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- Black, O. (2013) "History of Wimmin's Circus: Melbourne 1979-1981 -Active Feminism or Feminist Activists." Retrieved December 7, 2013 from <http://womenscircus.org.au/index.php/circus-community/the-first-womens-circus-in-the-world/>

- Black Profiles. (2013). "Entrepreneurs and Executives: Cedric Walker." Retrieved November 2, 2013, from <http://www.blackentrepreneurprofile.com/profile-full/article/cedric-walker/>
- Blackman, L. (2008). *The Body: The Key Concepts*. Oxford: Berg.
- Bogdan, R. (1988). *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bolton, G. (Ed.). (1990). *The Middle Way 1942-1995* (Vol. 5). Oxford: Oxford University Press Australia.
- Bolton, R. (1986). *New Circus*. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.
- Bolton, R. (2004). *Why Circus Works: How the Values and Structures of Circus Make it a Significant Developmental Experience for Young People*. Doctoral Thesis, Murdoch University, Western Australia. Retrieved January 9, 2012 from [http://www.regbolton.org/circus\\_library/PHD-Extract.pdf](http://www.regbolton.org/circus_library/PHD-Extract.pdf)
- Bordo, S. (2003). *Unbearable Weight, Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Borges, J. L. (1974). *The Book of Imaginary Beings*. New York: Penguin.
- Borges, J. L. (1993). "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins" (R. L. Simms, Trans.) *Other Inquisitions 1937-1942*. (p. 101-105). Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Borkowski, M. (2010). "Pierrot Bidon Obituary: Archaos Founder Who Reinvented Circus as an Edgy Art Form for the Industrial World." *guardian.co.uk*. Retrieved August 10, 2012 from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2010/mar/21/pierrot-bidon-obituary>
- Borkowski, M. (2010). "Remembering Pierrot Bidon Part 1,2,3,4." Retrieved August 10, 2012 from <http://www.markborkowski.co.uk/remembering-pierrot-bidon-part-one/>
- Bouissac, P. (1985). *Circus and Culture: A Semiotic Approach*. Boston and London: University Press of America.
- Bouissac, P. (2006). *Timeless Circus in Times of Change: A Canadian Perspective.* Fabulous Risk: Danger and Performance in Circus and Sideshow. University of Wollongong Conference, Australia. Retrieved August 8, 2012 from <http://www.semioticon.com/virtuals/circus/circus%20bodies.pdf>
- Bourdieu, Pierre. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Trans R. Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Bown, S. R. (2004). *How a Surgeon, a Mariner and a Gentleman Discovered the Greatest Medical Mystery of the Age of Sail*: Thomas Dunne Books.
- Boyd, A. and Duncomb, S. (2004). "The Manufacture of Dissent: What the Left Can Learn from Las Vegas." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest*. Issue 3. (p.n/a.) Retrieved August 17, 2012 from <http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org/new3/duncombeboyd.html>
- Boyd, M. C. (2006). "Performance Art: Recreation or Emulation." *Theory Now*. Retrieved July 27, 2012 from <http://theorynow.blogspot.com/2006/10/performance-artrecreation-or-emulation.html>
- Broadway, S. (1999). "Circus Oz -The First Seven Years: A Memoir" *Australasian Drama Studies*, Issue 35, (p. 172-183)



- Bradna, F. (1952). *The Big Top*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Bratton, J. (2007). "What is a Play? Drama and the Victorian Circus." In Davis, T and Holland, P. (Eds.), *The Performing Century: Nineteenth-Century Theatre's History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (p. 250-262)
- Bratton, J. (2007). "Romantic Melodrama". In Moody, J. and O'Quinn, D. (Eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730-1830*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (p. 115-128)
- Brereton, J. M. (1976). *The Horse in War*. Newton Abbot, GBR: David and Charles PLC.
- Bristol, M. (1985). *Carnival and Theatre*. London and New York: Methuen.
- Brooks, D. A. (2006). *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performance of Race and Freedom 1850 – 1910*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Brown, M. R. (2007). "Miss Lala's Teeth: Reflections on Degas and 'Race.'" *The Art Bulletin*, 4. (p. 738-765).
- Brownfield, P. (2000, 9 July). "It's Not Just 'Tonight.' It's Every Night." *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved November 25, 2012 from <http://articles.latimes.com/2000/jul/09/entertainment/ca-49890/2>
- Browning, F. (2012). "The Human Zoo: Invention of the Savage." February 7, 2013 Retrieved from [www.huffingtonpost.com/.../the-human-zoo-invention-o\\_b\\_1253952.ht...](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/.../the-human-zoo-invention-o_b_1253952.ht...)
- Burgess, H. (1974). "The Classification of Circus Techniques." *The Drama Review TDR*, 18 (1) (Popular Entertainment), (p. 65-70)
- Burns, L. (2003). *Through the Front Door to the Backyard: Linguistic Variation of the American Circus*. Doctoral Thesis: Illinois State University. Retrieved March 27, 2012 [http://soa.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/anthro\\_theses/linguistic\\_variation\\_of\\_the\\_american\\_circus.pdf](http://soa.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/anthro_theses/linguistic_variation_of_the_american_circus.pdf)
- Burt, R. (1995). *The Male Dancer: Bodies, Spectacle, Sexualities*. London: Routledge.
- Burt, J. (2012) Personal communication with the author
- Cain, William E. (2000). *A Historical Guide to Henry David Thoreau*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Calarco, M. (2008). *The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Campbell, P. (1996). "Interpretations and Issues." In P. Campbell (Ed.), *Analysing Performance, A Critical Reader*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Cannon, J. and St. Leon, M. (1997). "Take a Drum and Beat it, the Story of the Astonishing Ashtons 1848 - 1990s." Kensington: Tyheleigh Press.
- Carlson, M. (2004). "The Angel Project (Review)" *Theatre Journal*, 56 (1). (p. 125-127).
- Carmeli, Y. S. (1987). "Why does the 'Jimmy Brown's Circus' Travel: A Semiotic Approach to the Analysis of Circus Ecology." *Poetics Today*, 8 (2) (p. 219-244).
- Carmeli, Y. S. (1988). "Wee Pea: The Total Play of the Dwarf in the Circus." *TDR*, 33 (4 Winter) (p. 128-145).
- Carmeli, Y. S. (1990). "Performing the 'Real' and 'Impossible' in the British

- Travelling Circus.” *Semiotica*, 8 0 (3/4) (p. 193-220).
- Carmeli, Y. S. (1991). “Performance and Family in the World of the British Circus.” *Semiotica*, 85 (3/4) (p. 275-289).
- Carpenter, K. J. (1986). *The History of Scurvy and Vitamin C*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carr, C. (1993). *On Edge: Performance at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Connecticut, USA: Wesleyan University Press
- Carroll, J. (2007). “Jon Carroll.” *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved September 3, 2012 from <http://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/carroll/article/JON-CARROLL-2649162.php>
- Carter, A. (1996). “Bodies of Knowledge: Dance and Feminism.” In P. Campbell (Ed.), *Analysing Performance: A Critical Reader*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- Castricano, J. (2008). “Introduction.” In J. Castricano (Ed.), *Animal Subjects: An Ethical Reader in a Posthuman World*. Waterloo, ON, CAN: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- CathNews. (2011).” Spanish Boys Town Founder Jesus Silva.” *CathNews: A Service of Church Resources*. Retrieved May 12, 2012 <http://www.cathnews.com/archives/cn-perspectives-archive/2710-spanish-boys-town-founder-jesus-silva>
- Cavalia. (2012). “Cavalia” Retrieved March 10, 2012 from [www.cavalia.net](http://www.cavalia.net)
- Cavendish, D. (2013). | “Punchdrunk: Plunge into a World of Extraordinary Theatre.” *The Telegraph*. Retrieved July 27, 2013 from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-features/10127892/Punchdrunk-plunge-into-a-world-of-extraordinary-theatre.html>
- Chappell, K. (1996). “Circus with Soul.” *Ebony*. (p.69-70.) Retrieved June 10, 2013 from [http://books.google.com.au/books?id=6psMpxC-2oMC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=circus%20with%20soul&f=false](http://books.google.com.au/books?id=6psMpxC-2oMC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=circus%20with%20soul&f=false)
- Chaudhuri, U. (1995). *Staging Place: The Geography of Modern Drama*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press
- Chaudhuri, U. (2007). “(De)Facing the Animals.” *TDR: The Drama Review, Vol 51, No. 1, (T193)*, (p. 8-20)
- Chinn, S. E. (2000). *Technology and the Logic of American Racism: A Cultural History of the Body as Evidence*. London: Continuum International Publishing.
- Chris, C. (2006). *Watching Wildlife*. Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press.
- Chrisafis, A. (2011). “Paris Show Unveils Life in Human Zoo.” *The Guardian*, Retrieved September 7, 2012 from <http://www.guardian.co.uk>
- Circus Flora. (2013). “The St. Louis Arches.” Retrieved November 5, 2013 from [http://www.circusflora.org/people/bio/the\\_st\\_louis\\_arches/](http://www.circusflora.org/people/bio/the_st_louis_arches/)
- Cirque du Soleil. (2013). “Global Citizenship.” Retrieved June 30, 2013 from <http://www.cirquedusoleil.com/en/about/global-citizenship/social-circus/cirque-du-monde.aspx>

- Cirque du Soleil b). (2013). "Zumanity." Retrieved May 30, 2013 from <http://www.cirquedusoleil.com/en/help/shows/zumanity.aspx#faqAccordion1>
- Clair, C. (1968). *Human Curiosities*. New York: Abelard-Schuman.
- Clairval, G. (2009). "A Tightrope Poet of the Impossible." *Ecstatic Days*. Retrieved January 13, 2012, from <http://www.jeffvandermeer.com/2009/12/06/a-tightrope-poet-of-the-impossible/>
- Clark, T. (Fall 2005). "There's No Falling Down on This Job: The World Famous Circus High-Wire Aerialists, The Flying Wallendas" *FBQ: Family Business Quarterly*, 15 (4), (p. 3-5).
- Concannon, Kevin. "Yoko Ono's CUT PIECE: From Text to Performance and Back Again." 27 April 2014. < <http://imaginepeace.com/archives/2680>>.
- Cook, J. W. (2005). "Introduction: The Architect of the Modern Culture Industry." In J. W. Cook (Ed.), *The Colossal P.T. Barnum Reader: Nothing Else Like it in the Universe* (p. 1-8). Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Cook, J. W. (2008). "Antebellum Cultural History." In K. Halttunen (Ed.). *A Companion to American Cultural History* (p. 65-79). Malden, M.A.: Blackwell Publishing.
- Copeland, M. W. (2004). "Review of Malamud, Randy, Poetic Animals and Animal Souls." *H-Net*. Retrieved March 9, 2013 from <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=9080>
- Copeland, R. (2002). "Merce Cunningham and the Aesthetic of Collage." *The Drama Review*, 46 (1), T173, (p.11-28).
- Copeland, R. (2004). *Merce Cunningham: The Modernizing of Modern Dance*. New York, Routledge.
- Corbey, R. (1993). "Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930." *Cultural Anthropology*, 8 (3), (p. 338-369).
- Coté, Chantal. (2003) Public Relations Letter written to CircusNow from Cirque du Soleil. Retrieved 16 October 2014. <<http://circusnews.com/?p=307> .
- Cottle, G. (2010). "Pierrot Bidon: Creator of Archaos and a Pioneer of New Circus." *Independent*. Retrieved March 26, 2012 from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/pierrot-bidon-creator-of-archaos-and-a-pioneer-of-the-new-circus-1932782.html>
- Cotter, H. "Allan Kaprow, Creator of Artistic Happenings Dies at 78." *New York Times* (2006) 12 September 2012 <[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/10/arts/design/10kaprow.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/10/arts/design/10kaprow.html?_r=0)>
- Croft-Cooke, R. (1976). *Circus: A World History*. New York: Macmillan.
- Croggon, A. (2011). "Perth Festival: Donka: A Letter to Tchekov, The Red Shoes." Retrieved September 20, 2012 from [theatrenotes.blogspot.com/.../perth-festival-donka-letter-to-chekhov.html](http://theatrenotes.blogspot.com/.../perth-festival-donka-letter-to-chekhov.html)
- Cyrulnik, B. (2009). *Resilience: How Your Inner Strength Can Set You Free From the Past*. Trans. David Macey. London: Penguin.
- Dalbourg, V. (2010). "Absurd and Exciting New Circus." *Circostrada Network (Arts Writers and Circus Arts 2 Focus on Circus Bodies)*. Retrieved July 17, 2013 from

- <http://www.circostrada.org/IMG/file/PUBLICATIONS/Arts%20Writers%200&%20Circus%20Arts%202%20-%20BD.pdf>
- Davies, G. (2000). "Virtual Animals in Electronic Zoos: The Changing Geographies of Animals Capture and Display." In Philo, C. and Wilbert, C. (Eds.), *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places*, (p. 325). Florence, KY, USA: Routledge.
- Davis, F. J. (1991). *Who is Black? One Nation's Definition*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Davis, J. M. (1998). "*Instruct the Minds of All Classes: The Circus and American Culture at the Turn of the Century*." (Dissertation) (PhD). University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- Davis, J. M. (2002). *The Circus Age: Culture and Society under the American Big Top*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press.
- Davis, J. M. (2003). "Review: Freakishly, Fraudulently Modern." *American Quarterly*, 55 (3), (p. 525-538).
- Davis, J. M. (2011). "Bearded Ladies, Dainty Amazons, Hindu Fakirs and Lady Savages: Circus Representations of Gender and Race in Victorian America." In K. Spangenberg and D. Walk (Eds.), *The Amazing American Circus Poster* (p. 75-84). Cincinnati and Sarasota: Cincinnati Art Museum and the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.
- de Laurentis, T. (1981). "Futurism : A Postmodern View." *QUADERNI d'Italianistica*, 11 (2), (p. 143-157).
- Dean, C. L. (1899). "*Official Guide: Book of Marvels in the Barnum and Bailey Greatest Show on Earth*." N.p.: Barnum and Bailey.
- Degerbol, S. (2009). "The Rage of the Elements." *Circostrada Network (Arts Writers and Circus Art, 2 Focus on Circus Bodies)*. Retrieved July 17, 2013 from <http://www.circostrada.org/IMG/file/PUBLICATIONS/Arts%20Writers%200&%20Circus%20Arts%202%20-%20BD.pdf>
- Dellarosa, F. (2012). "British Theatrical Culture 1760s - 1830s." Retrieved July 13, 2013 from [http://www.uniba.it/ricerca/.../d.../dellarosa\\_letteratura\\_I\\_2012-13.ppt3.pdf](http://www.uniba.it/ricerca/.../d.../dellarosa_letteratura_I_2012-13.ppt3.pdf)
- Demoraine, H. (2009). "Funambulus Rope Walker and Equilibrists." *The Blondin Memorial Website*. Retrieved July 20, 2012, from <http://www.blondinmemorialtrust.com/>
- Demoraine, H. (1989). *The Tightrope Walker*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- Derrida, J. (2004). *The Animal that Therefore I am*. (Trans., Wills, D.) New York: Fordham University Press.
- Dfening, F. D. (1971). The Frontier and The Circus. *Bandwagon*. (p. 16-20).
- Diamond, E. (2000). "Performance and Cultural Politics." In Goodman, L and de Gay, J. (Ed.), *Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance*. (p. 66-69) London: Routledge.
- Diamond, J. (1992). "The Broadest Pattern of Human History." Paper presented at *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*. Retrieved October 30, 2012 from <http://www.tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/documents/Diamond93.pdf>
- Diamond, J. (1997). *Guns Germs and Steel*. New York: W.W. Norton and

- Company.
- Dick, G. (1998) "The Circus: It's Modern Slavery." *Marin Independent Journal*, (April 28) Retrieved June 7, 2012 from <http://www.peta.org/living/entertainment/dick-gregory-circuses/>
- Dickens, C. (1839). *Sketches by Boz*. London: Chapman and Hall.
- Diprose, R. and Reynolds, J. (2008). *Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts*. Durham, GBR: Acumen.
- Disher, M. W. (1971). *Greatest Show on Earth*. New York: Benjamin Blom Inc.
- Doty, M. (2011). "In the Gallery: Mark Doty." *Art Babble*. [Video Talk] Retrieved August 11, 2012 from <http://www.artbabble.org/video/ima/gallery-mark-doty?start=682>
- Drimmer, F. (1975). *Very Special People: The Struggles, Loves and Triumphs of Human Oddities*. New York: Amjon Publishers Inc.
- Duffett, J. (1968). "Atlantic City is a Town with Class - They Raise your Morals while They Judge Your Ass." *As It Happened*. Retrieved June 3, 2012, from <http://www.vfa.us/MissAmerica1968JUNE122008.htm>
- Dunn, K., Forrest, J., Pee-Pua, R., Hynes, M., and Maeder-Han, K. (2009). "Cities of Race Hatred? The Sphere of Racism and Anti-racism in Contemporary Australian Cities." *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies Journal*, 1(1), (p. 1-14).
- Durbach, N. (2009). *Spectacle of Deformity: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others*. Berkeley, CA, USA: University of California Press.
- Dyer, R. (1997). *White: Essays on Race and Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Dyer, R. (2000). "The Matter of Whiteness." In L. Back and J. Salamos (Eds.), *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*. (p. 539-548). London: Routledge.
- Eco, U. (1971). "The Death of the Gruppo 63." *20th Century Studies*, 5, (p. 60-71).
- El-Fiazy, M. (2011). "An Extraordinary Night at the Circus." *Financial Times* Retrieved June 23, 2012 from [www.ft.com/cms/s/2/6c212530-2fe3-11e0-a7c6-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1HpDx7LJZ](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/6c212530-2fe3-11e0-a7c6-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1HpDx7LJZ)
- Ellingsworth, J. (2011). "Poetry in Motion: Underman." *Sideshow Circus Magazine*. Retrieved June 17, 2012 from <http://sideshow-circusmagazine.com/magazine/reviews/poetry-motion-underman>
- Ellingsworth, J. (2011a). "You Can Look but with Your Eyes Dhut: Quebecois Circus." *Sideshow Circus Magazine*. Retrieved June 17, 2012 from <http://sideshow-circusmagazine.com/magazine/features/you-can-look-your-eyes-shut-quebecois-circus>
- Engerman, S. L. and Sokoloff, K. (2008). "Once Upon a Time in the Americas: Land and Immigration Policy in the New World." Paper presented at the *Understanding Long Run Economic Growth: A Conference Honoring the Contributions of Kenneth Sokoloff*. Retrieved March 5, 2012 <http://www.international.ucla.edu/economichistory/conferences/showevent.asp?eventid=6846>
- Epstein, E. A. (2011). "Ocularpation: Stripping down Wall Street." *Metro*. Retrieved February 23, 2012 <http://www.metro.us/newyork/local/article/931439--ocularpation-stripping-down-wall-street>

- Equestrian-News. (2011). "The Whirled at War." *The Equestrian News*. Retrieved September 9, 2012 from <http://theequestriannews.com/2011/12/24/whirled-at-war/>
- Equine Advocates (2013). "Robert Redford Calls for an End to Horse Slaughter." Retrieved May 22, 2013 from <http://www.equineadvocates.org/news.php?recordID=67>
- Equinezen. (2010). "Companion Animal versus Livestock Designation." Retrieved March 17, 2012 from <http://equinezen.wordpress.com/2010/01/14/companion-animal-versus-livestock-designation/>
- Esalen-Institute. (2012). "Esalen Institute Celebrates Anniversary with Week Long Anniversary Celebration." *International Holistic Centers' Gathering*. Retrieved November 12, 2012 <http://www.centersgathering.org/>
- Eudell, D. L. (2008). "Black Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." In K. Halttunen (Ed), *A Companion to American Cultural History*. (p. 95-109) Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Ewen, E. (1985). *Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars: Life and Culture on the Lower East Side, 1890 - 1925*. New York: Monthly Review Press
- Exhibitions, P. (2012). "BODIES The Exhibition." Retrieved May 28, 2012, from <http://www.bodiestheexhibition.com/faq.html>
- Faraci, D. (2008). "Interview-Phillipe-Petite-and-James-Marsh-Man-on-Wire" (sic) Retrieved July 2, 2012, from <http://www.chud.com/15666/interview-phillipe-petite-james-marsh-man-on-wire/>
- FEDEC. (2011). "The European Federation of Professional Circus Schools" (FEDEC). Retrieved March 28, 2012 from <http://www.fedec.org>
- Fensham, R. (1997). "Making Real: a Subordinate Reading of the Female Performer in Nineteenth Century Australian circus." *Australasian Drama Studies*. (30) April 1997, (p. 3-16).
- Ferrand, T. (2009). "Phillippe Ménard: Complete Fusion." *Stradda No 5*. Retrieved February 2, 2012 <http://www.horslesmurs.fr/plugins/fckeditor/userfiles/file/Editions/stradda%20pdf/pdf-circo-5-gb.pdf>
- Ferry, J. (1953). "The Society Tiger." *Weird Fiction Review*. Retrieved from September 12, 2013 *Weird Fiction Review*: <http://weirdfictionreview.com/2011/11/the-society-tiger/>
- Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain. (2011). Retrieved March 16, 2011 from <http://www.cirquededemain.com/web/index.php>
- Fiedler, L. (1978). *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Fiedler, L. (1996). "The Tyranny of the Normal." In C. C. Donley and S. Buckley (Eds.), *The Tyranny of the Normal*. (p. 3-10). Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press.
- Fischer-Lichte, E. and Wihstutz, B. (2013). *Performance and the Politics of Space: Theatre and Topology*. New York: Routledge.
- Fisher, L., A. and Bowers, C. (2009). *Agnes Lake Hickok: Queen of the Circus, Wife of a Legend*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

- Fjellstrom, R. (2002). "Specifying Speciesism." *Environmental Values* (11), (p. 63-74).
- Foer, J. S. (2009). *Eating Animals*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, Hachette Book Group.
- Ford, H. (1922). *My Life and Work*. Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing Company.
- Forna, A. (2009) "Resilience by Boris Cyrulnik: Review." *The Telegraph*. Retrieved June 5, 2012 from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/5361000/Resilience-by-Boris-Cyrulnik-review>.
- Forte, J. K. (1990). "Women's Performance Art: Feminism and Postmodernism." In Case, S. (Ed.), *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. (p. 251-269)
- Fossetts. (2011). "Fossetts Circus." Retrieved May 5, 2011 from [www.fossettscircus.com](http://www.fossettscircus.com)
- Foster, M., and Barbara, F. (2011). *A Dangerous Woman: The Life, Loves and Scandals of Adah Isaacs Menken 1835-1868, America's Original Superstar*. Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press.
- Foucault, M. (1994). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Knowledge, 1971*. New York: Vintage Books, Random House.
- Foucault, M. (1994). *Dits et Ecrits (1954-1988) Tome 1, 1945-1975*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Fowler, C. (2011). "Skydancing." Retrieved December 17, 2012 from <http://www.christopherfowler.co.uk/blog/>
- Frankenberg, R. (1997). "Introduction: Local Whitenesses, Localizing Whiteness." In R. Frankenberg (Ed.), *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*. (p. 1-34). Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Freud, S. (2012). *Totem and Taboo*. New York: Random House.
- Frost, L. (2005). *Never one Nation: Freaks, Savages and Whiteness in U.S. Popular Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fudge, E. (2002)a. "A Left-handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals." In N. Rothfels (Ed.), *Representing Animals*. (p. 5). Bloomington, In, USA: Indiana University Press.
- Fudge, E. (2002)b. *Animal*. London: Reaktion.
- Fudge, E. (2009). "At the Heart of the Home: An Animal Reading of Mikhail Bulgakov's The Heart of a Dog." *Humanimalia: a journal of human/animal interface studies*, 1(1). (p. 1-23). Retrieved June 6, 2013 from <http://www.depauw.edu/humanimalia/>
- Fusco, C. (1994). The Other History of Intercultural Performance. Retrieved April 30, 2012 from <http://ada.evergreen.edu/~arunc/texts/politics/fusco.pdf>
- Fusco, C. (1998). "Fantasies of Oppositionality." In G. H. Kester (Ed.), *Art, Activism and Oppositionality: Essays from Afterimage*. (p. 60-75). Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Gagnon, A. G. (1990). *Quebec: Beyond the Quiet Revolution*. Ontario: Nelson Canada.

- Game, A. (2001). "Riding: Embodying the Centaur." *Body and Society*, 7 (4). (p. 1-12).
- Ganley, T. (2003). "What's All this Talk about Whiteness?" *Dialogue*, 1 (2), (p. 12-30).
- Gänzl, K. (2002). *Lydia Thompson Queen of Burlesque*. New York: Routledge.
- Garland, H. (2007). *Son of the Middle Border*, Minnesota: Borealis Books.
- Garland-Thomson, R. (1996). "Introduction: From Wonder to Error - A Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity." In R. Garland-Thomson (Ed.), *Freakery: Cultural spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*. New York: New York University Press. (p. 1-22).
- Garland-Thomson, R. (1997) *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*. New York: Columbia Press.
- Garland-Thomson, R. (2008). "Foreword." In M. Tromp (Ed.), *Freakery Unfurled*: Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University. (p. IX-XI).
- Garland-Thomson, R. (2009). *Staring: How We Look*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Garland-Thomson, R. (2009)a. "Dares to Stares: Disabled Women Performance Artists and the Dynamics of Staring." In C. A. Sandahl, (Ed.), *Discourses of Disability: Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance*. Ann Arbor, MI, USA: University of Michigan Press. (p. 30 – 41).
- Gerber, D. (1990). "Review: Pornography or Entertainment? The Rise and Fall of the Freak Show." *Reviews in American History*, 18 (1). (p. 15-21).
- Gere, C. (2006). *Art, Time and Technology*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Ginsberg, E. K. (Ed.). (1996). *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University.
- Glionna, J. M. (2013, June 19th 2013). "Auction Sends Wild Horses to Sanctuary-or Slaughter." *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved July 17, 2013 from <http://www.latimes.com/.../la-na-wild-horses-20130619-dto,0,1687981.htmlsto...>
- Glover, T. (2006). "Reg Bolton: Clowning Showman who Took New Circus Around the World." *The Guardian*. Retrieved Feb 2, 2012 from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2006/jul/26/guardianobituaries.artsobituaries1>
- Goldberg, R. (1998). *Performance: Live Art Since 1960*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.
- Goldberg, R. (2011). *Performance Arts from Futurism to the Present*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Gomez-Pena, G. (2005). *Ethno-Techno: Writings on Performance, Activism and Pedagogy*. London: Routledge.
- Goodman, L. and de Gay, J. (Ed.). (1998). *Routledge Reader in Gender and Performance*. London: Routledge.
- Goodson, D. S. (2010). "U.S. Society and Culture since 1865." Retrieved December 17, 2012 <http://www.westga.edu/~hgoodson/>
- Goosey, V. (2011). Romantic Drama and Romantic Theatre. Retrieved July 28, 2013 from [nyurrg.org/2011/11/15/romantic-drama-and-romantic-theatre/](http://nyurrg.org/2011/11/15/romantic-drama-and-romantic-theatre/)
- Gotman, K.(2012). "Epilepsy, Chorea, and Involuntary Movements Onstage: The



- Politics and Aesthetics of Alterkinetic Dance.” *About Performance* 2012 No.11. (p. 159-183)
- Graham-Dixon, A. (2002). “ITP 139: Portrait of Mr. Van Amburgh as He Appeared with His Animals at the London Theatres by Sir Edwin Henry Landseer.” *Andrew Graham-Dixon Archive*. Retrieved October 23, 2012, from <http://www.andrewgrahamdixon.com/archive/readArticle/119>
- Greene, A. N. (2008). *Horses at Work: Harnessing Power in Industrial America*. Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard University Press.
- Greene, N. (1967). “Antonin Artaud, Metaphysical Revolutionary.” *Literature and Revolution. Yale French Studies* 39. (p. 188-197).
- Greenpeace. (2007). “600 Strip Naked on Glacier in Global Warming Protest.” Retrieved October 23, 2011 from <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/news/features/naked-glacier-tunick-08182007/>
- Gregory, D. (2010). “Circus Watch Western Australia.” Retrieved July 3, 2011 from <http://www.circuswatchwa.org>
- Grimes, W. (2011). “Jesus Silva, Priest who founded Spanish Boys Town Dies at 78.” *New York Times*. Retrieved February 2, 2012 from [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/17/world/europe/jesus-silva-priest-who-founded-a-boys-town-dies-at-78.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/17/world/europe/jesus-silva-priest-who-founded-a-boys-town-dies-at-78.html?_r=0)
- Groskop, V. (2009). “Escape from the Past.” *The Guardian*. Retrieved 12 June, 2012 from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2009/apr/18/boris-cyrulnik-children-trauma>
- Gross, F. (2012). *Diane Arbus's 1960s: Auguries of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Grosz, E. (1996). “Intolerable Ambiguity: Freaks as/at the Limit.” In R. G. Thomas (Ed.), *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (p. 55-66). New York: New York University Press.
- Guess, T. J. (2006). “The Social Construction of Whiteness: Racism by Intent, Racism by Consequence.” *Critical Sociology*, 32 (4), (p. 649-673).
- Gulotta, V. (2013). “A Dangerous Woman: New Biography of Adah Isaacs Menken Tells the Fascinating Story of America's ‘Original Bad Girl.’ ” Retrieved July 2, 2013, from <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2011/1/prweb8079237.htm>
- Hadley, B. J. (2011). “Do You See What I Mean? Charting Changing Representations and Reception of the Disabled Body in Contemporary and Pop Cultural Performance.” Retrieved February 6, 2013 from <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/50292/>
- Hall, A. (2009). “Animal Tamer Fighting For Life after being Mauled by Three Tigers in 'Playful' Attack as Horrified Audience Looks On.” *Daily Mail*. Retrieved May 6, 2013 from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1234575/Animal-tamer-main-course-mauled-tigers-upmarket-supper-club.html>
- Hamera, J. (2000). “The Romance of Monsters: Theorizing the Virtuoso Body.” *Theatre Topics*, 10 (2), (p. 144-153).
- Hamera, J. (2012). *Parlor Ponds: The Cultural Work of the American Home Aquarium 1850 - 1970*: The University of Michigan Press.

- Haraway, D., and Begelke, M (2003). *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.
- Haraway, D. J. (1991). "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge. (p. 151-152).
- Harding, A. (1922). "The Joys and Sorrows of a Circus Fat Lady." *American Magazine*, 94 (3), (p .62-63).
- Harrison, B. (1982). "The Act of Militancy: Violence and the Suffragettes, 1904-1914." In M. S. Bentley, John (Ed.), *Peaceable Kingdom, Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (p.80–122). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hawkes, J. (2011). "The History of Circus Oz." Retrieved November 17, 2011, from [http://www.circusoz.com/digitalAssets/1479\\_1234416397068\\_The%20History%20of%20Circus%20Oz.pdf](http://www.circusoz.com/digitalAssets/1479_1234416397068_The%20History%20of%20Circus%20Oz.pdf)
- Hayes, C.M. L. (2003). "Joseph Beuys 'extends' James Joyce's Work." *CIRCA*, 104 (35). (p. 35-39)
- Hémard, N. (2009). "New Orleans Nostalgia: Remembering New Orleans History, Culture and Traditions." Retrieved November 3, 2012 from [http://www.neworleansbar.org/documents/TheFloatingPalaceArticle\\_000.pdf](http://www.neworleansbar.org/documents/TheFloatingPalaceArticle_000.pdf)
- Hemingway, E. (1932). *Death in the Afternoon*. New York: Scribner.
- Hill, J. D. (2005). *Freaks and Fire: The Underground Reinvention of Circus*. McKinney, Texas: BarGarr LetterPress.
- Hill, L. (2000). "Suffragettes Invented Performance Art." de Gay, J. and Goodman L., (Ed.), *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance*. (p. 150-157). London: Routledge.
- Hoage, R. J., Roskell, A., and Mansour, J. (1996). "Menagerie and Zoos to 1900." In R. J. Hoage and W. A. Deiss (Eds.), *New Worlds, New Animals: From Menagerie to Zoological Park in the Nineteenth Century*. Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press. (p. 8-15).
- Hochschild, A. (2012, May 11). "Process of Extermination: The Spanish Holocaust" by Paul Preston, Book Review. *New York Times*. Retrieved September 7, 2012 from [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/13/books/review/the-spanish-holocaust-by-paul-preston.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/13/books/review/the-spanish-holocaust-by-paul-preston.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)
- Hodgson, C. (2013). "This is what Olympic Legacy Looks Like." *The Guardian*. Retrieved May 5, 2014 from: <http://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2013/sep/18/cultural-olympiad-legacy-extraordinary-bodies>
- Hoh, L. (1990). *Step Right Up! The Adventure of Circus in America*. Crozet, Virginia, USA: Betterway Publications.
- Hoh, L. (2004). "The Circus in America 1793-1940." Retrieved March 25, 2010, from <http://www.circusinamerica.org>
- Holland, W. (1999) "Re-imagining Aboriginality in the Circus Space," *Journal of Popular Culture* 33 (1): (p. 91-104).

- Hough, R. (2003). "Cat Woman." *The Guardian*. Retrieved August 4, 2012 from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2003/apr/05/fiction.features>
- Hudek, A. (2009). "From Over-to Sub-Exposure: The Anamnesis of Les Immatériaux." *Tate Papers, Landmark Exhibitions Issue* (12). .
- Hurley, E. (2008). Les Corps Multiples du Cirque du Soleil. *Globe: Revue Internationales d'Études Québécoises*, 11 (2). (p. 135 – 157).
- Hurwitt, R. (2007). "Circus Oz offers Big-time Fun from Down Under." *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved October 12, 2012 from [www.circusoz.com/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=92&languageId=1&contentId=920](http://www.circusoz.com/ViewPage.action?siteNodeId=92&languageId=1&contentId=920)
- Independent-Lens. (2007). "Chicago 10." Retrieved January 10, 2012 from [www.pbs.org/independentlens/chicago10/yippies.html](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/chicago10/yippies.html)
- Innes, C. (1993). *Avant Garde Theatre 1892-1992*. London: Routledge.
- International Centre for Arts for Social Change (ICASC) Homepage. Retrieved 10. August 2014  
<<http://ghrp.ubc.ca/research/current-research-projects/art-for-social-change-canada/>>
- Jackson, C. (2012). "The Accidental Caucasian." *Huff Post*. Retrieved January 3, 2013 from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cassandra-jackson/passing-on-the-phone\\_b\\_1651161.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/cassandra-jackson/passing-on-the-phone_b_1651161.html)
- Jackson, D. (1997). *Being the Other in Women's Circus: Leaping Off the Edge*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press.
- Jackson, D. (2010). *Lion*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Jacob, P. (2008). "The Circus Artist Today: Analysis of the Key Competences." Retrieved June 5, 2011, from  
<<http://www.europeancircus.info/ECA/images/bestanden/education/TheCircusArtistTodayEN.pdf>>
- Jacob, P. (2009). *Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain - Trente Ans*. Paris: Magellan and Cie.
- Jacob, P. (2010). "Five Thousand Years of Enchantment: The Context that has Led Up to New Magic." *Stradda: New Magic: The emergence of a contemporary art*, 16 (April, 2010), (p. 2-4).
- Jando, D. (2008). "From Natalino Huesca to Fumagali." Retrieved December 2, 2012 from [http://www.circopedia.org/index.php/Fumagalli\\_Interview\\_2008](http://www.circopedia.org/index.php/Fumagalli_Interview_2008)
- Jando, D. and Forcey, C. (2010). *Circopedia: The Free Encyclopedia of the International Circus*. New York: Big Apple Circus with the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation.
- Jay, R. (1986). *Learned Pigs and Fireproof Women*. New York: Villard Books.
- Jensen, D. (2013). *Queen of the Air: A True Story of Love and Tragedy at the Circus*. New York: Crown Publishers.
- John-Hall, A. (1997). "Circus of Color: An Exciting but Intimate Family Experience has Come to Town. Universoul is the First Circus in More than a Century that is Owned, Operated and Performed by African Americans." *The Inquirer*. Retrieved December 7, 2012 from [http://articles.philly.com/1997-04-01/living/25531500\\_1\\_first-circus-casual-cal-dupree-traditional-circus](http://articles.philly.com/1997-04-01/living/25531500_1_first-circus-casual-cal-dupree-traditional-circus)

- Johnson, K. (2012). *Stage Turns: Canadian Disability Theatre*. Montreal, Quebec and Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Johnson, S. and Williams, G. B. (1998). *Lived Body: Sociological Themes, Embodied Issues*. London: Routledge.
- Johnson, W. M. (1990). *The Rose-tinted Menagerie*. London: Heretic Books.
- Jones, Jonathan. "Wounds of History." *The Guardian* 2005. 12 Sept 2014.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/jan/29/art.art>
- Jones, Jonathan. "The 10 Most Shocking Performance Art Works Ever." *The Guardian* 2013. 12 Sept 2014.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/nov/11/scrotum-top-10-shocking-performance-art>
- Jordan, E. (2009). "Body of Evidence." *Examiner.com*. Retrieved June 19, 2013 from <http://www.examiner.com/article/body-of-evidence>
- Joseph, M. (2006). "Somatic City: Laughter and Civic Imaginings." *Space and Culture* 9. (p. 245-253).
- Joseph, S. (1997). "The Public/Private - The Imagined Boundary in the Imagined Nation/State/Community: The Lebanese Case." *Feminist Review*, 57, *Citizenship: Pushing the Boundaries* (Autumn). (p. 73 – 92).
- Joslyn, J. (1993). "Ceremony will Set Theatrical Reincarnation of Honoree." *Milwaukee Reporter*. Retrieved March 29, 2012  
<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1368&dat=19930806&id=uKFQAAAIBAJ&sjid=ARMEAAAIBAJ&pg=5470,1370032>
- Joys, J. C. (2011). *The Wild Things*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio.
- Jriousek, L. (2002). "Ethnography and Immigrant Resistance: Sui Sin Far and Snzia Yeziarska." *Spectacle*, 27 (1), (p. 25-52)
- Jupp, E. (2014) "Candoco: The Dance Company that's Challenging Perceptions of Disability." *The Independent*. Retrieved: March 3, 2014.  
<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/news/candoco-the-dance-company-thats-challenging-perceptions-of-disability-9161288.html>
- Kafai, S. (2010). "Subverting the Myth of the Bearded Lady: Jennifer Miller and Circus Amok." *MP: An Online Feminist Journal*, 3 (2), (p. 59-77).
- Kalmunity. (2013). "Kalmunity Facebook." Retrieved December 1, 2013, from <https://www.facebook.com/Kalmunity>
- Kalson, S. (2007, June 20). "China 'Bodies' exhibit raises hackles here." *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Retrieved November 7, 2011 from <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/news/science/china-bodies-exhibit-raises-hackles-here-490277/>
- Kaprow, A. (1966). *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.
- King Charles Troupe. (2013). "The King Charles Troupe." Retrieved November 2, 2013, from <http://www.kingcharlestroupe.com/#!/about-us/cvfo>
- Kinnunen, R, and J. Lidman. (2013) "Wellbeing Effects from Social Circus" Retrieved 2 Feb. 2014  
<http://www.uta.fi/cmt/index/wellbeing-effects-from-social-circus.pdf>.
- Kirby, M. (1965). *Happenings: An Illustrated Anthology*. New York: Dutton.

- Kirby, M. (1971). *Futurist Performance*. New York: Dutton
- Kirby, M. (1972). "On Acting and Non-Acting." *The Drama Review: TDR* 16. (p. 3-15).
- Kisliuk, M. (2002). "The Poetics and Politics of Practice: Experience, Embodiment and the Engagement of Scholarship." N. Stucky and C. Wimmer (Eds.), *Teaching Performance Studies*. (p. 99-117) Carbondale, Illinois, USA: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Kline, T., and Davis, J. M. (2008). *Circus Queen and Tinker Bell: The Memoir of Tiny Kline*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Kobayashi, A. and Peake, L. (2000). Racism out of Place: Thoughts on Whiteness and an Antiracist Geography in the New Millenium. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90 (2), (p. 392-403).
- Kobialka, M. (2009). *Further on Nothing: Tadeusz Kantor's Theatre*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Konstam, A. (1996). *Russian Army of the Seven Years War* (Vol. 2). Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing.
- Kotowska-Lysiak, M. (2002). Kantor and the Visual Arts. from [www.culture.pl/en/culture/artykuly/os\\_kantor\\_tadeusz](http://www.culture.pl/en/culture/artykuly/os_kantor_tadeusz)
- Kristeva, J. (2002). *Revolt, She Said*. Interview by Philippe Petit. (B. O'Keeffe, Trans. S. Lotringer Ed.) New York: Semiotext(e)
- Kronenburg, R. (Ed.). *Transportable Environments: Theory, Context, Design and Technology*. 1998. New York: Routledge.
- Kumar, K. (1995). *From Post Industrial to Post- Modern Society: New Theories of the Contemporary World*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kuoni, C. (1993). *Energy Plan for the Western Man / Joseph Beuys in America*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows.
- Kuppers, P. (2001) "Deconstructing Images: Performing Disability." *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 11(3/4), (p. 25-40)
- Kuppers, P. (2003). *Disability and Contemporary Performance: Bodies on Edge*. London: Routledge.
- Kuppers, P. (2007) The Performance of Disability. *TDR: The Drama Review* 51:4 (T196) (p. 80-88)
- Kwint, M. (1994). *Astley's Amphitheatre and the Early Circus in England, 1798 - 1830*. (Doctoral Dissertation) (D.Phil) Oxford University, Oxford 1994.
- Kwint, M. (2002a). "The Legitimization of the Circus in Late Georgian England." *Past & Present*, Feb (174), (p. 72-115).
- Kwint, M. (2002b). "The Circus and Nature in Late Georgian England". In R. Koshar (Ed.), *Histories of Leisure* (p. 45 - 60). Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Kwint, M. (2003). "The Theatre of War." *History Today*, 53 (6). Retrieved December 12, 2012 from [www.historytoday.com/marius-kwint/theatre-war](http://www.historytoday.com/marius-kwint/theatre-war)
- Kwon, M. (2002). *One Place after Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity*. Boston, Massachusetts, USA: MIT Press.
- Lafortune, Michel, and Anne Bouchard. (2011) "Community Worker's Guide: When Circus Lessons Become Life Lessons." Montreal: Cirque du Soleil, 2011.
- La Fura del Baus (2010). "furadelin Th" Retrieved August 6, 2012 from <http://www.furadelbaus>

- Las Vegas Back Image Magazine. (2011). "Afrika Soul Circus comes to Las Vegas."  
Retrieved June 17, 2013 from  
<http://lasvegasblackimage.com/2011/06/afrika-soul-circus-comes-to-las-vegas/>
- Lavers, K. (2013) "Uncanny Valley and the World Beyond: the Post-human Prostheses of Sophie de Oliveira Barata." *Weird Fiction Review*,  
<http://weirdfictionreview.com/2013/07/uncanny-valley-and-the-world-beyond/>
- Lavers, K. (2014) "The Resilient Body in Social Circus: Father Jesus Silva, Boris Cyrulnik and Peter A. Levine." *The International Journal of Arts Education* Vol.8 (In Press)
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Lemon, A. (2007). *The Circus Diaries: Nomadic Narratives/Nomadic Culture*. Retrieved from [www.uel.ac.uk/cnr/documents/Lemon2007.doc](http://www.uel.ac.uk/cnr/documents/Lemon2007.doc)
- Lemon, A. (2009). *The Circus Diaries: Nomadic Narrative / Nomadic Culture*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Australian Centre, Melbourne University, Melbourne.
- Leon, M. S. (1983). *Spangles and Sawdust: The Circus in Australia*: Greenhouse Publications:, Penguin Australia
- Leon, M. S. (2008). "May Wirth, The Bareback Queen" *The Circus in Australia* (Vol. 13). Greenhouse Publications: Penguin Australia
- Leon, M. V. S. (2006). *Circus and Nation: A Critical Inquiry into Circus in its Australian Setting, 1847-2006, from the Perspectives of Society, Enterprise and Culture*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Sydney University, Sydney, Australia. Retrieved May 17, 2013 from  
<http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/1702/1/01Front.pdf>
- Leroux, L. P. (2012). *Cirque in Space! The Ethos and Ethics of Staging and Branding the Individual of Exception*. Concordia University. Montreal.
- Leroux, L. P. (2012). *Zumanity*. Archives of Montreal Working Group on Circus Montreal.
- Lesaing, B. (1981). *Le Cirque Bidon*. Saint-Pons: Pandora.
- Levine, P. A. (1976). *Accumulated Stress, Reserve Capacity and Disease*. (Dissertation) (PhD). University of California at Berkley. Retrieved from  
[http://somaticexperiencing.com/images/stories/Peter\\_A\\_Levine-Thesis.pdf](http://somaticexperiencing.com/images/stories/Peter_A_Levine-Thesis.pdf)
- Levine, P. A. (1997). *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma: The Innate Capacity to Transform Overwhelming Experiences*. Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books.
- Liao, S. (2012,). "Boys Choir of Harlem Back in Business." *Columbia Spectator*. Retrieved February 2, 2013 from  
<http://www.columbiaspectator.com/2012/10/24/boys-choir-harlem-back-business>
- Libby, A. I. (2003). *The Aesthetics of Adventure: Sublime Confrontation and the Making of Empire*. (Dissertation), Indiana University
- Lichte, E. F. (2008). *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*

- (S. I. Jain, Trans.). New York: Routledge.
- Liebenberg, L. and M. Ungar. (2008) *Resilience in Action*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Lievens, B. (2009). "Dramaturgy: From Aristotole to Contemporary Circus." *Disturbis*, 6. <<http://web.mac.com/gerardvilar/Disturbis/Bauke.html>>
- Lindsay, C. (1996). "Bodybuilding: A Postmodern Freak Show." In R. G. Thomson (Ed.), *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (p. 356 - 367). New York: New York University Press.
- Linzey, A. and Clarke, P. B. (Eds.). (2004). *Animal Rights: A Historical Anthology*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lippit, A. M. (1994). "Afterthoughts on the Animal World." *MLN*, 109, (p. 786-830).
- Lippit, A. M. (2008). *Electric Animal: Towards A Rhetoric of Wildlife*. Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press.
- Little, K. (1995). "Surveilling Cirque Archaos: Transgression and the Spaces of Power in Popular Entertainment." *Journal of Popular Culture*, 29 (1), (p. 15-27).
- Loohauis-Bennett, J. (2009). "Troupe Tells Story of Black Performers." *JS Online Milwaukee Wisconsin Journal Sentinel*, Milwaukee County.
- Lorant, T. C., Jon. (1986). *The Pickle Family Circus*. San Francisco: The Pickle Press.
- Low, Lenny Ann (2004) "Look up in the Sky," *Sydney Morning Herald*, Retrieved May 27, 2014 from <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2004/04/22/1082530289789.html?from=storyr hs>
- Loxton, H. (1997). *The Golden Age of Circus*. New York: Smithmark.
- Lukowski, A. (2008). "Circus Oz: 30 years of Alternative Circus." Retrieved 5.04.2011, from <http://www.metro.co.uk/metrolife/289399-circus-oz-30-years-of-alternative-circus>
- Lyotard, J. (1996). "Les Immatériaux." In R. Greenberg, B. W. Ferguson and S. Nairne (Eds.), *Thinking about Exhibitions*. (p. 159-173). New York: Routledge.
- Maddox, P. S. (Ed.). (1892). *Route Book, Adam Forepaugh Shows Season 1892*.
- Mahy, I. (2005). *Innovation, Artistes et Managers: Ethnographie du Cirque du Soleil*. (Dissertation) (PhD). Montreal, Canada: University of Montreal.
- Malamud, R. (2003). "How People and Animals Coexist." Retrieved January 9, 2013 from <http://www.english.gsu.edu/pdf/HowPeople.pdf>
- Maleval, Martine. (2002) "An Epic of New Circus." Trans. Jane Mullett. (63-76). *Australasian Drama Studies* 41.
- Malos, L. (2008). "Writing in the Flesh: Body, Identity, Disability and Difference." In S. B. Shapiro (Ed.), *Dance in a World of Change: Reflections of Globalisation and Cultural Difference*. (p. 71-91). Champaign, Illinois, USA: Human Kinetics.
- Mark, M. E. (1993). *Indian Circus*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.
- Marsh, J. (2009). "Interview-Phillipe-Petite-and-James-Marsh-Man-on-Wire"(sic). Retrieved March 18, 2012 <http://www.chud.com/15666/interview-phillipe->

- petite-james-marsh-man-on-wire/
- Marwick, A. (1998). *The Sixties*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Mason, B. (1992). *Street Theatre and Other Outdoor Performance*. London: Routledge.
- Maulhardt, J. W. (2010). *Conejo Valley*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing.
- Maulhardt, J. W. (2011). *Jungleland*. Charleston. South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing.
- May, M. (2012, October 14th). "Esalen Institute Turns 50 this Year." *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved from <http://www.sfgate.com/living/article/Esalen-Institute-turns-50-this-year-3906021.php>
- McCann, C. (2009). *Let the Great World Spin*. New York: Random House.
- McClintock, A. (1995). *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge.
- McCullough, E. (1957). *Good Old Coney Island*. New York: Scribner.
- McDermott, C. (2007). *Design: The Key Concepts*. Oxford, GBR: Routledge
- McEachran, R. (2014) "How Social Enterprise Circuses are impacting on Disadvantaged Youths." *The Guardian*. Retrieved April 21, 2014 from <http://acapta.org.au/latest-news/the-guardian-how-social-enterprise-circuses-are-impacting-on-disadvantaged-youths/>
- McFarland, S. H., Ryan. (2009). "Approaching the Agency of Other Animals: An Introduction." In M. Hediger (Ed.), *Approaching the Agency of Other Animals: An Introduction* (Vol. 8: Animals and Agency: An Interdisciplinary Exploration). (p. 1-20). Boston, MA, USA: Brill Academic Publishers.
- McKenzie, S. (2013). "Snake Arms and Crystal Legs: Artificial Limbs Push Boundaries of Art." *CNN*. Retrieved February 2, 2014 from [www.cnn.com/2013/04/24/world/europe/alternative-limb-project](http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/24/world/europe/alternative-limb-project)
- McLendon, R. (2012). "Amazon Deforestation: NASA Images Show the Great Rainforest Disappearing." *Huffington Post*. Retrieved October 15, 2013 from [www.huffingtonpost.com/.../amazon-deforestation-nasa-photos\\_n\\_1748...](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/.../amazon-deforestation-nasa-photos_n_1748...)
- McLuhan, M. (1994). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Massachusetts, USA: MIT Press
- McShane, C. and Tarr, J. (2008). "The Decline of the Urban Horse in American Cities." *The Journal of Transport History*, 24 (2), (p. 177-190).
- McShane, C. and Tarr, J. (2007). *Horse in the City: Living Machines in the Nineteenth Century*. Baltimore, MD, USA: John Hopkins University Press.
- Meisel, M. (1983). *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England*. Princeton, New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. (C. Smith, Trans.). London: Routledge.
- Metropolitan-Museum-of-Art. (2011). Alexander McQueen. Retrieved from [blog.metmuseum.org/alexandermcqueen/tag/no-13/](http://blog.metmuseum.org/alexandermcqueen/tag/no-13/)
- Mighetto, L. (1991). *Wild Animals and American Environmental Ethics* (Vol.



- 2012): Tucson, Arizona, USA: University of Arizona Press. Milgrom, R. (2002). "Realizing Differential Space? Design Processes and Everyday Life in the Architecture of Lucien Kroll." *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, 13 (2), (p. 75 -95).
- Miller, A. I. (2001). *Einstein, Picasso: Space Time and the Beauty that Causes Havoc*. New York: Basic Books.
- Miller Van Blerkom, L. (1995). "Clown Doctors: Shaman Healers of Western Medicine." *Medical Anthropology Journal*, 9 (4), (p. 462-475).
- Milligan, K. J. (1998). *Exquisite corpses in America: Ornamented bodies of the late twentieth century*. (Dissertation) (PhD). University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA, USA. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304442552>
- Moeschen, S. C. (2003). "Review Untitled." *Theatre Journal*, 55 (No. 4.) Theatre and Activism, (p. 774-750).
- Mongalais, L. (2009). "The Circus Esperanto." Paper presented at the Fresh Circus: European Seminar for the Development of Contemporary Circus.
- Mongalais, L. (2009). "Construct Something Together: Interview with Pierrot Bidon." Paper presented at the Fresh Circus: European Seminar for the Development of Contemporary Circus. Retrieved February 17, 2012 from <http://www.circostrada.org/IMG/file/Fresh%20Circus/PDF%20OK/FreshCircusEN.pdf>
- Montagu, A. (2012). "John Philip Conway -Johnny Astley" *Find A Grave*. Retrieved 27th June 2013, from <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=85556853>
- Monteith, S. (2008). *American Culture in the 1960s*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Moody, J. (2000). *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770-1840*. Cambridge, GBR: Cambridge University Press.
- Morales, E. (2007). "Approaches Based on Resilience." Retrieved May 2, 2012, from [http://www.oakfnd.org/activities/2009/OakCAP\\_Approaches\\_Resilience\\_English\\_2007.pdf](http://www.oakfnd.org/activities/2009/OakCAP_Approaches_Resilience_English_2007.pdf)
- Morelli, D. and Lafortune, M. (2003). "The Phoenix: Building the Concept of Resilience into Cirque du Monde Practices." *Cirque du Monde Social Circus Instructors Training Program*. Montreal, QC.
- Mori, M. (1970). "The Uncanny Valley" (K. F. MacDorman and N. Kageki, Trans.). *IEEE Spectrum: Technology, Engineering and Science News - Editor's Note, 2013*. Retrieved March 2, 2013 from [www.spectrum.ieee.org/](http://www.spectrum.ieee.org/)
- Morpurgo, M. (1982). *War Horse*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- Morris, D. B. (1991). *The Culture of Pain*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Mousawi, D. (2011). "Step Up Circus Training Day 2." Retrieved September 9, 2012, from <http://tamashablog.wordpress.com/category/tamasha-developing-artists/step-up-circus-training/>
- Mudge, A. (2003). "Taming the Tale of Mabel Stark." Retrieved October 27, 2012,

- from <http://bookpage.com/interview/taming-the-tale-of-mabel-stark>
- Mullett, J. (2005). *Circus Alternatives: the Rise of New Circus in Australia, the United States, Canada and France*. (Doctoral Dissertation) La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria, Australia.
- Mullett, J. (2006). *Fabulous Risk: Danger and Performance in Circus and Sideshow*.
- Mullett, J. (2011). Private Correspondence to author.
- Murawska-Muthesius, K. and Natalia Zarzecka. (Eds.). (2011). *Kantor was Here*. London: Black Dog Publishing.
- Murray, M. (1956). *Circus! From Rome to Ringling*. Westport, Connecticut, USA: Greenwood Press.
- Nash, C. (2003). "Cultural Geography: Anti-racist Geographies." *Progress in Human Geography*, 27 (5), (p. 637-648).
- Neirick, M. (2012). *When Pigs Could Fly and Bears Could Dance: A History of the Soviet Circus*. Wisconsin, USA: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Nelson, R. (2008). "After Brecht: The Impact (Effects, Affects) of Intermedial Theatre." *Intermediality: History and Theory of the Arts, Literature and Technologies*, (12), (p. 31-48.)
- Nichols, A. (1999). "Romantic Rhinos and Victorian Vipers: The Zoo as Nineteenth-Century Spectacle." *Romantic Natural History: A Survey of Relationships between Literary Works and Natural History in the Century before Charles Darwin's 'On the Origin of the Species' (1859)*. Retrieved April 28, 2012 from <http://users.dickinson.edu/~nicholsa/Romnat/zoos.htm>
- Nickell, J. (2005). *Secrets of the Sideshow*. Lexington, Kentucky, USA: University Press of Kentucky.
- Nield, S. (2008). "The Rise of the Character named Spectator." *Contemporary Performance Review*, 18 (4). Backpages.
- No-Fit-state. (2013). "NoFit state circus." Retrieved October 10, 2013 from <http://www.nofitstate.org/>
- Noske, B. (1997). *Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.
- Novak, C. J. (1990). *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and America Culture*. Madison, Wisconsin, USA: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- O'Dell, K. (1998). *Contract with the Skin: Masochism, Performance Art and the 1970s*. Minneapolis, MN, USA: University of Minnesota Press.
- O'Quinn, D. (2005). *Staging Governance: Theatrical Imperialism in London 1770-1800*. Baltimore, Maryland, USA: The John Hopkins University Press.
- O'Quinn, D. (2007). "Theatre and Empire." In J. Moody and D. O'Quinn (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre 1730-1830*, (p. 233-246). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Observationalism.com. (2009). "Spain's Orphaned Children of the Revolution." Retrieved June 27, 2013 from <http://observationalism.com/2009/01/20/spains-orphaned-children-of-the-revolution/>
- Oddey, A. and White, C. A. (Eds.). (2006). *The Potentials of Spaces; The Theory and Practice of Scenography and Performance* (Kindle ed.). Bristol, UK: Intellect.

- Okon, M. (1950). "Lady and the Tiger." *New York Daily News*. Retrieved September 7, 2012 from [http://www.stagecoachmuseum.org/people\\_links/mabel\\_stark.htm](http://www.stagecoachmuseum.org/people_links/mabel_stark.htm)
- Ono, Y. (2008). "John Lennon-Yoko Ono Amsterdam interview 1969 Excerpt about Peace from Wedding Album." Retrieved July 12, 2012, from <http://www.orato.com/entertainment/john-lennon-yoko-ono-amsterdam-interview>
- Pednaud, J. T. (2006). "The Human Marvels." Retrieved 25, October, 2013, from <http://thehumanmarvels.com/36/the-pinhead-what-is-it/pinhead>
- Perkovic, J. (2010). "Minus Signs-Jana Perkovic: Contemporary Performance at Arts House." *Real Time* 97. <http://www.realttimearts.net/article/97/9874>
- Perry, P. (2001). "White Means Never Having to Say You're Ethnic: White Youth and the Construction of 'Cultureless' Identities." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 30 (1), (p. 56 – 91).
- Petit, P. (2002). *To Reach the Clouds: My High Wire Walk between the Two Towers*. New York: North Point Press.
- Pfening, F. D. (1971). "The Frontier and the Circus." *Bandwagon*, Sep-Oct, 1971, (p.16-20). Retrieved December 17, 2012 from <http://www.circushistory.org/Bandwagon/bw-frontier.htm>
- Pfeiffer, I and Hollein, M. *Yoko Ono: Half a Wind Show—A Retrospective*. New York: Prestel, 2013.
- Phaneuf, M. D. (2011). "Resilience: Abstract Concept or Survival Skill." Retrieved April 28, 2012, from [http://www.infiressources.ca/fer/Depotdocument\\_anglais/Resilience\\_abstract\\_concept\\_or\\_survival\\_skill.pdf](http://www.infiressources.ca/fer/Depotdocument_anglais/Resilience_abstract_concept_or_survival_skill.pdf)
- Picucci, M. (2012). "Interview with Peter Levine." *Authentic Process Healing Institute*. Retrieved October 3, 2012, from [http://www.theinstitute.org/trauma/levine\\_int.shtml](http://www.theinstitute.org/trauma/levine_int.shtml)
- Popotamo. (2010). "Bonjour les clowns." *Popotamo*. Retrieved October 17, 2011 from Popotamo website: <http://www.popotamo.com/forum/thread/1198313?page=32;id=1198313>
- Poppiti, K. (2005). "Gallopings Horses: Treadmills and Other Theatre Appliances in Hippodramas." *Theatre Design and Technology*, 41 (4), (p. 46-58.)
- Potts, A. (Ed.). (2007). *The Mark of the Beast: Inscribing 'Animality' through Extreme Body Modification* (Vol. 4: Knowing Animals). Boston, MA, USA: Brill Academic Publishers.
- Preston, P. (2011) *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth Century Spain*. New York. London: W.W. Norton & Company. Print.
- Pruitt, J. (2009). "Collecting the National Drama in Revolutionary England." *Romantic Textualities, Literature and Print Culture 1780-1840* (19) (Winter 2009). Retrieved May 7, 2013 from [http://www.romtext.cf.ac.uk/articles/rt19\\_n03.html](http://www.romtext.cf.ac.uk/articles/rt19_n03.html)
- Quelland, S. (2003). "Manson Family Feud." *Metro, Silicon Valley's Weekly Newspaper*. Retrieved from July 12, 2012 from [www.metroactive.com/papers/metro/05.15.03/manson-0320.html](http://www.metroactive.com/papers/metro/05.15.03/manson-0320.html)
- Quentin, A. (2010). "Training, The Transmission of a Language." *Stradda*, 16 (April), (p. 6).

- Qureshi, S. (2004). "Displaying Sara Baartman, the 'Hottentot Venus'." *History of Science*, 42 (xliii), (p. 223-257).
- Qureshi, S. (2011). *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ragussis, M. (2010). *Theatrical Nation: Jews and Other Outlandish Englishmen in Georgian Britain*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Rampton, J. (1996). "Shock Troops of the Big Top: Don't Get Too Comfortable Archaos Aims to Overwhelm Your Senses." *The Independent Newspaper*. Retrieved January 17, 2012 from [www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/shock-troops-of-the-big-top-1348548.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/shock-troops-of-the-big-top-1348548.html)
- Rancière, J. (2007). "The Emancipated Spectator." *Artforum*, 4, (p. 270-281).
- Redler, D. (2013). "Stage Lighting Museum." Retrieved from June 4, 2013 <http://www.compulite.com/stagelight/html/history-4/history-4-text.html>
- Reichenbach, H. (2003). "Review of Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo." *International Zoo News*, 50 (December 2003) (8). Retrieved June 2, 2013 from <http://www.izn.org.uk>
- Reiss, B. (2001). *The Showman and the Slave: Race Death and Memory in Barnum's America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA: Harvard University Press.
- Reiss, J. H. (2000). *From Margin to Center: The Spaces of Installation Art*. Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Rekow, E. (2010). "Materials." Retrieved September 11, 2012 from <http://www.walkerart.org/archive/C/9C43F9ACA34F1B386167.htm>
- Renoff, G. (2008). *The Big Tent: Travelling Circus in Georgia 1820-1930*: University of Georgia Press.
- Rense, R. (2005). "The Lady and the Tiger." *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved May 17, 2012 from <http://www.ripreuse.com/Mabel.htm>
- Reynolds, S. (2005). *Rip it up and Start Again: Postpunk 1978-1984*. London, GBR: Faber and Faber.
- Richard, N. (2000). "Margins and Institutions: Performances of the Chilean Avanzada." (p. 183-197). *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas*. Fusco, C. (Ed). New York: Routledge.
- Richard, N. (2004). *The Insubordination of Signs, Political Change, Cultural Transformation, and Poetics of the Crisis*, (A. A. Nelson and S. R. Tandeciarz, Trans). Durham, North Carolina, USA and London, GBR: Duke University Press.
- Richardson, N. (2010). *Transgressive Bodies: Representations in Film and Popular Culture*: Ashgate Publishing Group.
- Rilke, R.M. (1992) "The Panther, Jardin des Plantes, Paris," in *Neue Gedichte*, trans. Stephen Cohn. Manchester GBR: Carcarnet Press.
- Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey, (2014) "Built to Amaze," King Charles Troupe. Retrieved August 4 from: <http://www.ringling.com/ContentPage.aspx?id=46888&parentID=1409&assetFolderID=1428>
- Roar-Foundation. (2012). "The Shambala preserve presented by the Roar

- Foundation.” Retrieved October 20, 2012, from <http://www.shambala.org/about.htm>
- Robbins, L. E. (2002). *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots; Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century Paris*. Baltimore, MD, USA: John Hopkins University Press.
- Roberts, P. (2013). “Agnes Thatcher Lake: Equestrian Rider, Circus Performer, and Wild Bill's Wife.” *Buffalo Bones*. Retrieved July 7, 2013, from [http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/robertshistory/buffalo\\_bones\\_wild\\_bill\\_marriage.htm](http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/robertshistory/buffalo_bones_wild_bill_marriage.htm)
- Robertson, T. (2001). *The Pram Factory: The Australia Performing [sic] Group Recollected*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Rodenbeck, J. (2003). “Madness and Method: Before Theatricality.” *Grey Room* (13), (p. 54-79).
- Rodriguez. (2002.). “Race and Identity in Passing Films.” Retrieved October 30, 2013 from <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma02/rodriguez/thesis/introduction.html#c>
- Rooney, Kara. (1985). "Josph Beuys Process 1971-1985." *Catalog New York*. 14 Sept 2014.  
<[http://www.roostergallery.com/EXHIBITIONS/JosephBeuys/JBeuys\\_Catalog.pdf](http://www.roostergallery.com/EXHIBITIONS/JosephBeuys/JBeuys_Catalog.pdf)> (n/d and n/p)
- Rosen, R. (2000). *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*. New York: Viking.
- Ross, H. K. (2013). “London Artist Creates Intricate Limbs to Fit Individual Styles, Prosthetics with Personality.” *Healthline*. Retrieved May 5, 2013 from <http://www.healthline.com>
- Rothblatt, S. (1979). *Nineteenth Century London* (Vol. 2). Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press.
- Rothfels, N. (2002a). *Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo*. Baltimore, Maryland, USA: John Hopkins University Press.
- Rothfels, N. (Ed.). (2002b). *Representing Animals*. Bloomington, Indiana, USA: Indiana University Press.
- Russell, E. (2011). *Reading Embodied Citizenship: Disability, Narrative, and the Body Politic*. New Jersey, USA: Rutgers University Press.
- Sammons, M., & Cunningham, V. (2004). *Black Portsmouth: Three Centuries of African American Heritage*. Lebanon, NH: University of New Hampshire Press.
- Sandford, M. (1995). *Happenings and Other Acts*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Saxon, A. H. (1988). “As American as Apple Pie: The Art of the Circus Spectacular.” *The UNESCO Courier*, (p.31-34.) Retrieved September 30, 2012 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/Ulis/cgi-bin/ulis.pl?database=&lin=1&fut8=1&ll=1&gp=0&look=default&sc1=1&sc2=1&nl=1&req=2&au=Saxon,%20A.H.>
- Saxon, A. H. (1989). *P.T. Barnum: The Legend and the Man*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Schechner, R. (1994). *Environmental Theatre*. New York: Applause Books.

- Schechner, R. (2000). "Approaches to Performance Theory." In de Gay, L and Goodman, J. (Ed.), *Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance* (p. 351). London, GBR: Routledge.
- Schechner, R. (2000). *Environmental Theater*. New York: Applause Books.
- Schechner, R. (2002). "Fundamentals of Performance Studies." N. Stucky and C. Vimmer (Eds.), *Teaching Performance Studies*. (p. ix-xii). Carbondale, Illinois, USA: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Schechner, R. (2004). *Performance Theory*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Schechner, R. (2013). *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Scheck, F. (2007). "Dazzling Blend of Erotic, Hypnotic, Aquatic" Fuerzabruta. Review *New York Post*. Retrieved October 19, 2013  
<<http://nypost.com/2007/10/25/dazzling-blend-of-erotic-hypnotic-aquatic/>>
- Schlicke, P. (1985). *Dickens and Popular Entertainment*. London GBR: Unwin Hyman Ltd.
- Schwalm, T. (2007). "No Circus without Animals?: Animal Acts and Ideology in the Virtual Circus." In L. A. Simmons, Philip (Ed.), *Human-Animal Studies* Vol. 4, (p. 79-104). Boston, MA, USA: Brill Academic Papers.
- Schwalm, T. (2009). "No-One's Ark: Exotic Animal Acts in the Circus." *Animals on Show. Animals and Us* (3). (p. 160-166).
- Seaton, A. (1973). *The Austro-Hungarian Army of the Seven Years War*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing.
- Sendak, M. (1963). *Where the Wild Things Are*. London: Random House.
- Sentilles, R. M. (2003). *Performing Menken, Adah Isaacs Menken and the Birth of American Celebrity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Severo, R. (2001). "Gunther Gebel-Williams, Circus Animal Trainer, Obituary." *New York Times*. Retrieved May 17, 2012 from  
<<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/07/20/arts/gunther-gebel-williams-circus-animal-trainer-dies-at-66.htm>>
- Sharkey, S. R. D., Robert S. (1976). "Revolution, Myth and Mythical Politics: The Futurist Solution." *Journal of European Studies*, vi (December). (p. 233).
- Shaughnessy, R. (2012). "Immersive Performance, Shakespeare's Globe and the 'Emancipated Spectator.'" *The Hare*, 1 (1). Retrieved May 13, 2013  
<<http://thehareonline.com/article/immersive-performance-shakespeare's-globe-and-emancipated-spectator>>
- Sherman, W. (2010). "Johnathan [sic] Lee Iverson is the First New York and African American Ringmaster of Ringling Brothers Circus." *Daily News*. Retrieved March 23, 2012 <<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/johnathan-lee-iverson-new-york-african-american-ringmaster-ringling-brothers-circus-article-1.176298>>
- Shilling, C. (2004). *The Body in Culture Technology and Society*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Siegel, F. (1991). "Theater of Guts: An Exploration of the Sideshow Aesthetic." *TDR*, 35 (4), (p. 107-124).
- Simkin, J. (2012). "Horses and Mules in the First World War." *Spartacus Educational*. Retrieved March 3, 2012, from

- <[www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWhorses.htm](http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWhorses.htm)>
- Simmons, L. (Ed.). (2007). *Human Animal Studies* (Vol 4: Knowing Animals). Boston, MA, USA: Brill Academic Publishers.
- Singer, P. (2003). "Animal Liberation at 30." *The New York Review of Books* Retrieved September 9, 2012  
<<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2003/may/15/animal-liberation-at-30/>>
- Singer, P. (1990). *Animal Liberation*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Singer, P. (2007). "When Children see Animals in a Circus." Retrieved August 7, 2012, from <http://www.circuswatchwa.org>
- Singer, P. (2010) "Free Tilly – and all Circus Animals." Retrieved March 3, 2014  
<<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/free-tilly---and-all-circus-animals>>
- Skidmore, J. (2002). *A Critical Analysis of Cirque du Soleil 1987-2001*. (Doctoral Dissertation) (PhD). Toronto: University of Toronto.
- Skidmore, J. (2006). "Dark and Ancient Roots - the Circus of the Sun." Paper presented at the *Fabulous Risk: Danger and Performance in Circus and Sideshow*. University of Wollongong Conference, Australia Retrieved August 8, 2012  
<<http://www.semioticon.com/virtuals/circus/dark%20and%20ancient%20roots.pdf>>
- Smith, A.C.H. (1972). *Orghast to Persepolis*. London: Methuen, Print.
- Smith, D. (1995, 6/9/95). "Step Right Up! See the Bearded Person." *New York Times, Weekend Section*. Retrieved March 3, 2012  
<<http://www.circusamok.org/press/smithreview>>
- Smith, J. (2012). *The Thrill Makers: Celebrity, Masculinity, and Stunt Performance*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.
- Smith, J. C. (2011). "Circuses" in *Encyclopedia of African American Popular Culture*. Smith, J.C. (Ed) (p.303-307) Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood
- Sooke, A. (2010) "Circolombia: From Street Urchins to Stars." *Telegraph*. Retrieved December 12, 2012  
<<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culturecritics/7586608/Circolombia-From-street-urchins-to-circus-stars.html>>
- Sorenson, J. (2008). "Monsters: The Case of Marineland." In J. Castricano (Ed.), *Animal Subjects: An Ethical Reader in a Posthuman World*. (p. 195-222) Waterloo, ON, CAN: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- Sotiropoulos, K. (2006). *Staging Race: Black Performers in Turn of the Century America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Souweine, I. (2005). "Naked Protest and the Politics of Personalism." *Sarai Reader 2005: Bare Acts*. Retrieved August 15, 2012 f  
<[http://www.sarai.net/publications/readers/05-bare-acts/02\\_isaac.pdf](http://www.sarai.net/publications/readers/05-bare-acts/02_isaac.pdf)>
- Spackman, H. (2000). "Minding the Matter of Representation: Staging the Body Politic." *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol. 10 (3), (p. 5-22).
- Sparacino, F. (2000). "Media in Performance: Interactive Spaces for Dance, Theater, Circus and Museum Exhibits." Retrieved September 23, 2012  
<<http://domino.research.ibm.com/tchjr/journalindex.nsf/d9f0a910ab8b6374>>

85256bc80066a393/4c4914fd919aa8cb85256bfa00685d25!OpenDocument  
>

- Speaight, G. (1980). *A History of the Circus*. San Diego and New York: The Tantivy Press.
- The Spectator (1929). "Cut the Cackle and Get to the 'orses." *The Spectator* Retrieved February 1, 2012 <<http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/1st-june-1929/20/cut-the-cackle-and-get-to-the-osses-to>.
- Spectrum IEEE, (2012). "The Uncanny Valley." *Spectrum IEEE, June 2012*. Retrieved January 3, 2013 <<http://spectrum.ieee.org/automaton/robotics/humanoids/the-uncanny-valley>>
- Spencer, M. (2010). "Naked Celebrities: Why We'd All Rather Go Nude. After a Decade of Celebrity Exposure, What Makes So Many Stars Want to Bare it All?" *TIMESONLINE*. Retrieved May 7, 2012 <[http://www.amandaforeman.com/timesonline\\_2.shtml](http://www.amandaforeman.com/timesonline_2.shtml)>
- Spiegel, J.B. et al. "Social Circus and Health Equity: Exploring the National Social Circus Program in Ecuador." *Arts and Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice*. July 3 2014. Web. 7 Aug. 2014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2014.932292>.
- Springer, J. P. (2004). "La Dolce Vita: The Sweet Life, Fellini's Roman Circus." Retrieved May 24, 2012 <<http://bronze.uco.edu/passport/italy/springer/dolce.html>>
- Springhall, J. (2008). *The Genesis of Mass Culture: Show Business Live in America 1840 to 1940*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- St. Leon, M. (2011). *Circus: The Australian Story*. Melbourne: Melbourne Books.
- St. Leon, M. V. (2008). "Celebrated at First, then Implied and Finally Denied: the Erosion of Aboriginal Identity in Circus 1851-1960." *Aboriginal History, Vol. 32*. (p. 63-81) Retrieved June 25, 2013 <<http://press.anu.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/ch0455.pdf>.
- St Leon, M. V. (1993). "Colleano, Con (Cornelius) (1899-1973)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Retrieved June 17, 2014 <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/colleano-con-cornelius-9789/text17301>>
- Stark, M. and Orr, G. (1938). *Hold that Tiger*. Shildon, Durham, UK: The Caxton Press.
- Steinbock, B. (1978). "Speciesism and the Idea of Equality." *Philosophy, 53*, (p. 247-256).
- Stencell, A. W. (2002). *Seeing is Believing: America's Side Shows*. Toronto: ECW Press.
- Stephens, J. (1998). *Anti-Disciplinary Protest*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stephens, J. (1998). *Sixties Radicalism and Postmodernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stephens, L. (2008). *Pushing the Circus*. Toronto: University of Toronto.
- Stephens, L. (2012). *Rethinking the Political: Art, Work and the Body in Contemporary Circus*. (Dissertation) (PhD). Toronto: University of Toronto.
- Stoddart, H. (2000). *Rings of Desire: Circus History and Representation*.



- Manchester, GBR: Manchester University Press.
- Stoddart, H. (2003). "Horror, Circus and Orientalism." In A. Smith and W. Hughes (Eds.), *Empire and the Gothic: The Politics of Genre*. Gordonsville, VA, USA: Palgrave Macmillan. (p. 118-135)
- Stone, A. R. S. (1995). "Identity in Oshkosh." In J. M. Halberstam and I. Livingstone (Eds.). *Posthuman Bodies* (p. 23-37) Bloomington, Indiana, USA: Indiana University Press.
- Stradda. (2010). *Interest in New Magic*. Stradda, 16 (April).
- Strauss, D. L. (1999). *Between Dog and Wolf*. New York: Autonomedia.
- Sugarman, R. (Ed.). (2007). *The Many Worlds of Circus*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Sugarman, R. (2001). *Circus for Everyone: Circus Learning Around the World*. Shaftsbury, VT: Mountainside Press.
- Swain, S. (2010). "Circus Horse Whisperer keeps up Family Tradition." *Evening Times*. Retrieved April 11, 2012  
<<http://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/circus-horse-whisperer-keeps-up-family-tradition-1.1035732>.
- Sweet, M. (2001). *Inventing the Victorians*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Tait, P. (1996). "Feminine Free Fall: A Fantasy of Freedom." *Theatre Journal*, 48 (1), (p. 27-34).
- Tait, P. (1996). "Danger Delights: Texts of Gender and Race in Aerial Performance." *New Theatre Quarterly* 12, (p. 43-49).
- Tait, P. (1999). "Circus Bodies as Theatre Animals." *Australasian Drama Studies*, 35 (p. 129-143).
- Tait, P. (2005). *Circus Bodies: Cultural Identity in Aerial Performance*. New York: Routledge.
- Tait, P. (2006). "Circus Bodies: Defy the Risk of Falling." Keynote address, *Fabulous Risk: Danger and Performance in Circus and Sideshow*. University of Wollongong Conference, Australia. Retrieved August 8, 2012  
<<http://www.semioticon.com/virtuals/circus/circus%20bodies.pdf>.
- Tait, P. (2011). *Wild and Dangerous Performances: Animals, Emotions, Circus*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tate. (2012). "Tate Glossary." Retrieved May 5, 2011 from  
<<http://www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary/definition.jsp?entryId=218>>
- Tester, K. (1991). *Animals and Society: The Humanity of Animal Rights*. London: Routledge.
- Thayer, S. (2011). "American Circus Anthology, Essays of the Early Years." Retrieved July 11, 2011 <<http://www.circushistory.org/Thayer>>
- The alternative limb project. (2013). Retrieved April 12, 2013 from  
<<http://www.thealternativelimbproject.com/>>
- The Economist. (2002). "A dark and laughing ringmaster." *The-Economist*. Retrieved December 7, 2011 <<http://www.economist.com/node/1131154>>
- The Morgan Library and Museum. (2013). "Degas, Miss La La, and the Cirque Fernando." Retrieved June 7, 2013  
<<http://www.themorgan.org/about/press/MissLaLaPressRelease.pdf>>
- The New York Times. (1891). "The Great Showman Dead." *The New York Times*

- Retrieved October 11, 2012 f  
 <<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0705.html>>
- The New York Times (1885) "Ducrow and Horse Opera" Retrieved October 14 2014 <<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9801EFDE123FE533A25751C2A9679D94649FD7CF>>
- The Telegraph. (2010). "Pierrot Bidon." *Telegraph.co.uk*. Retrieved July 18, 2012 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/culture-obituaries/7474894/Pierrot-Bidon>>
- The Telegraph. (2011). "Father Jesus Silva." *The Telegraph*. Retrieved September 7, 2012 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/religion-obituaries/8758373/Father-Jesus-Silva.html>>
- Thomas, H. (2003). *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Thomas, K. (1984). *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*. London: Penguin.
- Thoreau, Henry David. *Civil Disobedience and Other Essays*. Stilwell, KS: Dover Thrift Editions, 2005.
- Thrift, N. (2008). *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*. New York: Routledge.
- Tisdall, C. (1979). *Joseph Beuys*. Exhibition Catalog. Trans Caroline Tisdall. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
- Tisdall, C. (1980). *Joseph Beuys*. Munich: Schirmer/Mosel.
- Tobier, N. (1999). "From Learned Pigs to the Burning Man: Itinerant Amusement in America." R. Kronenburg (Ed.), *Transportable Environments*. (p. 47-58) London and New York: Routledge
- Trueman, C. (2000). "Horses in World War 1." *historylearningsite*. Retrieved March 15, 2012, from [www.historylearningsite.co.uk](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk)
- Truzzi, M. (1966). "American Circus: The Shrinkage of an Institution." In M. Truzzi (Ed.), *Sociology and Everyday Life* (p. 312-322). Eaglewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc.
- Twain, M. (1884). *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Universoul Circus. (2013). "Universoul." Retrieved June 7, 2013, from <http://www.universoulcircus.com>
- U.S.-Bureau-of-the-Census. (1998). "Population of the 24 Urban Places: 1790." Retrieved July 16th, 2013, from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab02.txt>
- V&A. (2013). "Black and Asian Performance in Britain 1800-1899." Retrieved September 20, 2013, from V&A <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/b/black-and-asian-performance-in-britain-1800-1899/>
- V&A. (2013). "The First Circus, Philip Astley." Retrieved June 27, 2013, from <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-first-circus/>
- Vaughan, T. (2010). "Protecting Britain's Last Big Cat Performing Circus." *EXPRESS.co.uk*. Retrieved July 20, 2014 from <http://www.express.co.uk/expressyourself/185943/Protecting-Britain-s-last->

big-cat-performing-circus

- Wall, D. (2013). *The Ordinary Acrobat: A Journey into the Wondrous World of the Circus, Past and Present*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Wallace, I. (1959). *The Life and Times of P.T. Barnum*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Wallace, I. (2011). *The Fabulous Showman: A Biography of P.T. Barnum*. (Ed.) D. Dodd. Crossroad Press Digital Publishing.
- Wallenda, T. (2005) "Walking the Straight and Narrow: Lessons in Faith from the High Wire." Gainesville, Florida: Bridge-Logos. Print.
- Water, H. (2007). *Racism on the Victorian Stage*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Watts, M. (2001). "1968 and All That." *Progress in Human Geography*, 25 (2), (p. 157-188).
- Watts, R. (2013). "Celebrating the Body: Circus Arts and Disability." *ArtsHub* Retrieved February 15, 2014 from <http://performing.artshub.com.au/news-article/opinions/performing-arts/celebrating-the-body-circus-arts-and-disability-197604>
- Wawrzinek, J. (2008). "Ambiguous Subjects: Dissolution and Metamorphosis in the Postmodern Sublime" *GENUS: Gender in Modern Culture* (Vol. 10). Amsterdam, NLD: Rodopi.
- Wegenstein, B. H., Mark B. N. (2006). *Getting Under the Skin: The Body and Media Theory*. Cambridge, MA. USA: MIT Press.
- Weikart, R. (2003). "The Origins of Social Darwinism in Germany 1859-1895" *German Studies Review*, 26, (p. 273-294).
- Weisman, L. S. (2013). "Cedric 'Ricky' Walker." Retrieved November 2, 2013, from <http://www.answers.com/topic/cedric-ricky-walker>
- Wells, P. (2008). *Animated Bestiary: Animals, Cartoons, and Culture*. New Brunswick, USA: Rutgers University Press.
- Werner, M. R. (1923). *Barnum*. NY: Garden City Publishing Company.
- West-Pavlov, R. (2009). *Space in Theory: Kristeva, Foucault and Deleuze* (Vol. 7). Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi.
- Westcott, J. (2010). "Artist Marina Abramovic: I Have to be Like a Mountain." *The Guardian*. Retrieved January 12, 2012 from [guardian.co.uk website: http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2010/mar/19/art-marina-abramovic-moma](http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2010/mar/19/art-marina-abramovic-moma)
- Westlake, H. (1979). "Circus Lumiere." Retrieved June 27, 2012, from [http://www.hilarywestlake.com/t\\_circus/clprog.pdf](http://www.hilarywestlake.com/t_circus/clprog.pdf)
- Whatley, S. (2010). "The Spectacle of Difference: Dance and Disability on Screen." *The International Journal of ScreenDance*. Vol.1. No.1. (p. 41-52)
- Wheatley, D. (1978). *The Time Has Come: Officer and Temporary Gentleman, 1914-19* (Vol. 2). London: Hutchinson.
- Wiles, D. (2003). *A Short History of the Western Performance Space*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, D. (2000). "Performing Animal, Becoming Animal." In P. Tait (Ed.), *Body Show/s: Australian Viewings of Live Performance* Amsterdam and Atlanta, Georgia: Editions Rodopi BV. (p. 44-59)

- Williams, M. (2008). "Man on Wire: The Poet of the Sky." *Telegraph.co.uk*. Retrieved January 3, 2012 from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/starsandstories/3557290/Man-on-Wire-the-poet-of-the-sky.html>
- Williams, R. (1976). "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory." In R. Dale (Ed.), *Schooling and Capitalism: A Sociological Reader* (p. 202-210). London: Routledge and Keagan Paul.
- Williams, R. (1976). *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wilson, A. (2002). *Cirque de Soleil Re-imagines the Circus: The Evolution of an Aesthetic*. (Dissertation) (PhD). Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon.
- Wilson, S. (2011). Kantor's Art from Informel to Installation. In K. a. N. Z. Murawska-Muthesius (Ed.), *Kantor was Here* (pp. 128-139). London: Black Dog Publishing.
- Winther, P. (2003). "The Situation of Circus in the EU Member States: Study Requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport." *European Parliament Directorate-General for Research*. Retrieved November 11, 2012 from [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/.../04A-EDUC\\_DT\(2003\)0111\\_EN.doc](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/.../04A-EDUC_DT(2003)0111_EN.doc)
- Witts, N. (2011). Kantor's Art from Informel to Installation. In K. a. N. Z. Murawska-Muthesius (Ed.), *Kantor in the UK* (pp. 159-167). London: Black Dog Publishing.
- Wolfe, C. (2009). *What is Posthumanism?* Minnesota, USA: University of Minneapolis.
- WSJ. (2008). "Lot of the Day: Marc Chagall's 'Le cheval de cirque.'" *WSJ: Wall Street Journal* Retrieved September 7, 2012 from <http://blogs.wsj.com/magazine/2008/11/04/lot-of-the-day-chagalls-le-cheval-de-cirque/>
- Yalom, V., & Yalom, M. (2010). "Peter Levine on Somatic Experiencing." *psychotherapy.net* Retrieved March 8, 2013 from <http://www.psychotherapy.net/interview/interview-peter-levine>
- Women's Circus Homepage. Web. 1 Sep. 2014. <http://womenscircus.org.au>
- Zarilli, P. B. (1995). "Introduction." P. B. Zarilli (Ed.), *Acting Reconsidered: Theories and Practices*. London: Routledge.
- Zarilli, P. (2002). *Acting (Re)considered A Theoretical and Practical Guide* (2nd ed.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Zip Zap Circus. (2014). "About Us" Retrieved March 4, 2014, from <http://www.zipzap.co.za/about-us/history-background>
- Zouaoui, K. (2010). "Art & Action in the 1960s." Retrieved January 10, 2012, from <http://karenzouaoui.com/art-and-action-in-the-1960s/>